MARKETING THE AESTHETIC ENCOUNTER:
THE ROLE OF CONSUMPTION IN THE DESIGN OF THE NEW MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

by

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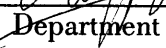MASTER OF SCIENCE IN ARCHITECTURE STUDIES

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ABSTRACT

In recent years, museum architecture has been extensively subjected to cultural critique. Perceived as an instance of architects' stylistic yearnings, reflecting control strategies, promoting institutions' economic and cultural power, catering for education through forms that increasingly associate it with commercial environments and building structures, museum architecture is examined in this thesis as a significant ground for articulating the relation between cultural and consumer practices.

Assuming that contemporary societies increasingly operate within a highly consumptive culture, where people seek new experiences through travel, leisurely activities and cultural exposure, and considering that the physical environment challenges and affects the perception of our material and immaterial worlds, we investigate the role of consumption in recent museum design. In so doing, this study focuses on the new expansion of the Museum of Modern Art in New York, a project that surprised critics both in its choice of participants and the conceptualization of its design process. We discuss the meaning of consumer culture in the context of cultural institutions, outline its effect on the definition of MoMA's institutional identity and study its role and expression in the conceptual and design phases towards the selection of the final project.

The objective is to review and expand our understanding of the relationship between consumption and cultural production in museum spaces while aspiring to develop an operative framework for future thought and practice in the shaping of new architectural identities.

Thesis supervisor: Professor William L. Porter
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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Introduction

"[...] By favoring the custom of public exhibition, the public, for a modest payment, shares a portion of the riches of genius; they may likewise come to know the arts, to which they are not as indifferent as they affect to believe; their understanding will increase, their taste be formed."[1]

"There is nothing remotely artistic that we wouldn't sell"[2].

In the last twenty years, architectural practice has seen the climactic growth in expansion and construction of museums. Cities around the world have engaged in the development of one or more, larger or smaller scale, more or less specialized museum buildings. One of the main reasons for this activity has been that the creation and promotion of museum architecture reflects the public circulation of cultural resources, a luxury that, since the origins of the public art museum in the Enlightenment, has progressively ceased to be the benefit of a favored elite. The other is that people today are increasingly seeking new experience through travel, leisurely activities and consumption of material and immaterial commodities.

Art, history, experience and knowledge are among the values that have been associated with intellectual prosperity, cultural development and social well being.

Museums today have assumed "the role of art's ritual cave, temple precinct, cathedral and palace"[3]. As an interpretative and narrative structure, art museum architecture has been constantly redefining its capacity and expanding its activities and audience.

Architects have played a key role in this evolution. As their "paramount vehicle of expression"[4], art museum architecture has offered them the opportunity to design what has been described as the "potential total work of art of the 20th century."[5] In

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[1] Jacques- Louis David, quoted in McCLELLAN [1984].
[2] John Floyd, Chairman of Christies, quoted from a 1988 interview in DAVIS [1990].
[3] Johannes Cladders, quoted in LÜPERTZ [1985], p. 18.
[4] DAVIS [1990], p. 16.
[5] Ibid., p. 19.

consequence, "virtually every great 20th century architect has at least designed an art museum and many have built one or more"[6]. Architects can concentrate further on the formal aspects of the design because technical and functional requirements are relatively limited in comparison with other building projects. It is thus not surprising to read Philip Johnson's opinion that "purely aesthetically speaking, the museum is an architect's dream. He has — as in a church — to make the visitor happy, to put him in a receptive frame of mind while he is undergoing an emotional experience. We architects welcome the challenge."[7]

Art museums, traditionally defined from their collection and the latter's renown and splendor, have come to afford and even demand a continuous architectural renaissance, an outlook that appeals to the architect's poetic spirit. This trend has induced a major challenge for architects, namely, "how to bring together the art of architecture and the art of art [... and] provide a hospitable and physically interesting home for the art, without the building as "object" rivaling the collections it houses and the functions it is supposed to perform"[8]. Consequently, despite the richness of artistic eloquence that may characterize them, museum buildings have often been considered unsatisfactory. Some have been spatially and sculpturally remarkable but functionally inappropriate for the collections' needs, while others were functionally performing but achieving little or no architectural distinction.

At the same time, occurrence of extraordinary architecture and orchestration of the experiential encounter have dramatically promoted changes in the way the public envisions the museum's role. In the 20th century, the art museum has been embraced and established as a popular civic ground. The studies performed by the Louis Harris institute in 1975, on "Americans and the Arts" confirmed that the public attends museums as a *leisurely activity and in search of pleasure* or liberal learning — a fact that shifted entirely the museum professionals' understanding of the audience. In the 1980s, studies expanded on the original findings and marked people's acclaim of the role of the arts in their quality of life. As described in DAVIS [1990], "the museum and its activities are located at the heart, not the fringe, of post-industrial society".

Art museum architecture is therefore situated today between the culturally and socially produced and consumed experiences of art, space and time. Art museums

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[6] COOLIDGE [1989].
[7] Philip Johnson, in Museum News 38, no.5, 22 January 1960.
[8] Quoted in MUSEUM DESIGN [1993], p. 14.

are undergoing a fundamental shift in their programmatic and institutional objectives as a response to the changing social, demographic, economic and cultural forces of our time. In molding the experiential conditions for artistic encounter and developing parameters for taste and individual and collective judgement in the aesthetic realm, they both affect and are affected by the transformations in the sensory perception of the world. In aspiring to encompass various cognitive levels together, their architectonic structures are inevitably incorporating the tensions and overlaps of the contemporary, nebulous, cultural condition.

Since these cultural spaces are conceived as centers of activity and consumption, there is a major demand for spaces capable of accommodating showrooms for temporary exhibits, restaurants, auditoriums, rest areas, bookstores, shops and gardens. The art museum has therefore evolved "from a quiet contemplation of works of art to one that encompasses social and commercial activities, scientific investigation, scholarly research and educational programs, as well as the presentation of not only the visual but other art forms as well."[9]

"As a building type, the museum focuses attention on architecture's dual nature, dramatizing the inherent tension between the needs of the user and the desire of the architect for an aesthetic statement"[10] a condition that brings us back to the fundamental question of architecture's role in the production and reflection of individual and collective identities, its formative and informative nature in the city. The fact that the museum as a structure and a collection has been at the juncture of the functional and the aesthetic, both deeply debated characterizations, has situated it at the center of most debates on architectural theory and practice.

The evolution of museum architecture seems to have been examined through a variety of analytical lenses and interpreted in relation to other building types and experiential metaphors. The most inclusive compilation of these associations can be found in DAVIS [1990]: from the religious connotations of art within a museum as *shrine, cathedral, treasure house,* within self-contained objects of total art of the *architect's canvas,* to the progressive desanctification of art within the *warehouse,* the *factory,* and even the anti-museum reflected in spaces such as *The Dumpster, The museum of drawers, The Dia foundation Gallery,* and *An abandoned military base in Texas.*

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[9] MUSEUM DESIGN [1993], p. 14.
[10] Ibid.

Adding to this, the museum has been associated with places such as *stadiums* and *department stores*,[11] and most markedly the *cultural shopping mall* and the *realm of spectacle*[12] as well as tourist attractions such as *the mall at the Louvre* and the *Disneyland*[13]. What therefore seems to have been the most recent and dominant consideration, is that the museum has evolved into a public building type, formed by contemporary needs of production and consumption of material culture, subjected to every possible kind of manipulation by a market driven society.

Under these speculations, cultural and consumer practices are increasingly merging their patterns of communication within museum institutions, which in turn become a significant ground of research in articulating their relation and outlining new operations of thought and practice.

The focus of this investigation is the new expansion of the Museum of Modern Art in New York, a project which was appointed in December 1997 and is expected to be completed by the year 2004. In a year that saw the opening of extraordinary museum structures around the world by renowned architects, this was a project that surprised critics both in its choice of participants and the conceptualizing of its design process. The purpose of this thesis is to review the nature of consumption in museum institutions and elucidate its role in their architectural design.

The first part discusses the meaning of *consumer culture* in the context of cultural institutions and analyzes the prevailing debates regarding its effects on museum architecture. Based on recent research performed on consumer-related practices, we extend our understanding of consumption to include its experiential aspects and outline a filter through which the effect of consumer culture on museum architecture can be examined.

The second part focuses on the MoMA's expansion process. Drawing from information directly provided by the museum, this case study is analyzed in an attempt to reach an understanding of the museum's objectives, how these relate to the museum's architectural history and how they were expressed in the conceptual and design phases. Finally, the architects' submissions are reviewed in order to articulate an

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[11] Artist Muntadas in February 1998, at his lecture on "Private Spaces/Public Spaces".
[12] GHIRARDO [1996], p. 72.
[13] Zerner, in the *Idea of a modern museum*, MoMA [1998], p. 108.

understanding of the relation between the museum's desired identity and consumer practices on the level of architectural design.

Chapter one
The nature of consumption in the art museum

Understanding that consumer culture is a field with a rich and diverse academic tradition and therefore a significant number of interpretations and concepts, it is necessary to begin this study by outlining the meaning, critical perspectives and context of consumption within which contemporary museum architecture appears to develop. As we move through the various ideas and debates that have associated the fields of commerce, culture and architecture, the objective is to increase the reader's awareness on consumption as both a *quantifiable* and *qualifiable* element of museum structures, towards a reviewed approach of its role in and control level over design processes.

1. THE MEANING OF CONSUMER CULTURE

In trying to comprehend the nature of consumer culture, one is confronted with a vast range of disciplinary fields and interpretations relative to its origins, its historical and contemporary significance. Discussions do however converge on the idea that, in all human societies, consumption has an essentially social nature, and is central to the cultural as well as material reproduction of social lives and relationships. In an effort to define consumer culture and its operative scope in relation to the architecture of art museums, SLATER's [1997] position is most valid. There, he defines consumer culture as a cultural process "denoting a social arrangement in which the relation between lived culture and social resources, between meaningful ways of life and the symbolic and material resources on which they depend, is mediated through *markets*"[1].

The concept of "market" must not be interpreted here as the locus of monetary exchange, but rather as a "means by which the exchange of goods and services take place as a result of buyers and sellers being in contact with each other either directly

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[1] SLATER [1997], p. 8.

or through mediating agents and institutions"[2]. More specifically, it pertains to spaces where "cultural reproduction is understood to be carried out through the exercise of *free personal choice* in the private sphere of everyday life"[3]. These spaces are both physically and intellectually constituted and range from cultural and educational institutions, the arts, aesthetic practices to culinary preferences and fashion systems. Through the practice of consumption, individuals exercise and display their cultural preferences, values and choices. They outline and affirm their desires, tastes and styles and reproduce their cultures and societies through construction of individual and socially shared meanings. Consumption is therefore a context within which personal and collective needs and social institutions are defined and interrelated on a daily level. It is on the basis of this understanding of cultural reproduction through consumption that art museum architecture is to be examined in this research.

1.1 Reviewing contemporary debates on consumer culture

Many attempts to discover the origins and map the development of consumption have been made. As examples, MCCRACKEN [1988] outlines the theories of three scholars: McKendrick claims that consumer revolution was born in 18th century England, Williams places it in 19th century France and Mukerji in 15th and 16th century England. As further explained in the same text, Mukerji discusses a "consumerist culture" but doesn't expand on the ideas of cultural meaning as these are reflected in objects and consumer behavior.

In the last 20 years, through postmodernism, the rise of marketing and interest in the emotional aspects of consumption, discussions on consumer culture have been reintroduced as a major preoccupation of sociological research. Postmodern scholars have nevertheless mostly argued for consumption as a process of signification. Its view has been generally associated with the city as a place of consumption, entertainment and services, leading even to the extreme characterization of a "hyper-space", a "space-time of a whole operational simulation of social life, of a whole structure of living and traffic"[4]. In so doing, it has limited the scope of the concept of consumption. It has reduced its original character of a social structural system within the realm of urban life. By *dissolving*[5] the social into signification, it fails to observe

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[2] Quoted from the Merriam-Webster's Collegiate dictionary, 10th edition.
[3] SLATER [1997], p. 8.
[4] BAUDRILLARD [1994], p. 76.
[5] Using SLATER's [1997] phrasing, p.202.

the design politics behind the construction of urban, cultural and social places. It neglects the fact that consumer, media and information societies are among the features of a new social formation whose meaning and social function in Western societies can be identified in an evolving state of cultural dialectic.

Under these considerations, it is important to try situating consumer culture in the context of this study and to establish its link with the contemporary cultural condition. As Slater explains, consumer culture, even though not the only way of relating to everyday life, is the "dominant role of cultural reproduction developed in the West over the course of modernity". This link with modernity is justified by the presence of:

a) "Core institutions, infrastructures and practices of consumer culture" that originated and were established, at least for some classes, in the early modern period and

b) "The idea of modernity, of modern experience and of modern social subjects".

What modernity presented was the dream of an attainable universal order. It promised the removal of ambivalence from the quotidian. Reason was seen as a force that would release society from tradition and would enable it to proceed freely, reconsider on individual or collective bases and ultimately define ideal ways and objectives towards the shaping of everyday life and social spaces. It symbolized independence and liberation from past spiritual faith. As Foucault describes in *The order of things*[6], modernity's origins can be identified in "the reordering of power, knowledge and the visible" and the institutionalization of "new modes of social and political control".

Modern social life, the figure of the consumer and the experience of consumerism were born, structured and transformed from the experience of the city and its reconfiguration of social spaces. They were formed and integral to its making around a "sense of the world experienced by a social actor [...] deemed individually free and rational, within a world no longer governed by tradition but rather by flux [...]"[7].

It is an indisputable fact that contemporary society is a highly consumptive one. In reviewing consumer culture as inherently tied with modernity, we have underlined

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[6] Quoted in FRIEDBERG [1993], p.17.
[7] SLATER [1997], p. 9.

its transforming role and contribution in marking the break from a past and prede-termined social order where consumption was relevant to one's social status, in the way that Veblen would express it. This approach induces that the way in which we connect to our ideals, our desired lifestyles in relation to the way our society is organized; the activities that are available to us in our leisure time; the physical and metaphorical configuration of the places we live in and the way we live in them, all reflect a structural dimension of the social character of consumer culture that has not always been acknowledged.

Consumption and, consequently, its "degrading" materialist character, have been widely criticized as a problematic field. This seems to be the reason why scholars have only recently begun to discern its cultural signification[8] and its role as constitu-tive agent of continuity and change in contemporary everyday life. Consumer research[9] has nevertheless, as we will examine later and contrary to postmodern beliefs, begun to perceive its structure, as not solely reflected through a manipulative system of abstract significations but rather an ongoing, impartial process through which we collectively reproduce the relation between social order and the intimate spheres in which we struggle to define our identities. This thesis does not attempt to deeply enter or provide answers within these debates, but to only map the ground upon which consumption is perceived in the framework of this study.

1.2 Impact of consumer culture on people's perception of the world

1.2.1 Short historical background

> "Traditionally, human societies attained a measure of ontological security from social arrangements that accepted the fundamental ambivalence of the world"[10].

People's experience of the world and personal identity were perceived through tradition and ritual ways of living, that were outlined, controlled and preserved by higher orders. Throughout the 17th century, people were still entirely absorbed by the conditions of daily life. Over time and occurrence, individuals took control of their

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[8] See for instance McCRACKEN [1988], p. xii.
[9] This term refers to the area of marketing research that focuses on consumer behavior. See for instance ZALTMAN & COULTER [1995].
[10] Giddens, 1994, quoted in CLARKE [1997].

consciousness, became aware of their bodies as physical objects. They recognized that the reality of a city was actually an image of their own thoughts and emotions, that there existed a distinction between the apparent structure and the spirit of the city. Then, the Enlightenment provided a meaning to the outside. It allowed its perception as a stimulus, as a domain for perceiving one's individuality and marking the differences in the world. The eye was given a unifying power by opening up the self to the environment as through *an open window*[11], bringing nature at immediate contact with the psyche.

Romantic literature originated from this historic moment, seeking to capture the evanescent city. It was in this context that poets and writers, aware of the growing intimacy of the individual's connection to the physical environment, were inspired to express their inner world, investigate episodes of their contemporary life and report the human condition.[12]

The city acquired its definition as a series of metaphysical responses to a continuous succession of events. People increasingly identified the moving forces of economic, cultural and social interactions behind the visible edifice. City form began to be perceived as a container of both function and metaphor. The organic and allegorical imagery of the city was developing as man was seeking his identity in the comparison of his body with that of the city. The sensory approach to built form opened new horizons for interpretations and the individual established a new relation to his/her self and society.

1.2.2 Modern consumption and the flâneur: the agent and experience of social change

In architecture, this form of consumption of the city has tended[13] to be mostly associated with the figure of the flâneur, the person who leisurely, and to a great degree aimlessly, wanders around space. Even though this form of mental assimilation clearly indicates the contemporary need for architecture to give back to the city the potential for pedestrian experience and urban animation, the flâneur's

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[11] SENNETT [1990], p. 73.

[12] For instance, Rousseau wrote in 1776: *"[..] my solitary walks and the reveries that occupy them [..] I give free rein to my thoughts and let my ideas follow their natural course, unrestricted and unconfined. These hours of solitude and meditation are the only ones in the day when I am completely myself and my own master [..] The only ones when I can truly say that I am what nature meant me to be."*

[13] See CLARKE [1997], p. 222 and CHAPLIN & HOLDONG [1998], p. 8.

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indifferent attitude fails to provide insights on a participatory, critical and imaginative production and consumption of the built environment. He/she nevertheless continues to represent the concept closest to that of leisurely movement, the temporal experience of space, especially in museum architecture, at a time where everything tends to be substituted by speed of communication and travel. It thus becomes important to go back in time and try to understand what aspects of the flâneur's experience are taken into consideration in contemporary design.

All through the years of the Enlightenment and following the French Revolution, philosophical spirit emerged in salons, cafés and clubs. Taste for elegance, comfort and beautiful objects infiltrated the circles of the bourgeoisie. With the changes in the political and social structures, the city was transformed, allowing for the first time the public access — at least visual and sometimes haptic — to luxurious objects. Paris was called the "looking-glass city". The ground for the commodities to emerge had been laid.

Capitalist cultural production and mass production generated a consumer-commodity relation allowing people the imaginary testing of different masks in their quest for identity.

In his 1867 analysis of the commodities, Marx analyzed that in bourgeois society, the commodity-form of the product of labor is the economic cell-form and that, "[...] as soon as it emerges as a commodity, it changes into a thing which transcends sensuousness. [...] It is nothing but the definite *social relation* between men themselves which assumes here, for them, the fantastic form of a relation between things."[14]

In this context, Baudelaire's figural vision of the *flâneur* was a model for a new kind of intellectual observer; one at ease in the crowd and fascinated with the constant flow of commodities and perpetually changing signs and images of the arcade, of the street, of the city. Seeing and being seen constructed a structure of gazing of both the inner and outer spheres of existence. Each individual looked at the world and mentally reproduced what he extracted as the real essence of things. This was an act of self-evidence; an urgency to dominate but also to connect to the world.

The body indicated the structure of the perceptual field and its consumer choices suggested representations of the individual mind. Both body and mind conveyed signification and it was within these that identity was manifested. In turn, identity was

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[14] MARX, Karl [1867], *Capital* v. 1, Penguin books, 1976 edition.

served by the commodity industry and together they established the phenomenon of fashion as formative of a modern dimension of urban reality. Everyday life was transformed through the social multiplication of images, dominated by what Debord would describe as an accumulation of "spectacles". Joined by technological advancements in the realms of telecommunications and travel, these new realities modified past concepts of distance, memory and experience. There was an increasing emphasis on the visual, a "relentless trafficking between the eye, the imagination and the body"[15]. Imaginative intimacy was perceived as inseparable from visual consumption.[16]

The *flâneur* embodied the gaze of modernity. He/she symbolized the freedom and the privilege to move within the public arenas of the city *observing, consuming the sights* through a controlling but rarely acknowledged gaze, directed as much at *other people* as at *goods* for sale; strolling, encountering others, seeking new and different experiences, grasping impressions and images from the flow of passing moments. He/she represented a new form of awareness between the viewer and the object. This strong shift of interest in one's desire for personal appropriation of the world can be detected in Baudelaire's ironic reference to his contemporaries' confidence in their own "mastery" of history: "I know *my* Museum".[17]

In the spirit and through the gaze of modernity, social realities were transformed, expanded to recognize and embrace all individuals. The shop window was open to everyone and its view enabled the individual to slip in imaginary worlds and incarnations. Baudelaire described modern life[18] as a great fashion show, a system of dazzling appearances, brilliant facades, glittering triumphs of decoration and design.

Fashion was recognized as a mechanism for personal identification. It was a system, a discourse. It intensified the quest for identity by allowing the staging of a multitude of virtual appearances. As there was always a sense of something beyond the present experience, desire was simply the prevalent driver of the market in a fashion-driven culture. It reflected the need for novelty and circulation of objects and images.

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[15] MACKIE, Erin [1994] *Fashion in the museum: an eighteenth century project* in *Architecture: in fashion* p. 320.

[16] Yet, it was precisely this focus on the visual that in MoMA's discussions, Eisenman referred to as "cutting off" the eye and the mind from the body, eliminating the affective dimension of architecture as opposed to the media. See MoMA [1998], p. 36.

[17] In *The painter of modern life*. The Museum he refers to is the Louvre.

[18] Ibid.

What flânerie expressed was an emphasis on "mobility and fluid subjectivity"[19]. The constant flow and exchange of information between viewer and viewed subject represented a dialectic of knowledge, of self-discovery, of growth and maturation of the individual. There was a direct impact on people's perception of the world originating in this changing visual culture. Along with the evolution of photography, various modes of representation, such as shop and exhibition displays as well as advertising documented the potential of image modification. Under the changing urban reality and lifestyle, every individual acquired the right and power to strive for an understanding of one's self and position in the public space.

Progressively, as human existence became the basic consideration and was no longer to be sought in religion but in reason, individual and social judgment, the knowledge of one's limits but also one's possibilities and talents developed new fields of exploration and examination. Through observation of what people understood as fragments of their personalities, they began to question their nature in relation to their living context. As part of a community of people, one was mirrored in others, progressively becoming familiar with one's uniqueness and increasingly trying to achieve one's personal fulfillment.

What consumption of the self, the other and the city provided the individual with was a new understanding of the realm of the visible and that of social encounters in terms of appearances, values, movement and ephemerality. Through the accessibility of continuously improving commodities, which were presented as new, stylish, and fashionable, the individual was allowed constant self-creation. Social identity was produced and maintained through a multitude of circulating apparatuses, configurations and roles. Creativity and potential for transformation were attached to physical objects.

> "Can it have been merely by coincidence that the future was to belong to the societies fickle enough to care about changing the colors, materials and shapes of costume, as well as the social order and the map of the world... societies, that is, which were ready to break with tradition? There is a connection."[20]

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[19] FRIEDBERG [1993], p. 16.
[20] Braudel, 1973, quoted in McCRACKEN [1988] p.130.

1.2.3 Consumption and cultural meaning

Due to the absence of intellectual tradition in the field of consumption, certain dimensions seem to have long been ignored. Even though consumption had since the 18th century been a mass activity, a recognized social phenomenon, and had been fully instituted within the structure of new urban spaces such as the department store, consumer research seems to have long neglected its cultural and symbolic attributes. As traditional values were reconsidered and to a certain extent abandoned, consumption provided not only the place and structure for human activities but also an agency of social transformation, culture and status authentication. Within this dialectic structure between consumption, the social and culture, the 'aura', the aesthetic aspect of goods and generally that of material objects became progressively their main function as well as the representation of their mutant nature. Culture and consumption came to be perceived as interdependent meaning structures. Aesthetics became the new marketing paragon for all material production.

It becomes important at this point to discuss how this condition came to be reproduced in the artistic and museum fields, and has even become the main focus of most, recent marketing strategies in the world of design[21].

With the opening of the first Salons in the 18th century, artistic production and authentication were distanced from the Academy. As artistic value was dissociated from the spiritual and 'religious' connotations extended by museum institutions, it began to be acquired through the interest and attraction it exercised on the public. Since ownership of art was increasingly made possible under these circumstances and was considered as proof of intellectual wealth and culture, artistic production became increasingly commodified. Consumption of art was a reflection of one's ideological choices and thus, produced meaning and values in objects while it sustained the individual's desired identity.

Today, this value structure has been fully established. Objects' value corresponds to their representation of an ideal, to their image, which is in turn structured to reflect their social and cultural status. Objects are mostly valuable for the status they have been accorded by art historians, public exhibitions and auctions. Actual or mental appropriation of art works continues to be a way of holding on to our identities. What

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[21] For an extensive study of this point see SCHMITT & SIMONSON [1997].

this reflects is the peak of an ongoing pursuit of ideals that has been occurring on a metaphysical level over the last two centuries.

It is within this understanding of the materiality of art that museums today are seeking to preserve both the past and a continuously evolving present. Museum professionals assume that the commodification of art does not affect the greater culture. Still, it appears that in the public's mind art's monetary and spiritual values are interrelated. This intermingling of values around the 'aura' of art works enhances mental processes such as the supposition that through viewing objects, individuals "entertain the eventual possession of ideals"[22] within the museum.

It becomes therefore a shared belief that museums are today the warrants of objects' merchandise value and exhibitors of status. In our contemporary society, economic structures significantly influence our relation to objects and material culture. Cultural production and consumption are perceived as associated systems of viewer-object relations and communication. As museums are investing in new artistic forms, incorporating elements from present trends and transforming culture, an enormous wave of artistic production and fashions are seeking historical validation through these institutions.

This dialectic relation between consumption and culture in terms of their mutual production of meaning has generated discussions on the uses, exchange values and meanings of objects, the empowerment of form, as well as the relation between material and immaterial forms of expression. In addition, the mobile, temporal character of cultural meaning in our consumer society calls for a new approach to the notions of the traditional and the ephemeral qualities of objects.

MCCRACKEN [1988][23] describes precisely this structure of cultural meaning. He defines the world, goods and the individual as locations of meaning and advertising, the fashion system and certain consumer rituals as instruments of meaning transfer. Even though his demonstration of the transfer of meaning between culture and consumption, presents us with a significant insight on the mobile quality of meaning, it nevertheless seems to remain locked in the perspective that culture is an endless resource of values at the service of competition tactics. His approach reinforces the assumption that identity today emerges from individual choice within a society charac-

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[22] MCCRACKEN [1988], p. 117.
[23] In his essay *Meaning manufacture and movement in the world of goods.*

terized by pluralism, arbitrary constructs and economically regulated and mediated experience but doesn't move from the received concept of a submissive to consumption culture. And this, as we will see in the following paragraphs, seems to be the filter through which most critics approach the relationship between consumption and culture.
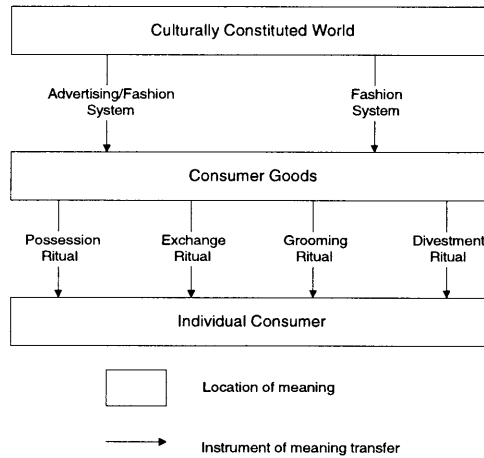
Source: MCCRACKEN [1988], p. 72.

Figure 1-1: The mobile quality of meaning

2. CONSUMER CULTURE IN ART MUSEUMS: WHERE ART AND COMMERCE MEET

"There's a renewed consumer interest in museums [...] retail gives people an opportunity to own a piece of the museum. It lets them bring the museum experience home."[24]

Relative to the issues of objects' status and meaning being located and transferred from our culturally structured world to consumable goods, the increasing number of retail activities and services that are filtered into the contemporary museum structure are seen as the symptom of a controlling capitalist power. Museums, as the places to consume mentally but also practically a "certified", by the curatorial staff, quality and style of goods (see for example figure 1-2), are seen as containers of a materialist culture, producing an enhanced image of certain expressions of art and design. While on the one hand museums may be sensitive to this debate on their institutional value judgements, they nevertheless defend commerce as a source of much-needed revenue

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[24] Mr. Gundell, MoMA's retail director, quoted in *Where art meets culture*, New York Business, June 16, 1997.

for the promotion of culture, as a way to promote their public image and as part of their services to the public[25].
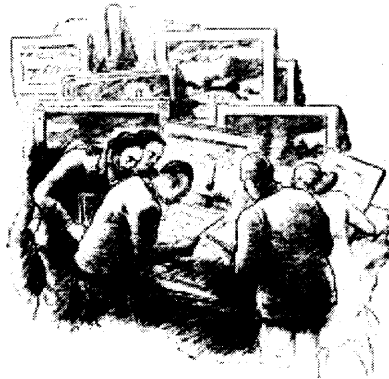
Source: MoMA microfiche archives.

Figure 1-2: Picking the 1945 Christmas Cards

The nature of the marketing exchange performed between a museum and a visitor/consumer is unique in character. Even though museums are seen to set standards and provide for the public's expectations, the major particularity constitutes in the museum's incapacity to totally control the manner in which the experience will be consumed. The visitor is the one who eventually is in control of the consumptive process as this relates to the spatial configuration, the works of art, information as well as the available goods that he chooses or not to purchase. People move according to their interests, their innate curiosities and exploratory instincts and therefore relate to the museum environment in unpredictable ways.

Ever since the museum, became incorporated in public, urban life, it appears that the focus has been on enlarging the audiences and thus making it accessible to wider and diverse category of interests. Unfortunately, it is not until recently that museums have started considering the quality of the experience, the ways in which this is produced, understood, and assimilated. Focus has been around statistics on attendance rather than the conditions of the museum experience and the interaction with the works of art.

As contemporary museum production is caught between the controlling forces, to only state a few, of technology, politics, the broadening of our access to knowledge and the arts, as well as the market's impact on the values, establishment and promotion of culture, it has become increasingly difficult to establish its design

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[25] Lisa W. Foderaro in *Museums step up their retailing to turn art into revenue*, The New York Times, February 18, 1997.

parameters. Spaces are not strictly defined in order to allow for the artworks to reverberate their "aura" unobstructedly, and the public to become personally involved in the translation of its meaning.

The quantifiable approach to a museum's success in term of its architecture, has concentrated on recreating retailing and entertainment activities, assigning increasing amounts of spaces, and organizing the inner structure so as to mostly attract tourists and spending. Often, where this was considered becoming, investments were made on new "signature" buildings in order to promote an additional source of attraction for the public.

Breaking away from the institutional envelop that museums have presented for most of their history, these trends, as the New York Times describes, "horrif[y] art purists even as [they] delight consumers in search of a different gift [...] or a little bit of culture to take home with them".[26]

The question nevertheless remains as to what is the true nature of consumption within museums and to which extent it influences their architecture. In the following sections I will be discussing the principle considerations and personal observations that I believe reflect the contemporary range of molding forces, as these pertain to consumptive processes within museums.

2.1 Prevailing views on culture, commerce and museum architecture

What then is the role of architecture under these ongoing dynamic relations between art, commerce, display and visuality? What has been the direct impact in terms of space and organization of visitor services?

Museums have always been both repositories of cultural patrimony and grounds for historical reproduction. In a more or less authoritative way, they have always established sets of criteria according to which works of art were to be collected and presented to the public at a given historical period. Past faith in a linear chronological master narrative, which provided a singular view of the reality and contexts of the displayed objects, was challenged by the changes in the way people came to perceive history and artistic production. Current discourse conceives of "historical periods as

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[26] New York Times, December 10, 1997.

arbitrary constructs"[27] and should be acknowledged as an ongoing process of interactions between heterogeneous concurrent beliefs and interpretations.

According to this discourse, museum architecture as a spatial structure offers today the staging of a variety of narratives. It has moved from the time when interventions within museum spaces were mostly of a decorative type rather than spatial articulations outlining viewing frames. Spatial needs and adjacencies have shifted and have generally been reorganized to provide complex but clearly discernible options to the viewers. It is no longer a structure simply characterized by a linear or parallel succession of galleries, rooms and halls.

Moving initially away from past classificatory schemes, according to schools, periods, chronologies, and overly decorated spaces which were visually detaching them from any sort of context, to space of neutrality, museum architecture is today focusing on the 'molding' of the art work experience. It has an aesthetic function rather than one of enclosure. As André Malraux describes in Le musée imaginaire, it separates the work of art from the "profane" and brings it together with opposing or rivaling ones. It allows the "confrontation of metamorphoses"[28] to be experienced by the public.

It nevertheless seems that the cultural production of this "confrontation of metamorphoses" of objects became hard, if not impossible to distinguish from the production of other, more 'common' material objects. Art museums seemed to legitimize artistic production that was outside past value structures, beyond types of objects[29] and traditional 'ideals', reaching a peak during the Pop Art period (see figure 1-x). Advertising came to be considered as a new, democratic artistic form that was structured upon and promoted the values of consumption. As the meaning and values of art and taste continuously transformed the relationship between art, commodity and fashion seemed to blur more than ever. This has been particularly evident in "modern"[30] art museums that have been preoccupied with keeping up with the contemporary artistic production.

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[27] As expressed in KAZZAZ [1990], p. 11.
[28] MALRAUX [1951], p. 12.
[29] See auction description of Warhol's Campbell Soup at Sotheby's: http://www.sothebys.com/Auction/prevu-may97a.html
[30] The definition of the characterization "modern" has acquired more than one possible meaning today. We will examine this in the chapter related to the MoMA. At this point it is used in relation to contemporary artistic and museum production and not in relation to a historic period of artistic production.
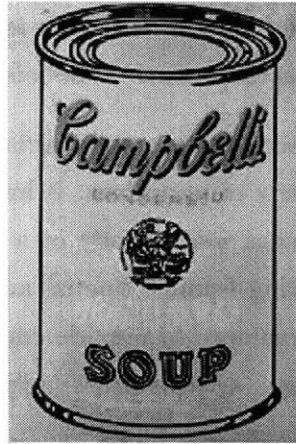
Source: Sotheby's Warhol Campbell soup auction web site
Figure 1-3: Warhol's Campbell soup (1965)

It is interesting to observe in the press of that time the exchange of codes between clothing patterns, object designs and MoMA's collections. Even though the museum had never considered fashion as collectible art and its only major exhibition in the field was Bernard Rudofsky's 1944 critique of clothing in "Are clothes modern?" (which was done within the definition of 'modern' as relevant to "intelligent garments, designed for machine production and for machine production only"[31]) there was obviously a direct link between the museum's 'higher' art works and the 'lower' retailed objects. And even though the extreme 1970s' statement of "you are what you consume" and the connection of culture, to identity and consumption were increasingly relating to the contemporary and the museum's artistic production, this had probably already become apparent in people's minds at such an earlier date as December 1944, when Sacks dedicated their Fifth Avenue windows to Rudofsky's exhibition theme[32]. Interestingly, only a few years ago, Sotheby's preferred to temporary exhibit the valuable objects for an upcoming auction at Bergdorf Goodman's shop windows rather than one of the city's museums.

As a new visual culture and media entered the art museum, the latter's role was expanded to present, communicate but also participate to the flow of images and information as well as stimulate people's awareness and knowledge. By incorporating and legitimizing the increasing attempts to liberate art and integrating them into everyday life, museums in the 1980s, while never rejecting their elitist character in setting their collection criteria, were set to help transform perceptions of the world and

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[31] New York Times, November 29, 1944.
[32] According to a December 1944 issue of the Herald Tribune found in the MoMA archives.

cultural meaning. Everyday life was to enter the museum and this resulted in a "museumization" of the world itself[33].

In this process the museum appears to have retained and often accentuated its original spiritual and ritual character. Conservatives and museum professionals have nevertheless expressed fears on a progressive degeneration of the institution, due to the elimination of differences between consumer and museum cultures. What seems to be the concern is the extent to which this process of convergence between the outside world and the museum is destabilizing its authoritative status and its role as a reflector of the exhibited objects' aura and a warrant of their value.

Considering that museum architecture is meant to provide a clearly defined and widely accessible place where one can gain experience and knowledge by being exposed to a vast range of extraordinary objects, what is exactly the place of consumption and upon what levels does it operate and influence the design? What are the parameters constituting this ambiguous but powerful and fluid relation between culture and consumption and how these affect directly or indirectly the museum's physical space? It is important at this point to examine the circumstances under which consumption is approached in its relation to cultural meaning. Consumption, being directly related to people's needs, one has to determine the ways through which consumer behavior has been understood and studied. This seems to shift our attention to the way consumer needs are analyzed, served or exploited within the private and public spheres.

2.1.1 The "information processing model" in the approach of consumption

The study of consumer research has mostly focused on the study of the consumer "as logical thinker who solves problems to make purchasing decisions"[34]. In this understanding of consumption, needs have been mostly approached in terms of their purely subjective nature. They have not been examined in terms of their social dimension, but rather as natural, arbitrary, individual idiosyncratic gestures and have therefore been expected to engender generalized unvaried functions. Under this approach, the making and meaning of all forms of artistic creation is transformed. These are produced in order to introduce each and every capricious consumer into a

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[33] Henri Pierre Jeudi, quoted in BEYELER FOUNDATION [1997], p. 298.
[34] HOLBROOK & HIRSCHMAN [1982], p. 132.

game of personal, rational choice, aspiring to attract in one way or another his/her individual needs.

Just as needs relate to the individual's personality and desired image, so is the 'aura' of objects manipulated to serve a maximum of personal utilities, through advertising and other media forms. Commodities and their surrounding spaces enter a process of 'aesthetization'. This approach identifies the individual as a malleable, passive personality that is subjected to all kinds of manipulations by the production forces through an overwhelming amount of images and signs. Accordingly, visual discourse of and around objects appears to be no longer grounded in its material qualities and its status and meaning structure become undetermined and debatable. Any link between producer and consumer seems to disappear through this lack of common references. Peter Wollen[35] describes visual display as "the other side of the spectacle, the side of production rather than consumption or reception, the designer rather than the viewer..." Meaning structures are controlled and interpreted by institutions. As such, all debates around consumption within museums have basically identified its architecture as serving economic structures, the public's consumer appetites and the institution's corporate assets and incentives.

Architects are criticized as product designers who use to the maximum their positions and professional status to control the designs and continually challenge the public's preconceptions, in order to attract tourism, capital and expand markets. As the role of consumption's cultural and symbolic attributes becomes the mechanism of the public's manipulation, this calls into doubt the museum's role as final repository of the high arts. Culture is seen and understood as a power structure that is using consumption in order to redefine the boundaries and parameters of the museum institution and architecture as well as promote their marketability.

The original desire to increase audiences and democratize museums through consumer activities and services has today backlashed in the minds of their critics and has brought into question the moral stance of the institution and the way architecture is serving it. What follows are the prevailing considerations, according to my understanding, on the effects of consumer culture in museum architecture today.

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[35] COOKE & WOLLEN [1995], p. 9.

2.1.2 A quantifiable impact: the expansion of spaces and services

"So Grand Rapids is building a new public museum with the emphasis on the *public*! We have tried to throw off a few inhibitions. We do not wish to stand aloof but to be friendly and inviting. Our mission is to retail museum services. We are therefore going to be as accessible as the dime store. Our aim is not to carnavalize the museum but to popularize it; to get visitors in with the least possible effort on their part; to give taxpayers a lot for the little money they invest in a museum"[36].

"It is a shrine to the phenomenon of mass production"[37].

In an attempt to locate the moment when architects began conceptualizing museum design and structure with regard to commercial activity and spaces, it was interesting to find corresponding views[38] on the belief that Louis Kahn was actually the first to attempt the blending in an innovative way of a multiplicity of commercial needs into the sacred cultural envelope of the Yale Center for British Art. What he did was open up the institution to the urban context by integrating retail stores at ground level which he then linked with exhibition galleries and educational spaces around a light-filled central court that rose through the entire height of the structure. In so doing, he enabled instant visual contact with the interior overall organization and programmatic richness that was responding to the changing needs of museum design as well as that of creating a cultural pole in the urban fabric.
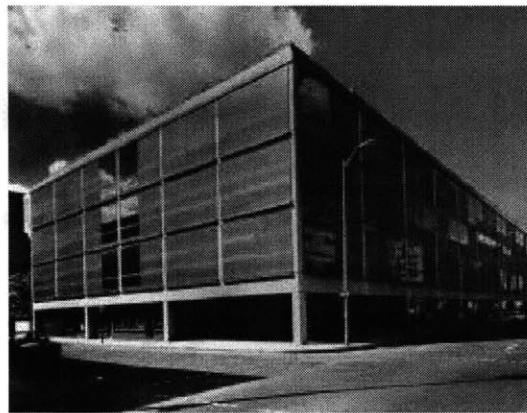
Source: DARRAGH & SNYDER [1993], p. 48.
Figure 1-4: Yale Center for British Art (1977)

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[36] Frank L. DuMond, director of Grand Rapids Public Museum, March 15, 1939, quoted in Museum News, March/April 1996, p. 47.
[37] Philip Garner, *the unknown museum* [1985], quoted in DAVIS [1990], p. 199.
[38] See DARRAGH & SNYDER [1993], p. 48 and DAVIS [1998], p. 68.

Today consumer activities have come to be considered as an inextricable part of all contemporary museums. Since 1992, at 185 of the largest American museums, the spaces devoted to museum stores increased by 29% while gallery space by 3%[39]. The growth in museum stores, the creation of satellite shops related to one museum (like the Boston Museum of Fine Arts store in the Prudential Center) or even none (like the retail chain "The Museum Company", founded in 1989 and counting today 78 stores in the United States), the blockbuster shows, the creation of museum brand names authenticating the values of purchasable objects, sponsorships by corporations in the funding and organization of temporary exhibits, are strong indicators of the blurring between art and commerce in our market driven society. Retail spaces and consumer services, all designed to offer the public a multitude of services as in many other museums, in order to increase its audience, to allow the visitor for a slower, more relaxed visit as well as to motivate him/her to spend more time and attend exhibitions more often, are today interwoven in the fabric of all museums. Even for those who do not physically visit the museum, web sites, catalogues and mail services guarantee the promotion of museum products.

Source: Museum's web page.

Figure 1-5: Shopping at the High Museum of Art in Atlanta

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[39] *Art (?) to go: Museums Broaden Wares*, The New York Times, December 10, 1997, p. A26.
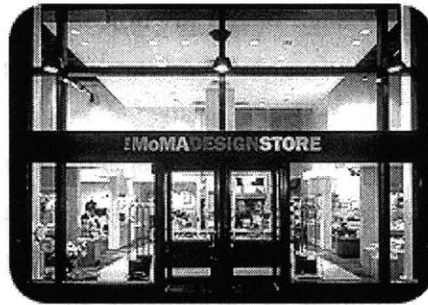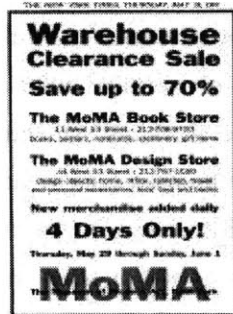
Sources: MoMA archives (from New York Times), MoMA web site.

Figure 1-6: Shopping at MoMA.

MoMA's Museum Stores' statement clearly expresses that the design store "reflects the Museum's commitment to good design by making outstanding examples directly available to the public [and that] many products sold are represented in the Museum's design Collection". Interestingly, a friend once remarked that while strolling around the Guggenheim museum in New York in the galleries away from the spiral, one could constantly hear the cashing machines and look over the railings to the museum shop below. Even the new Getty Center in Los Angeles, has dedicated 1,700 sq. ft to its main store and has located three satellite shops around its campus, expecting to add very high profits to the foundation's fortune.

It is, I believe, a shared agreement that the major reason behind these operations and comments is the desire to increase audience numbers and the need for self-help in funding, in order to sustain the collections and the activities and services that are provided to the public. It is also a fact that this situation has been promoted by the tax laws that allow for museum products to be tax-free when related to the museum's mission, but also favor funding by private sources. Even though counter arguments on the commodification and a 'consequent disgrace' of art objects, people seem to be responding positively to the new 'shopping' dimension that museums have acquired. In a new survey by the Museum Store Association, it was shown that museum stores are on average more profitable than department stores.

At the same time, as centers of urban activity, it is not only museums that are expanding their services and activities to match department stores and the much criticized 'theme park' of the entertainment industry (a fact that has engendered discussions on the ethical stance of these cultural institutions in relation to their design politics and control of the public's flow and investments). As the organization of shopping malls has been partly incorporated in museums in a more or less pronounced

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way, so the aura of the art object, the 'museumification' of values and material culture, the reinforcement of and "superiority of certain cultures and artifacts over others"[40], have been infiltrated in the design of shops, storefronts, display formats and patterns in commercial spaces, such as Niketown (see figure 1-7 below) and the Disney stores, to only state a few examples. Interestingly, even though the presence and display of art in spaces outside museums is not a new phenomenon, there is a growing number of fashionable restaurants around the world[41], who depending on their owners taste and enterprise, are exhibiting original works in their premises. It is a general phenomenon in postmodern times that "things which inhabited different worlds and value systems, and were consumed by different audiences, now occupy a single cultural space"[42].

Source: Store index web page.
Figure 1-7: Niketown shoe display

In the case of museum architecture, designers are therefore called upon to balance and reorder what GHIRARDO [1996] has called the "blurring of distinctions between commerce and art". In 1977, Paris revolutionized the art museum scene with the Pompidou Center. A highly innovative and technological design of its time, it redefined the new trends in museum design of its generation. On the opening week, frequentation exceeded by four or five times the original expectations. The expansion and variety of spaces (cafés, shops, auditoriums, libraries) within the institution's new programmatic model popularized the museum experience and provided it with an inviting dimension.

The art museum was at this time established as a cultural center. Pompidou Center was the "triumphant crystallization of the national cultural spirit"[43] and its ideology was one of flexibility and movement. It allowed for changing exhibition

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[40] GHIRARDO [1996], p. 90.
[41] *Watching where you eat*, The Economist, January 31, 1998, p.87.
[42] SLATER [1997], p. 196.
[43] SILVER, Nathan [1994] *The making of Beaubourg: a building biography of the Centre Pompidou*, MIT Press, Cambridge, p. 1.

patterns. Its envelope was not restrictive to the changing forms of artistic production. It provided a multiplicity of choices and curatorial patterns, viewing frames, and itineraries. J. Montaner and J. Oliveras, refer to the Pompidou Center as "the last generation museum: a hybrid building type defined by a programmatic complexity of usage". As presented by Coolidge, "the building and art it contained was the most controversial aspect of the broadest and most original enterprise of our times"[44]. The expansion and variety of spaces (cafés, shops, auditoriums, libraries) within the institution's new programmatic model popularized the museum experience and provided it with an inviting dimension.

Source: DAVIS [1993], p. 36.

Figure 1-8: Pompidou Center (1977)

Through Pompidou Center's new model, museum architecture was reconfigured in order to accommodate, as the architects explained, an "art [that] would evolve continually"[45]. By creating a "building for culture, information, and entertainment"[46], it marked a turning point for museums by allowing for an enlarged concept of culture and the desanctification of the art object. Museums, socio-cultural centers, exhibition halls and basically all past forms of display and commercial presentation seem to have both merged and reached towards future interpretations and concepts in the structure of the Pompidou Center. Uncertain of the building's potential operation even its architects' once entertained the hypothesis that "maybe one day our museum will become a foodstore, a supermarket"[47].

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[44] OLIVERAS [1986], p. 92.
[45] Quoted in COOLIDGE [1989], p. 93.
[46] DAVIS [1990], p. 41, 1986 interview with the architects.
[47] Peter Rawstorme, *Piano + Rogers, Centre Beaubourg*, Architectural design, July 1972, quoted in KAZZAZ [1990], p. 96.

2.1.3 A qualifiable impact: the trend of "signature" buildings

> "The 1980s heralded the subordination of production to consumption in the form of marketing: design, retailing, advertising and the product concept were ascendant, reflected in postmodern theory as the triumph of the sign and aestheticization of everyday life ...carried out in a world of plural, malleable, playful consumer identities, a process ruled over by play of image, style, desire and sign."[48]

Since the Pompidou Center went beyond programmatic structure in order to provide the flexibility it aspired, its architecture was resumed by its aesthetic appearance, by the socially, culturally, politically and economically charged image that it was promoting. In the two decades that followed its construction, there was great tension concerning the buildings and reorganization of museum institutions. Architects were impelled to design in a distinct, unobstructed style, reinterpreting at each time a conceptual framework. Design choices were driven by commercial, promotional and publicity demands, a fact that marked the stylistic change in museum buildings. Some museums, lacking or even not owning exceptional collections upon their opening, invested in their architecture as the only way to establish themselves. Meant to revive or expand their cities' aesthetic life, distinctive designs were valued for producing added value to the institutions independently of their collections' value.

On his design of the East Wing of the National Gallery of Art in Washington in 1978, I. M. Pei described his design as a dual challenge: "a building suitable to Washington's monumentality" and "a museum that has spatial excitement for visitors"[49]. As the visual impact of new museums became predominant, the art of architecture gained prominence. *Iconic presence* was given priority over than usage. According to Davis[50], Meier's High Museum of Art in Atlanta, built in 1983, attained the ideal of what Philip Johnson had described at the American Institute of Architects in 1987, of "architecture as a pure art". A modest exterior failed to reinforce the role of museums in the city; museum architecture was to reflect the prestige, wealth and intellectual supremacy of its founders and audience.

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[48] SLATER [1997], p. 10.
[49] COOLIDGE [198x], p. 86.
[50] DAVIS [1990], p. 68.
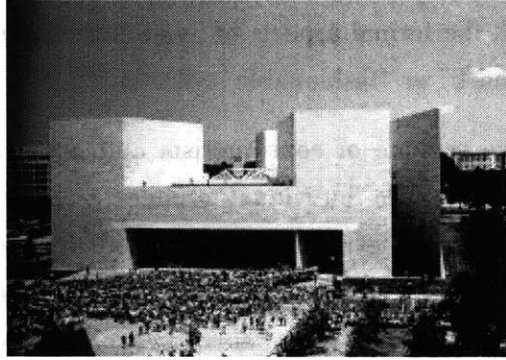
Source: *DAVIS [1993], p. 21.*

Figure 1-9: National Gallery of Art in Washington, East Wing (1978)

"I sketched a trapezoid on the back of an envelope. I drew a diagonal line across the trapezoid and produced two triangles. That was the beginning."[51] (I. M. Pei, in National Geographic, November 1978)
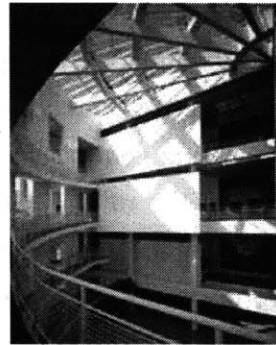
Sources: *Museum web site.*

Figure 1-10: High Museum of Art in Atlanta (1983), entrance and atrium

As museum architecture broke away from traditional envelopes, the power of its image began to be promoted as a form of statement of a new, expanding institutional identity. At the same time, consumption provided a system that required and offered choices to both producers and consumers. In this context, the promise for uninflected creativity provided architects with the license to be more expressive and more artistic in their concepts, interpretations and designs.

Varied interpretations provided museum institutions with the possibility of choosing from a number of architects' designs in order to develop and establish their individual institutional identities. This marketing and advertising of the image of the

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[51] From *National Gallery commemorates 20ᵗʰ Anniversary of East Wing with works showing early architectural design*, News Release, National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C. web site.

museum through the formal aspects of its architecture generated "a new definition of style as "trade mark" or "fashionable stylization"[52].

As a negative critique of consumerism and museum cultures, in relation to this commercial dimension of individual architectural styles, Duncan states that they merge on the ideological level: "both accommodate only isolated individuals for whom life's greatest values and pleasures exist in a private or subjective realm [...]"[53]. As for the advertising principles of both fields, these are considered as equally situated "at the center of a boundless, a-social universe."

There are two reasons for disagreement with this position. One is that, as previously discussed, it is precisely upon the social and not the 'a-social' universe that museums and consumption relate in the reproduction of culture. The second more telling reason is that architecture in general, and museum architecture in particular, have, since the origins of modernity been extremely sensible to the concept of building boundaries; the perimeter, the contour of buildings. In analyzing modern architecture and its relationship to the logic of fashion and clothing, Wigley describes the increasing concern of almost all modern architects with the mediating power of design and the role of exterior form in defining a building's identity by masking or reflecting its inner functions. What constituted the white walls of modernism was the concept that both the material and spiritual essence of buildings were to be found "in the surface".

> "Architecture is to be found in the sensuous play of surfaces rather than the lines that seem to mark the limits of those surfaces"[54].

The meaning of this architecture concentrates in the wall and its tectonic character. The metaphor used, that "to occupy was to wrap (oneself) in the sensuous surface"[55], was probably the first indication towards concepts of an architecture that would encompass the emotional aspects of our consuming nature, not restricted to the realm of fashion but also exercised within the built environment. This empowerment of form, surface and the primacy of design that originated with modernity, seems to have reached its peak in the contemporary production of architecture.

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[52] This is further analyzed in KAZZAZ [1990].
[53] DUNCAN [1994], p. 130.
[54] WIGLEY [1995], p. 25.
[55] Ibid.

In museum design today, there is a need for differentiation of museum identities and architecture as well as between the varying dimensions of a collective social enterprise and a contemplative personal experience, as this relates to the works of art. In most museum buildings of the last 20 years the shape and material of the bordering surfaces of spaces has determined the architectural concept of the viewer/object relation. Within this design framework, Renzo Piano, in his design for the Beyeler Foundation, describes the wall as "a mechanism to produce difference,"[56] as crystallized symbol of the Foundation's museological concept "to interpret the quality of the collection and define its relationship to the outside world"[57]. It is in this same context, that the Louvre is an important project for discussion, because what was precisely pronounced in this project, prior to the museum's reopening, was the symbolism of its exterior form, which after all, constituted a relatively minor part of the overall spatial intervention.[58]

2.1.4 The Louvre: the reversal of assumptions or the distinctions between consuming cultures

In the course of a discussion on *The idea of a modern museum*[59], Henri Zerner referred to the Louvre as "the caricature" of the contemporary 'malling' of museums and the 'Disneyfication' of city centers in the name of spectacle and entertainment (p. 108). Even though the Louvre survived the debates around the Pyramid and its symbolic connotations, it has continued to inspire debates around its institutional character ever since the underground commercial zone was opened to the public in 1993. There is no doubt that I. M. Pei's solution logically responded to the necessity for complex decision making. After all, it was basically following the general considerations of museum architecture at that time as expressed by Helen Searing at the 1982 exhibit of New American Art museums Whitney (which included MoMA's addition by Pelli among others), which consisted of the belief that the "self-effacing warehouse was no longer a relevant model, the Miesian ideal of open, flowing space had been

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[56] BEYELER FOUNDATION [1997], p. 298.
[57] Ibid., p. 291.
[58] The crowning structure that would become the new entrance to the museum was the symbol of the design and the most controversial point of the project. In order to find the origins of this form, one should look to the architect's past projects and interviews. The pyramidal shape constituted a characteristic element of the architect's expressive vocabulary and was reminiscent of an unrealized proposal for the J. F. K. Library project in Boston.
[59] This discussion took place on November 19, 1996 as part of the lecture series organized by the MoMA in New York in relation to their latest expansion project.

discarded and J.N.L. Durand's 1805 symmetrical organization of rooms around a central courtyard was back."

The reason the Louvre is mostly interesting as an architectural phenomenon is nevertheless, as suggested in the end of the previous section, not its shopping-mall character. The Commercial Galleries of the Carousel, which can be amusingly found under 'shopping centers' in a Parisian website[60], are without doubt one of the grandest representations of consumerism within museum institutions. What is a notable point is that consumption, in this case, has operated on a different level, which has been that of a trend in 'signature' or fashionable 'designer' buildings. What becomes apparent in this remark, is that the Louvre provides clear evidence that retail has in no way affected the museum as a building type. There is nothing exteriorly to indicate the existence of the shopping arcade. Since this was occurring in the context of a European country and a city that clings to its architectural patrimony as symbolic of its history, its political and cultural power, these activities and animations in the realm of the Louvre were to remain inconspicuous to the passer-by at ground level. The underground arcade, as in the original character of the form, was to be hidden within the building structure. At the same time, this spatial configuration, so directly linked with the developing consumer society of the 19th century, has been embedded in the form, function and sensation of the other museums and is not strange to museum publics around the Western world. After all, the Louvre's Carrousel is reminiscent of the shape of the Museum of Fine Arts extension in Boston. It is interesting that in its travel from the United States this architectural form, which after all has its original roots in the Parisian arcades of the late 1780s, is seen to reflect the commercial activity of a shopping mall, the "signature building of our age"[61].

What therefore reflected the building's urban identity and character, was not its shopping dimension but the discomfort over the Pyramid and the political signification of its geometry was due to direct references to pharaonic symbolism, which began with the announcement of the project to the public on January 24, 1984 and marked the beginning of its criticism and controversy[62].

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[60] http:www.smartweb.fr/louvre/

[61] *The shopping mall: The signature building of our age*, in WEISMAN, Leslie [1992] *Discrimination by design*, Urbana, University of Illinois Press.

[62] At this point, it is interesting to mention some comments on the project: "a megalomaniac and disastrous scheme", "fit only for Disneyland", "the Luna Park of the Louvre", "the house of the dead", "imported, ridiculous architecture", etc.

Source: French tourism information web site

Figure 1-11: The Pyramid of the Grand Louvre.
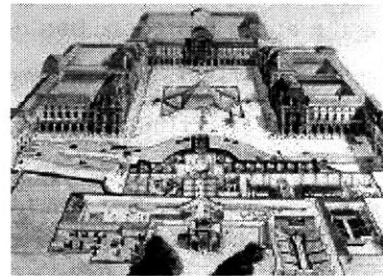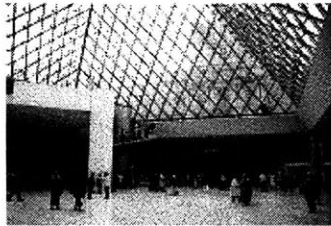
Source: French tourism information web site

Figure 1-12: The lobby and the section of the Caroussel

As physical and social structures through time are embedded in and influence one another, it was natural for people to make the association of the pyramidal design with the Egyptian monuments, transmitting a historical form of mausoleums, even though François Mitterrand had not requested any specific shape. The critical point and guiding principle to the project was the choice of the architect. I. M. Pei was considered the world's leading specialist in museum design. He had designed the East Building of the National Gallery of Art in Washington DC in the early 1970s and the West Wing at the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston in the 1980s, both of which were extensions to older edifices. For Mitterrand, he was the ideal person and this was a choice that remained irreversible through all the battles fought over the project's design, either in relation to the architect's Chinese-American culture or to his architectural and modernist viewpoint.

Even though the Pyramid was to define a point of reference, a new urban stratum of the Louvre, a new initiation to the museum experience and a turning point for the future of the institution, it only developed into its final shape after the commissioning of the project. The architect claimed that the form, which only developed into its final shape after the commissioning of the project, had been inspired by the geometrical designs in 17th century landscapes and gardens of Le Nôtre and the 18th century py-ramidal architecture of Boullée, Le Canu and Neufforge, suggesting references to the

French cultural consciousness. Besides, the aerial view of the Pyramid was meant to visually recreate the drawings and patterns in the Palace gardens by Le Nôtre.

The battle over the Pyramid lasted until May 1, 1985, when a full size simulation of the structure was installed at the Louvre after the then Mayor's of Paris, Jacques Chirac request. This was to convince people of the lightness of the intervention.

One should nevertheless consider that at the time, the Pyramid symbolized for the public the entire reorganization of the museum, which is why all the debates were focusing on its design. The underground spaces hadn't assumed their existence until their opening. Even though these constituted the core of the first stage of the project, they hadn't been associated with the Pyramid in people's mind.

It is therefore interesting to note that while its symbolism and image determined its reception as an urban space, the full extent of its volume, organizational logic and aesthetic quality were only apprehended at a later stage, through the lived experience of its commercial zones.

The Louvre as well as most art museums built in the last 20 years, has been part of a culture that wanted the exterior of a great museum to match its contents in terms of visual significance and "signature". According to J. N. Woods, director and president of Art Institute of Chicago "almost without exception, exterior form and image have been given priority over interior space. Success has been determined primarily by form rather than function." Art museums are designed to serve as worldwide recognizable architectural landmarks. The architects are challenged to "create a significant work of architecture"[63]. Investment on the style of architecture is expected to increase public attendance. Distinctive design produces added value and contributes to the creation of a memorable moment in time.

> "[...] Creation of immediate history is suggested in every level of the current marketing system"[64].

Museum architecture has proved to be a major contributor to the generation of historically acclaimed buildings by surrounding art collections with impressive, identifiable buildings. 1997 was an exceptional year for museum architecture. Three projects dominated the media and the press; and in each case discussions mainly focused to the choice on the architect and the architectural design. One was the

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[63] Read in the Architectural Fact Sheet, The Getty Center.
[64] DAVIS [1990], p. 227.

announcement and competition for the MoMA's future expansion in New York, which will be extensively discussed, in the following chapter. The other two were considered as having both exceeded their categorical limits and stretched assumptions on the future and nature of 21st century museum architecture. These include the Guggenheim in Bilbao (see figures 1-13 and 1-14), in terms of scale and the Getty Art Center in Los Angeles (see figure 1-15), in terms of cost.

Richard Meier, I. M. Pei and recently Frank Gehry have been considered as the most successful post-war architects, in terms of size and number of commissions[65]. Their designs have been criticized or exalted through the media for their forms, architectural logic, and even for their conceptual innovations in narratives. Especially in the Bilbao and the Getty the choice of the specific architects was representative their level of control over the designs. Interestingly, Meier made this apparent while commenting on MoMA's choice of architects for their expansion[66].
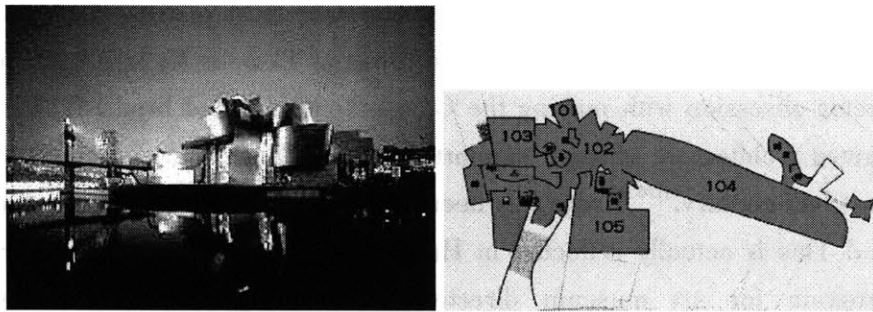
Source: Adapted from Guggenheim official web site.

Figure 1-13: Bilbao Guggenheim (1997): night view and ground floor plan
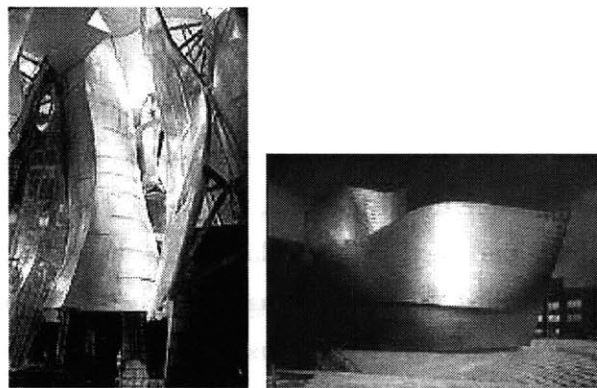
Source: Adapted from Guggenheim official web site.

Figure 1-14: Bilbao Guggenheim (1997): atrium and exterior wall

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[65] Museum News, January/ February 1997, p. 55.
[66] The Economist, February 1998.
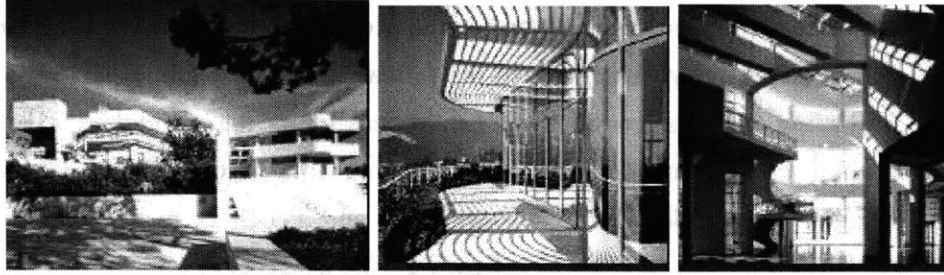
Figure 1-15: Getty Art Center in Los Angeles (1997): the Museum, a panoramic view, the Entrance Hall

It is nevertheless a fact that every one of these projects has served the specific institutions vision, and has usually been its director's "brainchild"[67]. The Getty's director, John Walsh stated that the institution wanted the architecture "to seduce visitors", that the "main purpose of the new Museum is to put the works of art in the most flattering setting and to give visitors the best possible experience"[68]. Gehry's "Metallic Flower" in Bilbao, was the result of Thomas Krens's, the Guggenheim's director obsession with making the Guggenheim a global brand."[69] Praised for having "given architecture stronger support than any other American museum director in the past half-century,"[70] Krens has been criticized as the "art world's Michael Eisner"[71]. and This is actually reflected in Harvard University Art Museums' recently created program for art museum directors, introducing them to "current thinking of leadership, management, and the latest trends in university-based art history teaching and research"[72], a program whose ultimate objective is to reinforce the role of directors in the design process and establish them as they primary clients for the architects. It is actually very interesting to notice in news headlines today that most museums are undergoing major shifts in their management and organization and are acquiring new directors who have proven successful in attracting funds for innovative projects. At the same time, directors, through a strong association with curators, seem to be leading the way in the planning and establishment of their museums' institutional identities. It is interesting how "the object of attention"[73] at the opening dinner of Stockholm's Moderna Museer, was a leader in his field as director and

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[67] From an interview with Paola Antonelli, Associate curator of Design and Architecture at the MoMA, March 8, 1998.
[68] Press release, Getty Center, December 9, 1997.
[69] *Tastemakers*, New York, December 1997.
[70] Herbert Muschamp, *The miracle in Bilbao*, The New York Times, September 6, 1997.
[71] *Tastemakers*, New York, December 1997.
[72] Harvard University Press Release, November 26, 1997.
[73] The Economist, *The old school*, March 28, 1998.

modern art curator and not the architect who was Rafael Moneo, as could have been expected by the current tendency in new museum reviews.

As we have progressively become an increasingly information-based society, a new culture of images has dominated production and creativity. There has been an increased concern with museum design as communicator of information, distinction and as value structure. Museum architecture seems to have been directly connected with the definition of individual identity more than any other built form. New museum buildings continue to reflect institutions' changing identities and image. In a never-ending world of significations, styles and images compete and acquire meanings in relation to each other and museum architecture has strongly reflected this condition in the last years. As Ghirardo[74] explains, "postmodernism in architecture is most commonly understood as a stylistic phenomenon". Many probably share Meier's critique of architecture of the eighties as 'fashion'[75]. 'Fashionable architecture" nevertheless remains the most probable reason for which Meier and other well-established and recognized museum architects of his generation were not included in the list for MoMA's expansion. It was precisely the fact that their names and personal design styles were already associated with quite a number of museum buildings in Europe and the U.S., outlining and bounding together their otherwise individual institutional identities. There was therefore need for a new 'style' to be generated for the museum in order to market its institutional identity. The fact that all entrants to the Charette had very singular styles and urbanistic concerns was to set MoMA apart from other institutions that commissioned the older generation of fashionable but by now largely identifiable in the majority of designers.

Still, what remains crucial to remember and is contrary to general belief is that museums, even though there is no dominance of a single style and type of architecture, are not projects allowing for discretionary stylistic manipulations. They have a distinctive character which lies in their programmatic richness as social, cultural, political, economic organisms, its ability "[...] to exist within a number of different architectural enclosures"[76] and the desire to make collections accessible to the widest possible public.

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[74] Ghirardo [1996], p. 8.
[75] Modern man, Vogue, p. 288.
[76] Brawne, quoted by Lowry in MoMA [1998], p.78.

2.2. An extended understanding of consumption in art museums

> "In its design and construction perspective, and not in building type, the museum is much like a department store in its need for oriented public circulation through secured areas housing frequently changing installations."[77]

We have observed that within an increasingly pluralistic culture, there is both a demand for expanded activities and retail services within museums as well as a need for differentiation and for museum architecture to constitute at each time a visible symbol to the outside world and a reflection of each museum institution's personal identity and ideology. Consumption, even though a multifaceted phenomenon, has been mostly depicted within museum architecture on two levels:

♦ A "dynamic" level which concerns its changing character of spaces, and is reflected in the types of activities for which the majority of the new spaces and the flows between them were designed. This involves the organization of the plan, the creation of a multitude of circuits, corridors, choices and connections among the composition.

♦ A "static" level which relates to the building's formal presence in the urban context. This marks the focal point, the sign, the "brand" identity of the institution.

Understanding consumption as a cultural process, is nevertheless inseparable of its role as a social institution that induces behavior and outlines functional and aesthetic values and meanings to objects and spaces.

Even though the conventional understanding of consumption related to fulfillment of physiological, utilitarian needs is very important in order for architecture to programmatically respond to the public, there is the symbolic kind of consumption, a fulfillment of experiential, non-utilitarian needs, related to the partial accomplishment of one's desired identity, that is today an evolving field of study. This refers to the rising need of integrating emotional considerations as part of the design of museum architecture, a fact that is breaking away from the modern museum concept of neutral spaces. The atmosphere generated by this clean, white, vacant aesthetic, which was believed to help eliminate distractions from viewing art, is not today considered as the established ideal type it was originally meant to represent in terms of space condi-

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[77] DARRAGH & SNYDER [1993], p. 106.

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tioning. Even though neutrality, is still conceived by many as respectful in regards to art, there are artists who welcome the idea of a museum building as architectural statement, as an important, special place in which their art is upraised, is given "stature"[78]. What this basically suggests is the desire by certain contemporary artists, especially sculptors, like Richard Serra, who's position we will see in more detail in MoMA's pre-competition discussions, to exhibit their works in spaces where art and architecture challenge each other, where architecture generates a form of tension with the exhibited objects or installations. It has after all been argued that even for the public, the white neutrality of certain museums is psychologically an uncomfortable encounter, "turning attention to (one's) self rather than to the work of art"[79]. At the same time distinctive architecture should not be considered as a quest for monumentality, since this may bewilder and intimidate the viewer.

However, it is important for architecture to interpret the distinctive character of a place in order to stimulate and engage people. Picasso once told Ernst Beyeler, art dealer, collector and director of the recently opened Beyeler Foundation that "it is important to arouse enthusiasm, because enthusiasm is what we all need most- for ourselves and for the younger generations"[80]. Assuming that monumentality is not probably the most appropriate environment to display art, and that there is not a single way for individual's to experience this art can we still search for an optimal condition created by museum architecture?

Specifying the model of an instrumental, educational and pleasurable museum environment remains inconclusive to this date. A study performed in 1990 by the Getty Center for Education in the Arts, proves that we can only start understanding aesthetic experience by observing its symptoms to the viewer's psychological condition, rather than its underlying structure. In this study, the parallel between aesthetic experience and flow experience has been presented to illustrate the state of consciousness these induce to the individual and to determine what they have described as "criteria" for such conditions to occur. It is nevertheless a fact that these remain abstract in their formulation and indicate no operative structure that could facilitate the design process of an 'aesthetic' environment. What they have nevertheless discovered with this analysis is that it is the activities, the *articulation of*

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[78] Gehry in an interview in Museum News, January/February 1996.
[79] CSIKSZENTMIHALYI & ROBINSON[1990], p. 142.
[80] BEYELER FOUNDATION [1997], p. 300.

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the museum experience that viewers consume that needs to be made rewarding[81]. It is interesting to observe that this reinforces the perspective of the viewer/object dialectic through consumption, previously examined, as a *process*, constituting a non-controlling form of what we have called "dynamic" style, as opposed to the "static" style of a building envelope's formal aspects, through which individuals attach meanings to objects, assimilate their own culture and use it to help develop themselves in the social realm.

What these observations contribute to architectural research is unfortunately not directly usable in practice at the extent they have been presented. It seems that we can not currently measure a clear and general attribute of behavior and experience or evidence of a shared view of places among people. Creating the "spirit of a place" remains a complex system of forces, values and variables directed and determined in ideological discourses beyond the design process. What they nevertheless mark and significantly add to this study, is a shift from a generalized concept of museum architecture as a background for art objects, to one that focuses on the structuring of a variable experience, based on a general sense of one's position in space, of a mental map through which individuals can personally or collectively assimilate the resources that they are provided with.

2.2.1 The "experiential view" of consumption

In accordance to the position previously exposed it is interesting to note that, in the last 20 years, the study of consumer behavior has come to acknowledge an additional dimension in the nature of consumption. Consumption has begun to be seen as "involving a steady flow of fantasies, feelings and fun encompassed by what has been called the "experiential view".[82] These aspects of consumption in turn influence the "products" as carriers of *symbolic meaning*, the "stimulus properties" based on *non-verbal 'sensory cues'* and "communication content" on the *structure and style* of environmental inputs. These consequently affect people's cognitive mapping, emotions, behavior, and generally the type of involvement they develop with objects and space.

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[81] CSIKSZENTMIHALYI & ROBINSON [1990], based on what they have outlined as the Aesthetic and Flow experiences, define the following set of points: a) Object focus, b) felt freedom, c) detached affect, d) active discovery and e) wholeness, as representative of the experiential nature the museum should offer.
[82] HOLBROOK & HIRSCHNAN [1982].

Consumption is therefore an "energy system"[83] a "multifaceted interaction" between organism and environment, a "dynamic process"[84].

By expanding our understanding of consumption to that of an operative structure that can through "physical factors shape, limit and motivate culture", we can reinterpret McCracken's diagram of locations and transfers of meaning (figure 1-1, p. 24) by transposing it to architectural design, especially within the value structures that are reflected in art museums.

In this new model we observe that there is a cyclical sense to the movement of meaning between culture and consumption and that architecture becomes both the locus and transferring tool of meaning. While culture remains the "lens" and orienting "principle" through which individuals relate to as well as assimilate and behave according to their culture, consumption is now perceived as the reflection of the individual's personal memories, experiences, and mental associations, which in turn, through a socialization process, transfers, and redefines culturally shared meanings.
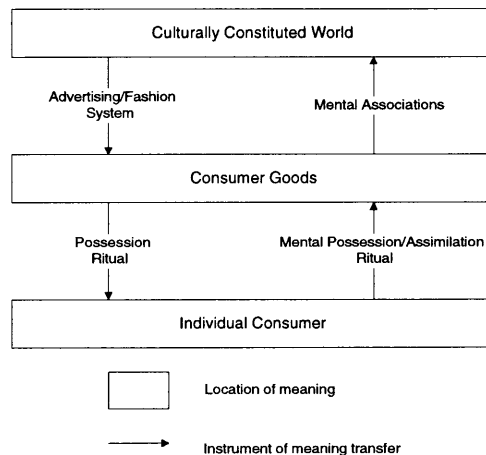
Source: Adapted from McCRACKEN [1988], p. 72.

Figure 1-16: Revised diagram: the mobile quality of meaning

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[83] COHEN [1968] quoted in PARKER & TAVASSOLI, *Physioeconomic Theories of Culture and Consumption*, June 1997, p. 15, borrowed from the definition of culture supported by some anthropologists, as instrument of adaptation in relation to the authors' belief in an "often complex interaction between the physical environment, culture and behavior". This paper focuses on the effects of the physical environment on cross-cultural consumer behavior.

[84] HOLBROOK & HIRSCHNAN [1982], p. 139.

2.2.2 The need for experiential "place"

At a time where anything visible can be considered as art, where art can be found in practically every place, size and scale and produced through any medium, how does architecture contribute to its visibility, accessibility and representation? How does it come to determine an active relationship with the works of art? What becomes its role in presenting and forwarding the meaning of collections?

With the emergence of information technology and the digital marketplace, plans are made to "create new uses and markets for high-quality visual content"[85]. Whether this reduces artistic production to a system of information communication[86], or calls attention to questions of reproduction rights, control and ethics, and reduction of the 'aura' of the originals, is an immense issue of discussion and debate. The reason for which I am bringing this into my argument is in no way an attempt to provide any answers but to call attention to its impact on the role of contemporary museum architectural production.

As we are moving towards an increasingly service-oriented and information processing society, the rising numbers in museum audience provided by the National Endowment for the Arts[87] indicate that we should not assume that the role and number of museums will not be diminishing at any time in the near future. If anything, the accessibility of reproductions has empowered the 'aura' of the originals and has generated a desire for their direct experience.

Contemporary society is under constant exposure of knowledge and becoming increasingly art literate. Museum visitors are becoming educated minds and skillful eyes, aware of both the existence of a variety of animating powers and contexts that lead to artistic production as well as the market dynamic behind every art object.

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[85] In 1989, the omnipresent Bill Gates founded Corbis Corporation, "a comprehensive archive that reflects human experience", Museum News May/June 1996, p.34.

[86] See J.N. Woods, Museum News January/ February 1997, p.56.

[87] May 15, 1996 research report on *Age and arts participation with a focus on the baby boom cohort: 1982-1992*, indicated that museum attendance has increased by nearly 40%. However, the increase in museum audiences "may be a factor of convenience, marketing, or the draw of blockbuster exhibitions, and does not necessarily indicate a deeper involvement with the visual arts", p.1, Endowment News.

2.2.2.1 Creativity and sensory perception

Dealing with the experiential aspects of design brings into the discussion some reflections on the creative process as this relates to human perception. These are structured upon two issues.

The first relates to the way that city and built form in general have come to be recognized as having an effect on the individual's perception of the world. As visual language, the city became increasingly understood as a complex place of circulation of representations, representing the material form of perceptual relations between the viewer and the object. It took form both as a site and object of visual consumption affording subjective experiences and readings. This was mostly intense in the spaces of intersection, in places of commerce and leisure, where codifications of identity and desire emerged and were set in flux. This awareness increased the control of the physical environment and architecture aspired to create sensory orders, express meaning enhance discourses. What this condition nevertheless implied was the existence of an infinite realm of possible, subjective definitions. The problem with establishing an exact and objective definition of individuals' internal logic lies in the difficulty of isolating the organism from the external environment, the space where the immediate situation and past experiences are veritably significant.

The second issue has to do with what Baudelaire described in 1863 as the meaning of modernity, as *"the ephemeral, the fugitive, the contingent, the half of art whose other half is the eternal and the immutable"*. It is precisely this search of an eternal, cohesive whole that has generated in the individual the need to redefine life and the self in a world that has moved from its concept of fixed realities and meanings to one that allows for continuously changing relations. Accordingly, artistic activity becomes increasingly understood as a form of reasoning, of "symbolic expression of [a] creator's psychodynamics" as Freud described in his analysis of art. Yet, it is the nature and ethical stance of this expression that is usually criticized and argued upon. It seems that in "the Moses of Michelangelo"[88], even Freud contradicted his generalizing, unfeeling and strictly laboratorial approach that considered creativity as a result of unfulfilled libidinal instincts[89], by realizing that artistic creation "cannot be merely a matter of intellectual comprehension; what (the

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[88] FREUD [1958] *On creativity and the unconscious*, p. 12.
[89] HORDEN [1985] *Psychoanalysis and creativity* in *Freud and the humanities* p. 43.

artist) aims at is to awaken in us the same emotional attitude, the same mental constellation as that in which in him produced the impetus to create".

More than any other artistic form, architecture is trying to respond and adapt to a society, to an environment outside the creator's existence. On the one hand, this determines its ability to lead to objects that are constant, material forms. On the other hand, it provides the ground for changing meaning structures to evolve. This is especially true in museum architecture, where it is necessary to provide a value structure by satisfying the experiential, that is the aesthetic needs of a diverse public. We need to focus on the sensory experience, on the perceived benefit of the viewing and assimilation of art.

The quest for an understanding of sensory perception and the mental processes of assimilation, particularly as these relate to art, is not part of a new discourse. In his 1969 book, *Visual Thinking*, Arnheim describes the character and structure of vision as active performance, as essential element of cognition together with the other mental operations —sensory perception, memory, thinking, learning etc.— involved in the receiving, storing and processing of information[90]. Believing that function alone does not determine shape, he considers that it becomes the artist's essential responsibility to introduce appropriate meaning to his creation in response to the world of senses. Physical fitness is arbitrary in an object made for human use because comfort is related to body as well as to mind. Function and practicality as principles of physical fitness are therefore a reduction serving as an act of character, personal or a period's style. Conceiving expression as "[...] an aspect of perception, cerebral rather than retinal but dependent on the stimuli recorded by the eyes,"[91] the translation of shapes as carriers of expression, symbolism and feeling into visual language comes to depend on the observer. This involves a spatial and dynamic perception between the parts and the whole and marks the transition from the material of the object and the form as precondition of visual understanding[92] to perceptual abstraction as the process for internalizing a visual concept. By illustrating the art object as "a bundle of energy"[93], he describes perception as a dynamic event, subject to change in time and demands for detachment from frame and reference[94]. He calls attention to a restructuring of

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[90] ARNHEIM [1969], p.13.
[91] ARNHEIM [1966]
[92] Ibid., p. 39.
[93] ARNHEIM [1969], p. 286.
[94] Ibid. p. 269.

perception as "evoking powers in which man recognizes himself"[95]. This can be related to his argument in ARNHEIM [1996] where he considered that "perception is not simply mechanical absorption of received material, it always involves imposition of a network of concepts [...] whose nature depends on the medium that happens to generate them, [...] turning thus relativity to a new structure of interpretations, a new pure absolute."

Even though Arnheim is a very important reference in outlining mental models in the field of psychology[96], consumer behavior and advertising research[97], and is very insightful in understanding sensory perception and visual thinking, his work implies the existence of objective principles and primary conditions, of a new form of representation, of classification of types, self-contradicting to his initial discourse of perception's subjective nature. As much as is important to understand that "[...] thinking takes place in the realm of the senses,"[98] it remains a fact that there is no agreement on a general way of relating to physical space and objects and on whether architecture should provide for a direct or mediated experience of art[99].

As described in SCHMITT & SIMONSON [1997], design is today increasingly becoming involved with the construction of a "total sensory experience", a perception through feeling rather than that of the direct experience of an object or a service. Aesthetics, as described by Baumgarten in the 18th century, refer to a special branch of philosophy that "aims to produce a science of *sensuous knowledge* in contrast with logic, whose goal is truth" and in particular the interest lies in "the impact of physical features on individuals' experiences"[100]. By applying this approach to museum architecture, the focus turns on the definition of structural features and inherent qualities of an institution's identity and the production of designs. Even though it allows for a multitude of aesthetic interpretations according to individuals and to their reaction to visual and sensory stimuli, the key factor to a design's value is its integral and coherent response to and articulation of a desired identity.

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[95] Ibid, ch.16.
[96] CSIKSZENTMIHALYI & ROBINSON [1990], p. 14.
[97] ZALTMAN & COULTER [1995], p. 35.
[98] ARNHEIM [1969].
[99] SCHMITT & SIMONSON [1997], p. 19.
[100] SCHMITT & SIMONSON [1997], p. 18.

2.2.2.2 Contemporary museum architecture and the need for critical experience

As Edelman [1964] [101] points out, when accenting a setting, we are seeking to *heighten the response to the act it frames*. Charged with this design philosophy, museum architecture is trying to frame the act of seeing, of visually perceiving, encountering urban spaces and art objects. Adding to this, "as soon as a setting becomes a conscious object of attention it sets the stage for some general type of action, offering or reinforcing suggestions of its motivation. Background and ground are both synonymous and complementary." [102]

Today, museum architecture forms links between the public's cultural and social activities in order to integrate images of collective memories in the invention of new places and new experiences by legitimizing a set of values and a mode of access to interpretations of artistic objects. The contemporary design of museums seems to attempt the staging of the exhibited objects, to provide constructed, physical perspectives of a visual structure, to incorporate the dimension of time and speed in the processing of information and knowledge. The contemporary museum aspires to achieve "embracing material practices as well as aesthetic forms, underlying the convergence between economic structure and cultural project.[103]"

We therefore can see the design politics of consumption being manifested in this new museology in trying to connect settings, create supporting environments for artistic production and market relations; to generate stimulus for both mental and mercantile encounters with art objects. Addressing a consumer society and providing for a media-oriented culture has more than ever accentuated the need for architecture to provide a critical framework for the viewing and education of art.

Contemporary museums are more than ever recreating the city and the social dimension of urban life within their architecture. Strolling has become a central pleasure of museum attendance rather than simply means to an end. Spaces are transformed into centers of activity rather than static meditation. Pedestrian movement corresponds to spatial geometry. Museum architecture has incorporated a part

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[101] EDELMAN [1964].
[102] Duncan, quoted in EDELMAN [1964], pp.101-102.
[103] ZUCHIN [1991], p. 22.

of the urban fabric within its structure and its characteristics are increasingly becoming apparent in the rationale of new designs.

In this context, museum architecture is seeking today to provide a spatio-temporal structure of appearances, a condition for mental consumption of objects that have come to be considered as commodities, as elements of consumer culture, of an aesthetic that values the function of objects "as systems of signs[104]". This aesthetic therefore demands for a "new concept of environment[105]"that will allow the system of circulation of signs to occur, for an aesthetic that allows the constant movement of collections and the temporal component to be represented. At the same time there is need for creation and conservation of artistic reference points as we are moving towards the 21st century and newer art forms are becoming 'classic'. In addition to being a ground for presentation, representation, symbolism and motion, it outlines a dynamic model, affording a variety of sensory encounters and interpretations, a transferring tool of meaning.

2.2.3 Levels of representation of consumer culture in the art museum

An attempt to locate the manifestations and structure of consumption in the realm of museum architecture has provided us with an insight to a wider range of issues that are related to consumer practices than those usually criticized. We have seen that consumption involves both rational and experiential processes and as such is directly related to creativity and as such, it relates to our structure of perception:

1. As fulfillment of both utilitarian and non-utilitarian needs,

2. As reflection of individuals' need for differentiation of identity.

3. As reflection of the social nature of urban life,

4. As intimate relation and appropriation of art and physical space,

5. As articulation of bodily movement through space, and above all

6. As *location and transferring tool* for cultural meaning.

The last point is the most important factor that has been introduced in this study of consumption. By approaching consumption in its dual capacity to contain and

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[104] BAUDRILLARD [1981], *The political economy of the sign*, p. 188.
[105] Ibid., p. 202.

convey meaning and in understanding its interdependence with social activities and cultural reproduction, we shift from a concept that separates it from the realm of production to one that considers consumption and production as mutually inclusive.

In a society that considers consumption in the art museum as a) a negative source for altering human relations and social order, b) an unethical form of architectural practice and c) a manipulation of individuals for institutional profits, it is important to underline the more positive and operational of its facets, in order to promote the progression of architectural design vital to the field. Geertz[106] has offered an intriguing definition of culture as "not only a reflection of a social setting or a psychological predisposition, but also a production of meaning". It is not only *a way of life* but also a *social process* within which people share mental maps that order their perception, thought and action and help produce individuals' identities. I believe that consumption should be viewed precisely as a reflection of these cultural processes rather than a ruling set of boundaries within which people are given impressions of choice. Consumption is not a ruling, totalizing and fixed element of everyday life. Just as culture, it is constantly reconstructed, it is "a process of ordering", "it changes and develops like a living organism"[107] and as designers we should acknowledge this potential of consumption rather than its restrictive character in the reproduction of personal meanings and everyday life. It pulls as away from our focus consumption's impact on the architectural program and object, from the artifact.

What this view of consumption contributes to the creative process is the need for practice and communication of experience through forms of visual thinking. It generates the need to search for forms that underlie and allow for human experience. It indicates the need for *critical* spaces, for spaces that provide individuals with the necessary visual/sensory information for *critical thinking*.

It becomes necessary for architecture to materially structure visual incidents and interconnections of events, to provide material that engenders metaphorical thinking which leads to thought and assimilation of concepts according to each individual's memory bank. The architectural structure must finally attempt to spatially outline material that will determine perceptual and informational communication and processing speeds. In this context, critical thinking is effected by visual indicators that

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[106] FISKE, John [1989] *Reading the popular*, Unwin Hyman, Boston, p. 21.
[107] CLIFFORD, James [1988], *On collecting art and culture*, in *The predicament of culture : twentieth-century ethnography, literature, and art*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge.

generate awareness and help the viewers instinctively move though space and actively direct their selves and their assimilation sequence.

As architecture was the first feature of the museum institution to be modified and address the fundamental design issues related to the visitors' expanding, it is today being increasingly considered as a medium for critical activity, rather than a background suggesting a specific and unobstructed viewing of art objects. We recognize today that contemporary museums are complex institutions providing different sensory dimensions, time and space to think and feel "Kahn's beloved silence"[108]. Apart from creating environments that encourage leisurely activities, pedestrian promenades, spaces for contemplation, distraction and even occasional purchasing, new activities and functions are reflecting a different approach to cultural consumption and production of meanings. The current climate is one that sees museum architecture as assisting the production and movement of meanings through a structure of cinematic sequence where the viewer directs a personal montage of images and information. As a permanent structure in which new information circulates and can be variously processed, the viewer transforms the experience to meet his personal identity and culture.

The primary objective of museum architecture is to display art and make it perceived in the best possible way. Design concepts strive to establish a link between internal conditions defined by collection's characteristics, and size, and external conditions defined by surroundings. To envelop the collections in structures that allow for powerful interactions between space and objects as well as reflect a desired image and spirit of a place, means to stimulate the eye, the body and the mind, with an incentive to promote visual thinking.

In creating such experiences, there is need for silence and movement, for concentrated observation and understanding while walking, for balance between the modern concept of free-flowing spaces and the past ensembles of fixed rooms. Museum architecture should provide a place for art as well as a place for people, allowing for the physical and psychological relaxation needed in the encounter of powerful art.

Illusions of unique, functional, ideal types and forms are no longer relevant in a diverse and ever-changing reality. Nor are the multifunctional, flexible, infinitely

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[108] Kenneth Powell in New Museum: architectural design, ed. A. Papadakis, 1991.

signifying and individualistic structures the proof of what Baudrillard would call a world of simulations, where there is no longer confidence in the true, or inherent essence of a material object. Between these two extreme interpretations of creativity in modernity and postmodernity, contemporary architecture seems to be seeking an intermediate zone, where boundaries are no longer either privately or collectively defined. For an architecture that allows for simultaneity, provides potential for action within spaces, designs must have specific but not limiting factors that help viewers to focus in between boundaries. A museum architecture that calls back attention to the interior qualities of space and their overall organization.

What seems to appear today as the moving force of creativity is the ideological definition and physical reflection of cultural identity and idiosyncratic character in architectural projects. It is what I would describe as a "dynamic style', a system that: a) unfolds the singular, inherent qualities of the project, b) reflects its process of making, and c) results in designs that have imaginatively provided for internal integrity, logic and coherence of the overall form.

2.2.4 Conclusion

It is a fact that museums have on the one hand expanded their commercial activities and on the other have intensified the trend of architectural statements by well-established, 'brand' name architects. What these have indicated is that museums are today a hybrid building type, reconfigured to match the needs of an expanding public and also the specific identity defined by each institution's objectives and urban context. These examples have further shown the need for identification of museums as distinct places within a pluralistic culture and a dense national and international urban and social fabric.

The understanding of consumption as an operational structure for design is important to the structuring of museums that must take into account the experiential aspects of cultural meaning in objects and spaces. This approach calls attention to the entire experience of museum architecture, rather than simply isolating its program or the object and how these tend to disturb or enhance one's perception and assimilation of art. The implications of consumption challenge the level of control that architectural design has over and within the set constituents of each institution's inherent characteristics. Consumption theory thus demands a reconceptualization of

the interior qualities of spaces rather than the boundaries that define the limits of one's experience.

Under this form of speculation, consumption in museums therefore poses the following challenges to resolve in terms of architectural design:

♦ IN TERMS OF BUILDING TYPE: it demands for an architecture of *differentiation* and *distinction*

♦ IN TERMS OF PROGRAMMATIC STRUCTURE: it calls for *social ordering through spatial articulation* and *allocation* of activities and services

♦ IN TERMS OF SPATIAL INTEGRITY: it calls for experiences that are afforded through *critical visual thinking.*

> "... Only where things can be seen by many in a variety of aspects without changing their identity, so that those who are gathered around them know they see sameness in utter diversity, can worldly reality truly and reliably happen". [109]

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[109] Arendt quoted in BAIRD [1995], p. 24

Chapter two
Defining the Museum of Modern Art

1. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

New York's Museum of Modern Art opened on November 8, 1929 in rented commercial spaces at the Hecksher building at 730 Fifth Avenue. Accommodating temporary exhibition galleries, the museum's collection began where the Metropolitan museum's were ending, with works by the late French impressionists Paul Cézanne, Paul Gauguin, Georges Seurat, and Vincent Van Gogh. The museum's director was Alfred Barr Jr., a man who would revolutionize the concept and role of the museum institution. The Museum of Modern Art's opening was to mark the point of departure of an extraordinary permanent collection, which was to be based symptomatically on the same underlying logic as its architecture: "upon a metabolic principle of continual building up and tearing down".[1]

1.1 The institution

> "The Museum of Modern Art is a laboratory: in its experiments, the public is invited to participate."[2]

The founding of the MoMA came both as a direct and indirect result of the 1913 International Exhibition of Modern Art in New York City, the "Armory Show".[3] According to the American artist and co-organizer Walt Kuhn, the Armory Show was produced from: a) "a burning desire by everyone to be informed of the slightly known activities abroad" and b) "the need of breaking down the stifling and smug condition of local art affairs as applied to the ambition of American painters and sculptors". This created a new audience for modern art and a new group of patrons and collec-

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[1] Alfred H. Barr Jr. in 1939, quoted in MoMA [1998], p. 95.
[2] Alfred H. Barr Jr., quoted in MoMA [1998], p. 88.
[3] The exhibition took its name because of the place where it was located, which was in the Armory building of the 69th Regiment.

tors. The MoMA was to be the institution to continue the work and success of the Armory Show. Arthur B. Davies's, the second of the show's leading organizers, pursued his dream of bringing modern art closer to the American public through an exhibition organized at the Met in 1921, but, having received much criticism from the press, any possibility of further modern exhibitions was eliminated within this institution.

In 1928, fulfilling Davies's hope and suggestions, Miss Lillie P. Bliss, Mrs. Cornelius J. Sullivan and Mrs. Abby Aldrich Rockefeller began forming the museum's committee, which would soon be joined by Paul J. Sachs, associate professor and founder of the museum course at Harvard University[4]. Sachs taught the course from 1921 to 1948 and more than half of his students were to become leading figures in the museum profession. He was the one to recommend Alfred H. Barr Jr. for the directorship of the new institution and to begin what James Cuno described[5] as "a long tradition" in preparing museum "workers"[6]. According to Sachs' notion of the 20th century museum, these must "understand that [...] a museum should be *not only a treasure house* but also *an educational institution*, and last but no means least that [they should each] be a competent speaker and writer as well as a man of the world with bowing acquaintance to other fields".

Barr, who was the first to teach a course entirely dedicated to modern art in an American college, expanded the field to cover all angles of the visual arts, including in its "subject headings" painting, sculpture but also film, photography, theater, music, architecture and industrial design. The "multi-departmental" plan was, as Barr later said, "simply the subject headings" of his course. "The plan was radical [...] because it proposed an active and serious concern with the *practical, commercial and popular arts* as well as with *the so-called 'fine' arts*... I wanted to show New York the *best* of modern architecture, posters, chairs, movies and attack the complacency with which our successful designers contemplated their 'modernistic' skyscrapers and refrigerators, Gothic dormitories, pompous super-films, banal billboards and the cynical promotion of 'artificial obsolescence'."[7]

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[4] "No other university has been more influential in the museum world, in this country or in many other countries, than Harvard" (James Cuno, *Harvard University Art Museums Press release*, November 26, 1997). Currently directors, curators and conservators with Harvard degrees include those of the Metropolitan in New York, the National gallery of Art in Washington, the Philadelphia Museum of Art. MFA in Boston, the High Museum of Art, the MoMA and many others.
[5] *Harvard University Art Museums Press release*, November 26, 1997 on the program for art museum directors initiated at Harvard.
[6] Sachs in MEYER [1979], p. 41.
[7] RASMUSSEN [1979].

In MoMA's manifesto entitled *A New Art Museum*, it was clearly noted that the institution would be multifunctional with a first attempt to "establish a very fine collection of the immediate ancestors, American and European, of the modern movement", which, as discussed in MoMA [1997], was based on the concept of "a modern *tradition*, an adventure which was not simply a sampling of whatever happened in art at a given time, but a story of the development of modernism[8]".

Interestingly, it was through architecture that the museum made its first opening towards a multifunctional and multi-departmental institution. In 1932, with the architectural exhibition *Modern Architecture: International Style*, curated by Philip Johnson and Henry-Russell Hitchcock,[9] the MoMA founded its department of architecture and in 1933, launched the first Department of Circulating Exhibitions which had come as a result of the need to finance, through leasing to other institutions, this exhibit.

As MoMA's architecture curator, member of the board of trustees (a role which he continues to hold today) and eventually the museum's most influential architect, Johnson was probably the one to promote the importance of the museum as an institution at the center of community life and to underline its role in the formation of contemporary values. According to him, "the cultural center", "the museum as a monument" replaced the cathedral and became "the place the city took pride in".[10]

The significance of the museum's role within the city and society, its transforming model from one that paid respect to historical traditions to one of that represented new value judgements, structures and statements, that were increasingly challenging the institution, originated at that moment and are still today the subject of all debates around museum space and design.

1.1.1 The ideological position

> "The primary purpose of the museum is to help people enjoy, understand and use the visual arts of our time".[11]

As a continually evolving institution, the MoMA was since its founding, based on a given permanence of purpose but also a sense of definition through process. This

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[8] Henri Zerner in MoMA [1998], p. 101.
[9] They had both, along with Barr, studied under Sachs at Harvard. MEYER [1979], p.129.
[10] Ibid. p. 130.
[11] Alfred H. Barr, quoted in MoMA [1961].

"citadel of civilization"[12] which was seen as signifying the "furthering [of] democracy itself", was at the same time a *dynamic* museum and the goal of its director was "to keep the museum always up-to-date".[13]

The MoMA was a pioneering institution, a new kind of museum, with an open, adventurous policy. Apart from capturing the vitality of contemporary art, it was also concerned with the function of art in society. It originally begun as "an experiment to determine whether sufficient public interest existed to justify the establishment of a permanent institution devoted to collecting, exhibiting and studying modern art."[14] The MoMA established the dominant set of standards and created a widespread public awareness of a field[15] that, in the 1930s, had a very limited audience of experts and connoisseurs. Barr wanted the museum to promote public understanding of all the aspects of modern art and he recognized that it should not be a fixed entity but a frame with possibilities of change over time and according to the public's preferences. Exhibitions' patterns were based on experimentation[16], and Barr always made sure to inform the public and press of the time on the context and principles upon which every exhibition was based.[17]

As a laboratory, the institution set out to redefine its concept of aesthetics through making value judgements on beauty and its display. It was a "place of demonstration [... and] a place of action"[18] where the public would be taught aesthetics, would learn to perceive and through perceiving understand what the new universe of individual achievements of the modern period represented. Based on a set, linear narrative that drew authority from the institution's system of beliefs, the artworks "unfolded a succession of formally distinct styles", a "series of art-historical moments that opened up new formal possibilities"[19]. As we will later see, without ever negating its central, traditional position on the modern movement, the institution has had to reexamine and reevaluate its linear structure while opening up to new artistic currents and expressions.

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[12] President Franklin Roosevelt's radio address on the opening night of the MoMA's new building. In *Public Views, New Museum*, The New York Sun, Thursday, May 11, 1939.
[13] Nelson A. Rockefeller, statement on the opening day of the museum. MoMA Archives.
[14] MoMA [1961], p. 7.
[15] " [...] In bringing this art to a public that was eager for the new and that derived from it an increased confidence in the latent powers of our culture, Barr also served the artists by providing the fullest exposure of the most accomplished and daring works of our time". Meyer Shapiro, quoted in MoMA's 1986-87 annual report, p. 4.
[16] MoMA [1998], p. 88.
[17] MATTHEWS [1994], p.56.
[18] University of Chicago President Robert Maynard Hutchins's address on the opening of MoMA, from the archives.
[19] DUNCAN [1994], p. 104.

Even though the history of modern art and MoMA's narrative have been criticized as highly selective "cultural constructs [...] collectively produced and perpetuated by all those professionals [...] where modern art is taught, exhibited or interpreted"[20], one should not underestimate the institution's role in bringing the museum closer to the public through exhibitions such as 'Useful objects under five dollars' in 1939. The museum integrated industrial design and established links with manufacturing industry based on the principle of an underlying "purity" of design in these everyday-life objects. In so doing, the MoMA was a major forerunner in the assent to "higher" status of various, commodified accessories in most contemporary museums. Through "encouraging and developing the study of modern arts and the application of such arts to manufactures and practical life and the furnishing of popular instruction"[21], it initiated the 'museification' of everyday life which was to become apparent in the 1980s. "I think the time is not far away when it will be possible for all of us to live in homes furnished with objects of 'museum quality', even though their cost be trifling".[22]

1.2 The architecture: from private townhouse to urban center

"Throughout its history, The Museum of Modern Art has used architecture as a vehicle of self-renewal and regeneration, articulating and rearticulating its evolving understanding of modern art in concrete form."[23]

1.2.1 The first 50 years

The MoMA was founded in 1929 as an educational institution and opened in the Heckscher Building at the corner of Fifth Avenue and 57th Street with a staff of four and six rented rooms (4,600 square feet) for galleries and offices. In 1932, the museum moved to a townhouse owned by the Rockefeller family at 11 West 53rd Street, which constitutes part of its present site. All through the 1930s, the museum was instrumental to the definition and promotion of modern architecture in the United States. The 1932 International Style exhibition brought together European and

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[20] Ibid. p. 102.
[21] Museum's charter, *The first ten years.*
[22] Edsel Ford in 1939, on the industrial aspect of modern art, address on the opening night of the MoMA's new building.
[23] Glenn D. Lowry, in MoMA [1998], p.26.

American masters of the time and had a unique and immense impact on the architecture of the 20th century.[24]

Ever since the origins of the institution, there had been discussions in terms of a permanent home for the collections. As the institution was becoming increasingly involved in the field of architecture and was the first to present architecture as a visual art, the creation of a new 'place' was necessary in order to broaden and establish the institution's unconventional approach to the arts. As Barr would later underline, the idea of an active institution and the interest in the museum's leadership role and commitment to quality "not only in the art of our time but in architecture, too"[25] were to be considered as crucial in the design process of the 1939 building. This was obviously a position that was reflected in the final design, which came to be considered as the symbol of the institution's ideology. As Talbot Hamlin wrote at that time, "since architecture is one of the arts in which it is deeply interested, its own building had to serve as a public evidence of its aims and ideals. Thus the design [...] became, in all truth, a part of the museum collection – the only part permanently and indefinitely on display".[26]

Barr, Johnson and Hitchcock, all three instrumental figures in the museum's architecture, were preoccupied with ideas of style and a universal, modern aesthetic expression. In 1936, Barr traveled to Europe in an attempt to invite one of the International Style experts. It was nevertheless an American, Philip Goodwin, the only architect in the board of trustees who eventually got the commission.

Interestingly, the choice of the architect at such an early point in the architectural history of the museum was very much related to the institution's view on art and the role of architecture and especially, the level of control of the architect in relation to the image the museum wanted to promote. A sensitive balance existed even then between the importance of a building statement and the overpowering architectural language imposed by certain established architects who considered their work as superior interpretations of the universe.

For example, Le Corbusier was not considered as a potential architect for the building even though his concept of a "World museum" in 1927 revolutionized the idea of museum space and structure. In his design, Corbusier reconstructed his con-

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[24] According to Edward Durell Stone, quoted in MEYER [1979], p. 129.
[25] RICCIOTTI [1985], p. 51.
[26] Ibid.

cept of architectural promenade as integral part of the museum's narratives. The design was a square spiral in plan, conceived as endless, and a stepped pyramid in section. There were to be three parallel paths, three simultaneous narratives in each corridor, one for the object, one for culture and one for the context, which had given birth to the art object. Even though Corbusier's concept was very similar to the linear narratives constructed by the MoMA, his attitude of "a show salesman"[27] was not in accordance with the institution's desire for a universal, modern architectural style. The relation between individual expression and an underlying universal logic, even though unclear and much debated[28], has been one of the major points upon the MoMA has shaped its identity and position through time.

Wright was also a very important figure in American architecture at the time and one whose work had been exhibited in the International Style exhibition among the European architects that Barr had hoped to get for the new building. Wright would have been a prominent candidate, especially since there was growing criticism on the museum's promotion of European rather than American artists and designers, but he was probably considered as too strong-willed and idiosyncratic in his work for the institution to accept in the molding of its identity. It is nevertheless a fact that Wright's Guggenheim Museum in New York, in October 1959, which, under the direction of Baroness Hilla Rebay Von Ehrenwiesen[29], institutionalized "Non-objective art", was to architecturally represent the precise peak of MoMA's, and specifically Johnson's, position on the need for a museum to be a monument, a contemporary temple validating and sanctifying a distinctive facet of artistic production.
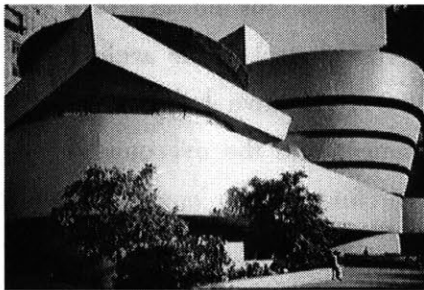
Source: Guggenheim museum web site.

Figure 2-1: The Guggenheim in New York, atrium and exhibition ramps

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[27] Corbusier's arrogance is poignantly described through the quote "One has to be conceited, sanctimonious, sure of oneself, swaggering, and never doubting- or at least not let it show. One has to be a show salesman. *Merde, alors!*" in MEYER [1979], p. 132.

[28] DUNCAN [1994], p. 102-105.

[29] For Rebay, the Guggenheim was to be "The most important museum in the world", in COOLIDGE [1989], p. 45.

Wright himself referred to it as the "memorial building", "a temple for adult education".[30] The Guggenheim outlined his personal view on exhibition patterns. He even had a strong position on the way artworks were to be displayed, freeing paintings from glass covers and massive frames and establishing a spatial structure that implied a respectful distance from the art. He wanted to "create a new *unity* between the beholder, painting and architecture."[31] After and very similar to Le Corbusier, this was probably the most marked built attempt to conceptualize a narrative, architectonic framework, where the paths themselves outlined the exhibition spaces and parameters of viewing. Through its plasticity, it moved museum architecture into the realm of the artistic, the sculptural, it established an institutional image and created a specific aesthetic atmosphere. The fact that this was an architecture that imposed the architect's curatorial patterns was nevertheless considered a negative element of the museum's architecture and after Wright's death, prior to the opening, James Johnson Sweeney, the successor of Rebay, changed the hanging and lighting patterns as well as the color of the interior walls.

MoMA's architectural tradition never considered architecture as an object. This was probably due to its side street location, which didn't provide many possibilities for a three-dimensional monument. Nonetheless, its 1939 building, even though distinctive, was meant to embody the unpretentiousness of modern culture in its antimonumental structure. The architecture was meant to be an affirmation of the International Style, a model of a new kind of cosmopolitan art museum, reflecting Barr's interest in anonymous, loft-like spaces[32]. It was an institution that used its architecture as a process of discovery rather than a static, permanent structure, ever since Barr recognized it as a *frame* in which to explore a variety of possibilities[33].

What becomes interesting at this point in MoMA's architectural identity is that Philip Johnson, the institution's de facto architect, remained the promoter of museum architecture as individual style, monumental structure and artistic statement, a position which he has entrenched in recent years by moving his own design towards sculptural forms. It is therefore interesting to see that 60 years after the MoMA dismissed Wright from the design of its original building, he called Gehry's

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[30] Quoted in COOLIDGE [1989], p. 45.
[31] Ibid, p. 46.
[32] Lowry in MoMA [1998], p. 83.
[33] Ibid., p. 88.

reinterpretation of the Guggenheim "the greatest building of our time."[34] This statement must be put side to side with the fact that the MoMA has, after so many years, reaffirmed its position in relation to renowned architects and the distinguishing factors that tend to underlie most of their buildings. After all, Gehry's interpretation of architecture, as most of the architects of his generation, has been of a personal and very distinctive style and has dominated most of his designs independently from their building type. His concept of architecture as "a three-dimensional object [... that] can be anything, [...] as long as it *fits* the program, *solves* the technical problems and *deals* with the context"[35], was doubtlessly contradictory to MoMA's desire for an architecture that articulates its own intellectual and programmatic needs.

Coming back to the contemporary discussions of a 'fashionable stylization' in the realm of architecture, the MoMA intended to avoid identification of its new building with already existing museum structures or specific architects' styles. After all, its 1939 building's architecture had constituted an international and radical break from all past museum designs. Its distinct marble, glass and metal, International Style façade totally disrupted the unity formed by its neighboring town houses. Since then, the museum's soul-searching has at no time adopted or been associated to other museum models. This practice was not one to change in its most recent expansion. As we will later examine in depth, there was clearly no desire to appropriate an established practitioner's creative style or a designer's 'prêt-à-porter' line of forms, or an artist's collection item. As it was distinctly illustrated in one of their most recent statements, what the institution wanted did not exist and they "couldn't shop for a building the same way [they] shop for a painting".[36]

MoMA's architecture has always been responsive to the changes in time and urban context, to the changing nature of patronage of the arts and the changing status of artistic production. It has perpetually evolved and has in no way adopted a definite form.

As the institution grew and matured, it had become increasingly apparent that there was need for additional spaces to exhibit their collection. In the 1950s, Philip Johnson designed a seven storied building, the West wing, the Grace Rainey Rogers Annex. According to the architect, this had been a temporary structure from the

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[34] GEHRY [1997], p. 372.
[35] GEHRY [1997], p. 372.
[36] Riley quoted in *MoMA's Boys*, New York, March 31, 1997.

beginning and was replaced by the new west wing in 1984. It basically provided office, storage and library spaces. In 1953, he completed the design of the Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Sculpture Garden, which has been considered as probably the museum's most precious 'gallery room'.[37] In 1956, the museum acquired an additional building[38] for office use at 23 West 53rd Street and in 1960, two adjacent townhouses were donated to the museum that would be later replaced by the East wing.

Source: Museum of Modern Art annual report 1962-1963, p. 14.

Figure 2-2: The Sculpture Garden

In 1963, the MoMA acquired the Whitney Museum building, located at 20 West 54th Street and Johnson converted it in administrative spaces (the "North wing"). In 1964, the institution expanded again through the construction of the East wing, which doubled its gallery spaces and provided totally flexible, loft-like spaces of 50 × 100 square feet.[39]

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[37] It was one of the prerequisites of all expansions and especially the latest one, that "the Garden should retain its current location and configuration", quoted in MoMA [1998], p. 153 and that also "new exterior spaces should be as inviting and well-designed as the Sculpture Garden", p. 287.

[38] This was a townhouse by Hunt & Hunt, which would house MoMA's bookstore until its demolition for the 1984 expansion.

[39] According to Paola Antonelli, Associate curator of architecture and design, when these galleries open to occupy the entire extent of the floor, opening views from 53rd Street to the Garden, one realizes that they are truly remarkable places to exhibit and enjoy modern and contemporary art.

1.2.2 The Pelli addition

The next phase of MoMA's physical expansion has been subjected to extensive debates and criticism and has been of a value that the institution itself has had to question and reinterpret in view of the latest expansion. It appears that at the time of the commissioning of the project, the museum was undergoing significant financial problems. Even though it received financial help from national and state endowments for the arts, it never received city government money, as did other New York museums[40]. At that time, there was an important lack of gallery space, 85% of the collection was in storage and rotation was estimated to be every 25 years. Every time the museum had grown and expanded, there had been an increase in operating expenses and this condition allowed very few choices to the institution. Unless the museum sold its air rights to a commercial developer, allowing a daring and controversial real estate deal which would involve, in a controlled way, both museum and commercial developments, there would be no way to keep up with the increasing public attendance and art collection. Most importantly, there would be no choice but to reduce staff and services, a position that was contradictory to the institution's ideological position.

Even though the connection of the museum with entrepreneurial development was perceived as a controversial mixture of art and aesthetics with commerce and financial interests, this was the only way for the museum to attain financial stability through self-funding. The commercial relationship that the institution established in order to generate money for its expansion was justified since it would provide the necessary $55 million for a 44-story condominium next to the museum.[41] This was a scheme that also generated important income through tax-exemptions. Even though this arrangement imposed a model and plan by the architect Richard Weinstein that indicated the exact height and placement of the tower, this had already been part of a 1969 proposal by Philip Johnson and John Burgee for an office tower that would replace the West wing, and was since then perceived as a way of financing the rest of the project.[42]

What became apparent with the 1984 expansion was the relationship of museum architecture with the powers that determine its institutional identity and strategic

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[40] MEYER [1979], p. 137.
[41] DAVIS [1990], p. 156.
[42] MoMA [1998], p. 84.

planning. In the original building, the role of architecture was to juxtapose the ex-
isting pluralistic American architecture of its time with a new, cohesive, modern style.
Just as was the role of the art, the building served to "proselytize"[43] visitors. As the
collection assumed a canonical stature, the museum grew into a well-established place
in the psychic, urban and cultural life of the contemporary city but also attained in-
ternational acclaim and leadership in the field, the different departments strengthened
their views and positions and the institution became increasingly curatorially driven.
As a result of that, there was no need for the architecture to affirm the status of the
institution. For a long time it was only perceived as a means to simply respond to the
needs that rose from the constant growth of both collection and audience. When
Glenn Lowry referred to the museum's expansion, he described it as inevitable but
"reactive in its development"[44]. It was nevertheless a fact that Richard Oldenburg, the
museum's director at the time of the Pelli expansion, stated that the objectives and
priorities of that project were clearer than they had been in the past[45]. For the
museum to afford an expansion under the possibilities of funding at that time and
under the supervision of a strong curatorial and administrative staff, the Tower was
the only solution obvious to the institution. After all, the patronage in the arts had
significantly changed through time and the trustees were no longer able to support the
museum's expenses and needs in salaries, physical space or a constantly rising art
market. The trustees were becoming people who could attract, rather than personally
invest resources.[46] Last but not least, except for the public areas that were shaping
the institution's social, political and financial role and assuring its operation as a civic
center "in the center of complex interactions that characterize commerce and the
culture of public life"[47], the architecture was a "[...] shell in which the architect had
no impact [...] the curators determined the articulation and style of the exhibition
spaces which are the bulk – and certainly the heart – of the museum."[48] It was a
conscious choice that the new addition would play a *background* role to the 1939
building.[49] The stylistic directions, according to which architecture was to support the
goals of its curators, required the neutral aesthetic of plain, white walls that the
MoMA had instituted. This was a project where the cultural icon that the architecture

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[43] Arthur Drexler, Director of the department of architecture and design, quoted in ARTNEWS [1982], p. 58.
[44] MoMA [1998], p. 84.
[45] ARTNEWS [1982], p. 57.
[46] Ibid. p. 59.
[47] WEIL [1983], p. 89.
[48] William S. Rubin, director of painting and sculpture in 1984, quoted in ARTNEWS [1982], p. 58.
[49] Pelli in *Modern Architecture for modern art*, Architectural Record, October 1984, p. 166.

was to serve was tied to the institution's historic precedent and pedagogical philosophy but also to its process of evolution and institutional transformation under a changing society.

Since the MoMA validated the role of architecture in its institutional identity through the creation of an archetype for a museum of modern art in 1939, it has been critically judged on its authority and control over social and cultural values, beliefs and even 'capitalist rituals'[50]. This is the point where much of the misunderstanding probably lies in terms of the role of consumption in the architecture of the art museum. The distinction is situated on MoMA's institutionalization not of specific styles of architecture but of processes of making the architecture that mostly reflects the museum identity's inherent qualities and values at a given time.

What became increasingly apparent in the expansions since the 1980s was:

♦ That the transformation of the MoMA as an institution that produces ideology under the forces of changing contemporary realities, urban conditions and social relations, was being intensely reflected in its architectural forms.

♦ That its expansions did not merely symbolize the overpowering alteration of the museum's identity by corporate capitalism.

♦ That the architecture was not a mechanism that structures and mediates a set experience of art that is based on a prescribed, manipulative system that promotes a chaotic, disorienting condition through which the visitor becomes indoctrinated in a specific visual culture, but rather allows for a form of democratic, public space to occur within its structure.

It is important to realize that there is a different kind of ritual being formed in the MoMA over the last 20 years; one that allows the institution to state its goals while allowing for a balance between past and present, private and public, intimate and social; one that is not attached to a set of forms that in turn dictates the experience of

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[50] See DUNCAN and WALLACH's critique of the MoMA [1978], where they analyze how the MoMA developed into an institution that translates and promotes individualism and alienation from public life and shared social experiences, as well as a monument to corporate relations as outlined in our late-capitalist society. It is nevertheless important to note that while Duncan seems to have held the position of this article and even reinforced it in her book *Civilizing rituals* [1994], WALLACH [1992] has revised his position, embracing MoMA's unique cultural character under the shaping forces of contemporary society and artistic production as reflected in its 1984 expansion.

art,[51] but one that derives from the conditions through which art becomes available and accessible to an expanding public.

Consumption in turn has expanded from being one of need for survival of the institution and therefore we can see how in its latest expansion, the museum redefines and reinforces its contemporary role on the level of experience of the institution's identity.
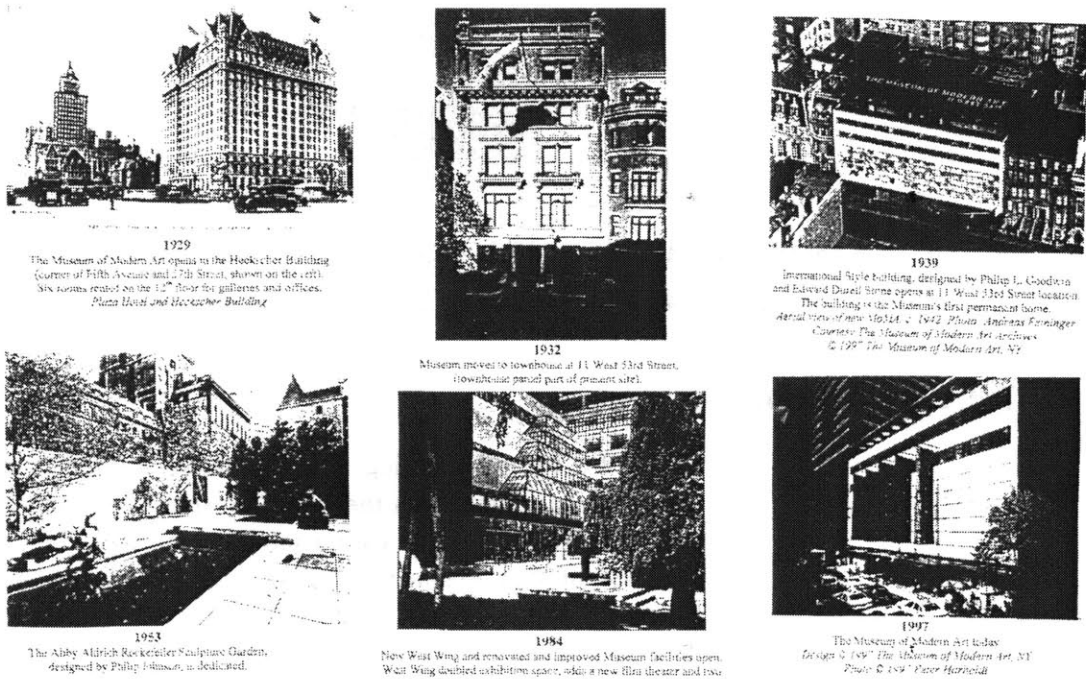
Source: MoMA archives, MoMA department of communications
Figure 2-3: Highlights of MoMA's architectural evolution, 1929-1997

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[51] Ibid. p. 51. It is interesting to see that in their quote of Talbot Hamlin that "at a glance at the interior shows that the great thermolux window has little relation to what exists behind it – two stories of galleries and one of offices. It is not logical...", the authors more than contradict their initial argument. What this reflects is the extent to which politics, individuals and the principles that constitute the experience of art did not affect the building type or degenerate it in any way, even at such early days in the history of the museum.
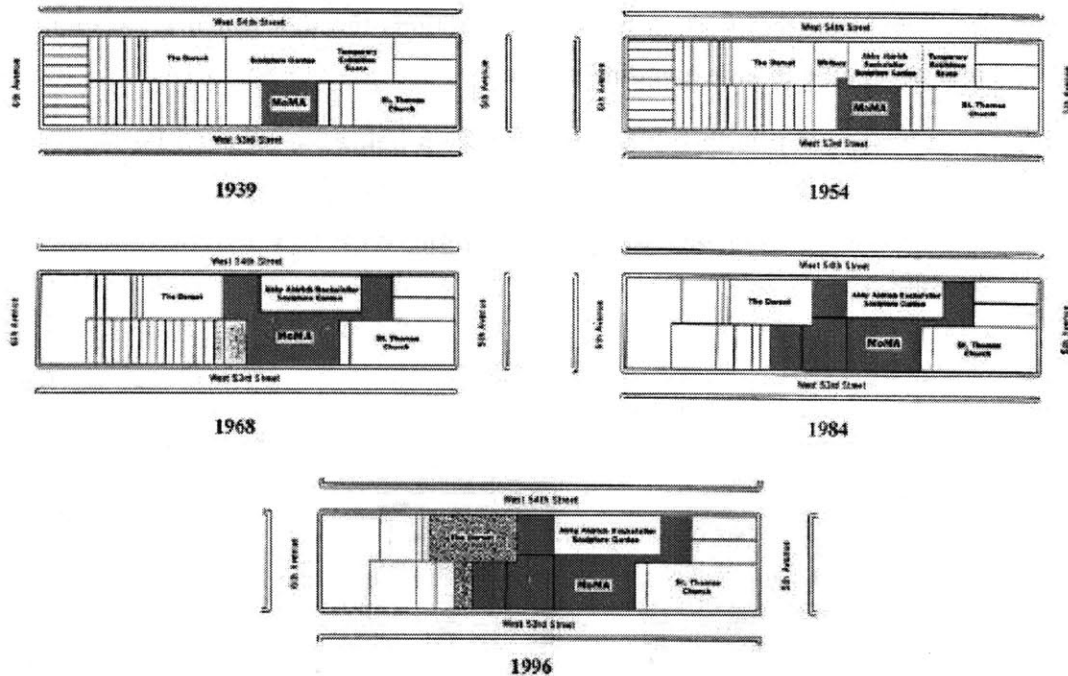
Source: *MoMA archives, MoMA department of communications*

Figure 2-4: The growth of the MoMA, 1939-1997

2. THE LATEST EXPANSION PROJECT

> "[...] We started thinking about what we wanted to achieve, and to what extent was the need for space for contemporary art the driving for an expansion, or was it to be a consequence of that expansion but not necessarily the principal element".[52]

So which were the pronounced reasons behind the expansion and the objectives that the Museum of Modern Art had set in view of its expansion? According to the museum's history, there has and will always be a need for more gallery space to expose the growing collection. The new expansion was to evolve with a focus on the institution's qualitative rather than quantitative aspirations.[53] The pressing need was to redefine the institution's identity through its architecture before moving into the 21st century. It was about determining the *environment* that would constitute the museum in a changing culture and society as well as the *network of physical relationships* that this would consequently create.

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[52] Riley in MoMA [1998], p. 30.
[53] Ibid., "The real issue was about the *kinds* of spaces we needed".

It became apparent at an early stage of the discussions launched by the museum, that there was already some sense of what the museum's mission was going to be and of which elements the museum intended to hold on to. There were however many uncertainties around the museum's role under the advancing and new technologies, a transforming and unpredictable artistic production and an expanding international culture.

It appeared that after 70 years the MoMA would have to review its objectives and outline the image that would be reflected in its architecture, and expand the latter's operative character. From the 1939 "laboratory"[54], to the 1984 'shopping mall'[55] and 'air-craft carrier lobby'[56] of the Garden Hall, there had been discussions on the controlling power of architecture over the works of art and the public's circulation patterns. Even as a neutral background that did not interfere with the original configuration of MoMA's white box display ideology, and as a public space that was increasingly winning over its place in the urban scene, the 1984 expansion had been blamed for disconnecting the public from the artistic and spiritual realms and propelling it towards a commodified, material culture.

On the other hand the inherent character of the institution as an authenticating ground for the value and status of objects was seen to enhance anything material as long as this was surrounded by the museum's aura. This position has been the one that postmodern discussions tend to characterize as one of increasing 'dematerialization' of objects. There was therefore an awkward situation where at the same time the museum was understood as a device that distanced people from high culture through 'theme park' services and activities and on the other hand abused of its role within the community in order to attribute high status, prestige and monetary value to any possible object. The most important challenge for the MoMA would be to confront the different and often contradicting interpretations on its role in the contemporary 'late capitalist'[57] society, and provide maybe not an answer but a ground for new questions on a different level of perceiving consumption and cultural practices.

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[54] Barr's definition of the museum, see MoMA [1998], p. 88.

[55] WALLACH [1992]

[56] R. A. Stern, in MoMA [1998], p. 117.

[57] According to Jameson's critique of postmodern condition, the cultural logic of late capitalism underlies, regulates and shapes all physical and intellectual structures. Rosalind Krauss's article on *The cultural logic of the Late capitalist museum* builds on this argument in the realm of museum production in terms of 'simulacral experience rather than aesthetic immediacy', See October, Fall 90, pp. 3-17.

2.1 Documenting the process

Before presenting an overview of the expansion process, we must underline that the analysis that follows is mainly based on the documentation made available by the institution and through curators of the museum's department of architecture and design. The data is the official material that the museum has chosen to present in relation to the design process. The fact that the MoMA chose to make public information that is generally inaccessible, was probably not surprising if one thinks of Alfred Barr's policy of making public material that was related to the museum in order to attract media and the public's attention and to show that it made sense for things to happen in the way they did within the museum's structure. Still, the idea of a competition and especially of one of unusual format was a radical deviation from MoMA's decision-making strategies. On the one hand, there would be no outside judges in the Architect Selection Committee, which was constituted by the director, 9 trustees and 2 curators of the museum (see table 2-1) and on the other hand, the interest was in conceptual schemes rather than finished designs. Instead of allowing for a wide range of submissions or simply picking one architect according to the museum's past, private criteria, there was a set number of contestants[58] belonging to "the next generation of usual suspects"[59] and "the director took an unusually liberal attitude in terms of allowing and encouraging public debate."[60] One shouldn't nevertheless forget that Lowry was apparently a successful fund-raiser for the expansion of the Art Gallery of Ontario[61].

Museum Director	Glenn Lowry
Trustees	Sid R. Bass, Chairman
	Ronald S. Lauder, Chairman
	Agnes Gund, President
	David Rockefeller
	Sr. Marchall S. Cogan
	Jerry I. Speyer
Advisors, Members Of Board Of Trustees	Edward Larrabee Barnes
	Barbara Jakobson
	Philip Johnson
Staff Members	Terence Riley, Chief Curator, Architecture and Design
	John Elderfield, Deputy Director of Curatorial Affairs

Table 2-1: The Architect Selection Committee

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[58] "There was a natural attraction to that generation which would be the leading architects of the next century." Riley quoted in MUSCHAMP [1997].
[59] NEW YORK [1997], p. 40.
[60] Riley, quoted in NEW YORK [1997].
[61] Andrew Decker in ARTNEWS [1997], p. 132.

Even though this public presentation of the design process was most probably not as apolitical as the choice of designers and competition format were supposed to be, it has been a major contribution in the understanding of the museum's choice of the final design. Even though this is an institution that seems to no longer need justification of its politics of action, it obviously sensed the need to describe its position in relation to the public and urban culture in order to inspire recognition of the project and its expense[62] as well as attract future funding for this genuinely "urban museum".[63] This was an initiative that proved to be fruitful since the City of New York has made the commitment to provide $65 Million for the project. It has been after all since the 1984 expansion[64] that the museum has actually exposed and proved the need for financial partnerships in order to assure its funding, to "further the cause of the arts in the country, and to help insure the cultural vitality of major urban centers."[65]

In this study, there are nevertheless issues that have remained strictly confidential to this date and our analysis has therefore been unable to cover. As probably anticipated, no clear statement has been made to this date as to the choice of the ten architects that participated in the Charette, except that they will be most likely the generation to lead and mark the new century's early architectural production[66]. The only official statement made on this point was that "these architects, the committee felt, explored the possibilities of modern architecture in new and interesting ways that expanded and challenged the parameters of modern architecture"[67].

Even though the flow of information (see figure 2-x) from the museum to the architects and vise versa has been more or less outlined in the official publication, there is no data on the details of the discussions that occurred during the information sessions or the travel of the project's director, the museum's director and the Chief curator of Architecture and Design to the finalists' offices in July and August 1997.

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[62] The project is currently estimated to cost $650 Million, MoMA Press office release, April 24th, 1998.
[63] "[...] Which captures the pulse and the beat of the City of New York", Glenn Lowry, quoted in MoMA Press office release, April 24th, 1998.
[64] See more in DUPEYRON [1978]. And also *The New realism: incentive funding* and *Marketing the Museum of Modern Art: case studies*, in BLACKALL & MEEK [1992].
[65] Lowry, MoMA Press office release, April 24th, 1998.
[66] This is a fact that can be strongly debated, especially judging by Mr. Taniguchi's age indicating that he belongs to the generation of architects that was conspicuously excluded from the competition.
[67] Lowry in MoMA [1998], p. 16.
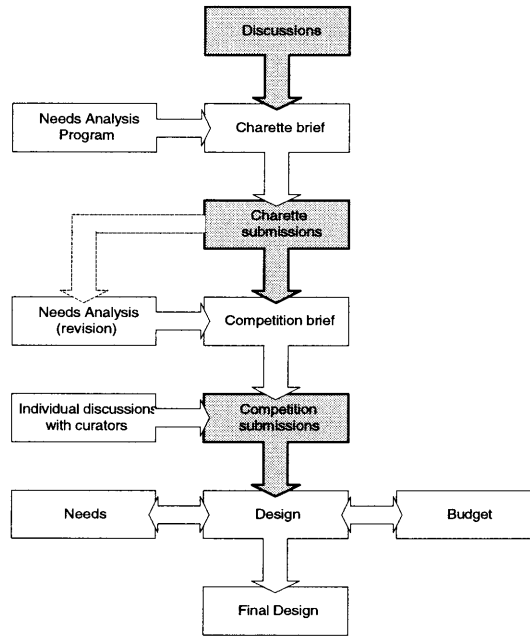
Source: Based on MoMA [1998].

Figure 2-5: The flow of design information

Last but not least, it is important to note that the format chosen by the MoMA in presenting its expansion project, through a publication, two exhibitions on the Charette and Competition submissions and a regularly updated Web based documentation, is a significant breakthrough to the prevailing inaccessibility of the underlying tensions of design processes. As such, it has been considered as a major resource and indication of the questions and driving forces that underlie the chosen design and that are aspiring to ultimately mold our experience in the future MoMA and possibly an example for other[68] modern and contemporary art museums.

2.2 Overview of the expansion process

The process that has been presented in detail was constituted of five stages evolving from a more general but restricted brainstorming session towards a more specific and lucid outline of the institution's purpose. In an attempt the present the process in a more intelligible way the following diagrams document the sequence and meander of operations.

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[68] See for instance the Cincinnati Contemporary Arts Center web-site for a detailed presentation of its architectural competition and commission to Zaha Hadid.

Until October 2, 1996		**Extended staff discussions** **Two trustee committees (Expansion, Architect Selection)** **Purchase of Dorset Hotel** **Drafting of Mission and Executive Statements**

Pocantico conference October 4-6, 1996 moderator: curator panelists: 1 architect, 1 artist, 1 museum director, 1 critic/scholar	opening remarks	**Director, curator, trustees:** **what creates the environment we call a museum?**
	conversation I	**The relationship between art, visitor and architecture**
	conversation II	**Architecture, education, and art: number of narratives?**
	conversation III	**Relationship between technology and architecture**
	conversation IV	**Contemporary values reflected in museum architecture**
	Summary session	**Ontological and experiential needs** **No formula for a great museum** **Architectural style is not important**
		GUIDING PRINCIPLES **Eisenman: theorizing of space, not architecture per se** **Koolhaas: urbanity more than architecture** **Serra: need for a new model of museum**

"Imagining the MoMA in the 21st century" lecture series October 22- December 12, 1996	Director's observations	**No typology, no single story** **Architecture: mediating force between the experience of the city and experience of the museum**
	The idea of a modern museum	**Rigourousness for permanent material** **flexibility for things that go through the museum** **managing without controlling too much**
	The Museum and society	**Transformation of the museum's public and social role** **No fixed or correct view of context** **Need for variety of experiences**
	Rethinking the modern	**5 concepts: (1) heterotopic institution, (2) comfort with both the status quo and future programmatic and physical diversity, (3) critical space, (4) Interiority and (5) nature of urban culture and not context**

Architect Selection Committee, Board of Trustees January 8-13, 1997	**Review of a broad group of architects** **Selection of 10 architects**

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Note: Gray stages are not documented.

Figure 2-6: Stages in MoMA's expansion design process

The members of the discussion sessions whose statements were transcribed in MoMA's publication belonged to the following fields.

Anthropology and Ethnic Studies
Fine Arts - Arts
Architecture and Design criticism
Architecture
History – Art history
Religion
Film and Video
Education
Photography
Museum administration
Museum studies – curatorial affairs
Journalism

Source: Based on MoMA [1998], pp. 7-141.

Figure 2-7: The participating fields

It is interesting to observe that in the extensive and exploratory exchange of ideas that preceded the definition of the museum's programmatic briefs and where questions of experience and human perception quickly became the dominant concern, there was no representative from the fields of psychology and/or cognitive science. The museum's choice not to involve directly any specialists in this area of research, to avoid maybe a normative and generalized approach to the public's cognitive and behavioral operations, was probably meant as an additional

demonstration of the institution's focus on criticality and reservation towards universally prescribed, scientific patterns.

3. ANALYSIS OF THE EXPANSION PROCESS

> "At no time since its founding, however has the museum had such a unique opportunity to undertake such an extensive redefinition of itself".

In the analysis of the design process, it rapidly became apparent that the expansion project was an important moment for the institution to redefine its identity through its architecture. From the early discussions, it was made obvious that the museum wanted more than just a quantitative change to its structure and in order to achieve this objective, it had to outline clearly its goals, which were initially very vague in their expression. In the opening remarks, the director outlined the general approach to the project as a "nexus of relationships that actually create an *environment* that we call museum,"[69] the trustees expressed their thoughts about what constituted the major qualities that were to be retained from the existing, and desired in the future, buildings. Last but most significantly, the curator of paintings expressed the institution's commitment to the modern movement and called attention to the need for architecture to:

a) Reinvent the notion of critical thinking, established by the institution and thus allow the possibility for a "self-elected" elite to experience and learn about art,

b) Provide a sense of mainstream, punctuated by series of alternative stories, in the attempt to meet a broader and diverse audience rather than a narrow one,

c) Express that universalism and individualism come out of something different from an "enlightenment trap".

What would characterize the discussion sessions was an accumulation of ideas and arguments around the structure, operations and experience of the future institution. The structure of the discussions allowed for a multitude of positions to be expressed and even though there was always a basic theme or question, the participants moved in all possible directions in order to most accurately represent their field

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[69] Lowry in MoMA [1998], p. 30.

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and viewpoint. Many issues were presented in a rather abstract way and, as Terence Riley observed, the conference was inconclusive. It nevertheless set the ground and major lines of thought that were further elaborated and established through the program and the architects' proposals. Above all, it expressed the understanding that there can be *no precise formula, or prototype*[70] for the design of museum institutions. The one paradigm it offered however was for architects *not* to try designing a museum[71].

Before going into the specific traits of the expansion, it is important to note that in reviewing museum production of the last 20 years there was a general acknowledgement and consent in the fact that:

a) Every museum of modern and contemporary art is an "idiosyncratic building designed to be unique rather than typical", that

b) "The nature of contemporary art is to constantly challenge preconceived notions of art" and that

c) Museums have become "catalysts that transform the contents of the institution into events and not only places for contemplation and study but also venues for provocation and debate."[72]

3.1 Setting the parameters of the project

> "Architecture is a catalyst for the museum [...] not only an object for us — a shell, a space, an environment in which to articulate a program — [but] also a *subject* [...] one of the principal proponents of our larger collection".[73]

All along the initial, private[74] in nature, discussions that preceded the Charette and Competition, there was a tendency to emphasize two main issues that are today dominant in the approach of museum design. One was that there could be no generalization in approach, no typology, no specific spatial organization that will determine a precise building type, which was an assessment that left open questions and critique on "appropriate" forms, dominant functions and notions of set criteria for viewing and appreciating the maximum and optimum experience of art. The other

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[70] Riley, in MoMA [1998], p. 72.
[71] Ibid., reference to Eisenman.
[72] Lowry, in MoMA [1998], p. 80.
[73] Lowry, in MoMA [1998], p. 30.
[74] These were attended by a limited number of MoMA professionals and invited guests.

was that *the nature of urban culture* and *not context*[75] plays a molding role to the urban identity of the institution. The museum was therefore caught between an endless potential in the programming of its interior and the restrictive forces of the surrounding urban fabric and character.

Defining its architecture as a subject and not object was a very poignant remark in relation to many contemporary critiques around museum buildings and the value of their more or less elaborate formal expressions. Still, this was a museum that no longer needed to shock through its architecture, in the way that it had done with its 1939 building. There was no major need for an architectural statement that would provide recognition, definition and affirmation of a collection, as has been the case in other recently built institutions. It was nevertheless important for the MoMA to reaffirm its status quo at a time where: a) being *modern* is a vastly debated concept and b) the multiple expansions had brought into question the institution's position according to a changing urban fabric and social reality that were both seen as transforming and to a great extent degenerating powers over its integrity and mission[76].

It became obvious that the museum would have to expand the notion of its "bold and uncompromising"[77] character from what was believed to be a controlling model[78] of collecting and presenting modern art to a managing process, where the contemporary realities and values of its expanding audience would be reflected.

The points upon which the museum had to rethink and filter its identity, as described in the Pocantico conference[79], were the following:

a) The *relation of art and architecture* as a response to changing conditions of production and consumption as these pertain to the status of object and a general discomfort with contemporary architecture's definition of space, place

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[75] In MoMA [1998], Riley specified the importance of architecture's relationship to the city, more as an exchange of codes rather than a model imposed by the contextual city structure.

[76] "If you are looking for an identity crisis, try 1964", Arthur Drexler in ARTNEWS [1982]. Also a number of articles on the 1984 expansion describe the controversies around the Tower and the incentives of the addition, both came from the public and certain directly related members of the museum. As an example, this is described in *Modern architecture for modern art*, Architectural Record, October 1984, p. 166 and in DUPEYRON [1978].

[77] Agnes Gund, MoMA's president, in MoMA [1998], p. 34.

[78] It is interesting at this point to see Varnedoe's position on this subject, in MoMA [1998], p. 71.

[79] These conferences are noted I to IV in the following sections. They can all be found in MoMA [1998].

and form[80] and its role in the viewing of art and captivating of the viewer's attention.

b) The need for *clarity and no chaos*[81] through *choice and not manipulation*[82] in relation to *education* and the number of master and/or alternative narratives that should be offered to the audience in order to achieve better communication by providing potential for knowledge and intersubjective restructuring of artist's consciousness[83] through *movement and not forcing*[84] of itinerary or experience.

c) The role of *technology* as both a *tool*[85] for education, exchange, variety of experience as well as a *way to transfer power from an object to its beholder*[86] who can through the use of technology interact and manipulate its meaning according to his/her cognitive map.

d) The reflection of contemporary values by allowing for mental associations[87] in the way that people relate to the material and immaterial world, of the architecture *becoming a process*[88] that enhances the experience and transmits the aura of a variety of direct and/or indirect contacts with objects and mostly by providing a social environment for people, allowing both for a sense of intimacy and community in a place that is part of the complex, ruptured[89] whole which is New York City.

These first conversations allowed the institution to further understand the nature of its expansion and outline its goals and priorities. Even though no definite answers derived from this brainstorming session, there were clearer and more operative indications as to what would be the directions to follow in the expansion. It became obvious that the future design would have to deal with both *ontological* issues related to the structure and operation of museum institutions and *experiential* ones in terms of interior articulation, generation and support of experiences notably in the context of a

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[80] In MoMA [1998], Isosaki described the contemporary relation between container and contained as problematic. Architects are trying to be artists and vice versa (see Conversation III).
[81] Gopnic in Conversation II.
[82] Cuno in Conservation II
[83] Irwin in Conversation II.
[84] Elderfield in Conversation II
[85] Walsh in Conversation III.
[86] Cuno, Ibid.
[87] De Bretteville in Conversation IV.
[88] Koolhaas in in Conversation IV.
[89] Riley in MoMA [1998].

leading financial and cultural center. Last but not least, as will be presented in the following paragraphs, the position that the museum adopted in terms of these major issues was deeply conscious of and rooted in the cultural character of consumption as a dominant feature and driver of New York's society and urban culture.

3.2 Addressing consumption in the project

Without abandoning any of its founding principles as a unique institution in a unique place, the MoMA had to rethink the distinctive nature of its desired experience as the driver of its expansion. It was therefore not surprising to see that, upon entering the public lectures and panels, the MoMA's director clearly stated that the institution:

a) *Could not rely on the museum's past history or any other* for establishing a future model,

b) That its architecture had the obligation to *argue for a particular understanding* of what the Museum of Modern Art will be at the beginning of 21st century, and

c) It could no longer be reactive in its development but should *state clearly and effectively the goals of the institution as it wishes to be*, not as it should have been.[90]

As an urban place, the MoMA has always been distinguished, as the trustees stated at the beginning of the Pocantico conference, by intimacy, its location on a side street yet close to one of the world's major commercial axis and a quiet garden in a city where speed overpowers everyday life. These particular qualities would have to be conserved, reconfigured to match the meaning they had acquired through time and be strengthened by the institution's new organization and structure. It was also apparent that the museum would have to balance the promotion of the institution and increase its public's awareness of art through contemplation and critical thinking while responding to the necessity to attract and stimulate people with many and diverse interests. Adding to these, it would have to strive for a clear position in the long debated arguments between commerce and culture as this was an institution that

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[90] Lowry in MoMA[1998], pp. 75-94.

had definitely moved from an originally residential atmosphere to one that was part a commercial zone[91].

At first glance, one could read the museum's statements as entirely disconnected from any manifestation of consumer culture. After all it can be argued that differentiation and distinction constituted the foundation of individual expression in all fields that concern structuring of identities prior to our highly consumptive era. However, with the merging of consumer and cultural institutions, which was already ambiguous in the 1940s − one has to look at the press[92] of that period to notice that the metamorphosis of the public and its relation to the object was already changing due to the museum's pleasurable and less intimidating environment − museums broke through to the general public and increased their audience in both number and class. This is a condition that, as observed by Eisenman in Conversation IV, no museum today would be willing to go against for the sake of an "authentic experience" of art and, in MoMA's case, "Lowry would be a short-lived director"[93]. What consequently became important to determine was not the occurrence but rather the nature of this ambiguous relationship in its contemporary manifestation.

It is a fact that all along the discussions on MoMA's expansion, the role of consumption was an important consideration that appeared in several manners, particularly in relation to the shaping of the institution's identity. As a space for *cultural consumption*, a *theme park*, a *house for commodity*, *attraction* in terms of show business, a species endangered from *shopping activities* that attempt to alter its primary objective and above all a *machine for the production of aura* that *changes the art object's aura for [mass] consumption* thus altering the status of every artistic object and its authenticity[94], the MoMA could simply not be dissociated from consumption. Even in terms of its educational material, one of the museum's curators brought into attention the fact that *sponsors*, even though exterior to the museum, tended to be the main producers[95] of exhibition material. It was hence vital for the institution to

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[91] This point is quite amusing if one thinks that prior to the townhouse location, the first house of the collection was actually a rented commercial space on Fifth Avenue.

[92] See *Where art meets the public*, New York Tribune, Dec. 5, 1943, on MoMA as part of the New York scene. The museum's expanding services make it the "one museum where visitors don't have to stand in awe before Art with a capital A".

[93] Eisenman in Conversation IV.

[94] Respectively Taylor in Conversation I, Isozaki in Conversation III, Cohen in Conversation III, Koolhaas in Conversation IV and Serra in Conversation IV

[95] Brandy in Conversation III.

assume a position in regard to these arguments and integrate this in its marketing image.

The fact that culture and consumption are today interwoven was also addressed in the public lectures. As it turned out, Lowry's observation of the museum's architecture as the "means of giving definition to a specific set of spatial needs that reflect the unique location and programmatic needs of the MoMA", brought into discussion the driving forces behind museum institutions and the way these relate to consumptive processes, society and the conceptualization of physical structures.

In the *Idea of a modern museum*, Jorge Klor de Alva, Professor of Ethnic studies and Anthropology, summarized museum typology as a triangle of forces that shape each institution according to patron, marketing and/or social-oriented initiatives, thus turning it into an amorphous phenomenon. He also expressed his belief that upon moving away from the fully patron-based institution, the marketing and social museums were the most significant forces in the creation of the modern museum. In a different perspective, Henri Zerner, Professor of Fine Arts, described the three museum typologies as storeroom, temple and educator where the challenge lay in the possibility and the means to determine and shape the institution's educational function. Both descriptions related to the role of museum architecture in the shaping of *specific types of experience* according to a variety of narrative incentives. Their common point was the need for the institution to be distinguished from other popular images, to be differentiated, diversified, to continue being open to a wider public and different social strata while holding on to its spiritual character. Above all, the basic concern expressed was for meaning to result from an exchange between stable and flexible structures and in no way from an empowerment of one over the other. Interestingly, there was a question presented by one of the audience members suggesting that there was no mention in the discussion of the role of capitalism, elitism and the channeling of social, political and economic forces in the institution. The answer to this point called attention to what seems to be the problematic issue in the argument against the commercialization of cultural institutions, which is that it has become in itself a canon, seen to affect all creative processes. It has become a way of approaching all human establishments and identifying the extent to which their founding qualities have degenerated under the pressure of a manipulating power stirred by economic and political powers. And what the MoMA has distinctly marked all along this process is that, even though it recognizes its position as an important part of New York's

economic fabric[96], its identity is neither characterized through a generalized model of action nor imposing a late capitalist ritual structure.

Probably the most important point in the discussions was Helen Searing's in *The museum and society*, which addressed the issue of contemporary museology as "the decoding of the role those institutions have played in society."[97] It is after all upon this role that all critique of the public and social role of this cultural institution has concentrated and it is through this that it has seen "the agenda of states, classes, and groups penetrate and shape cultural practices and acts of communication". One may choose to agree or disagree with Searing's reference to Marcia Pointon's description of museology as offering "the opportunity to understand artifacts functioning neither as isolated cultural icons or masterpieces, nor as emblems of personal wealth, but as components in a perpetually shifting language that works to create understandings of concepts such as 'the past, 'the present', 'art', 'nation', 'individual', allowing us to recognize "structures of power in a modern world and how those powers function". If one replaces the word museology by architecture, we recognize immediately the main subject of discussion in the field of contemporary practice. It is a fact that we have today recognized the direct or indirect exercise of economic and political forces in our built environment so the issue becomes no longer to seek for its symptoms but to make it operate under more constructive ways. Museum architecture has probably more than any other kind of architecture manifested the cultural transformations of our era. What becomes the question is to which extent this has affected its building type and to which extent it has abused of its public and social role. Assuming that no cultural institution can be ideologically neutral, how does museum architecture in itself affect the nature of cultural experience?

Even though there was no conclusion on this topic, and once again there was an attack to the formalism of architectural expression[98], the idea that came through was that there is a major need to rethink spatially the contemporary goals of the museum institution and abandon the idea that there is a specific, correct way of viewing and consuming our material and spiritual patrimony. The role of architecture becomes to provide a number of experiences rather than search for one or all ideal solutions. Under a changing social reality, it is up to each institution to assume a position and

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[96] In MoMA [1998], R. M. Stern describes the context of MoMA as "commercialism to the nth degree", p. 114.
[97] Searing, in MoMA [1998], p. 109.
[98] "Most architects have been interested – quite naturally I suppose – in architectural expression than gallery design ... we do very exciting buildings but there is problem with the spaces art is shown". R. M. Stern, in MoMA [1998], p. 115.

determine the nature and number that best represents the stories they have chosen to tell while allowing for individuals to imaginatively use the exhibited material in constructing their own, personal narratives.

What by now is beginning to be clear is the urge and will, from all fields related to museum culture, to break away from the mold of architecture as a container excitingly regenerated through a variety of formal interpretations, and begin thinking of design from the inside out, around three pivotal axes. These are: a) *physical space*, as this relates to the institution's identity, b) *urban socio-cultural setting*, within a highly commercialized zone while there is need to hold on to its mission, and c) awareness of *distinction of works of art*, by providing for a differentiated kind of experience from the original universal unidirectional one.[99] Museum architecture for the MoMA becomes therefore a dynamic interaction, a network variously linking these three nodes that in turn form the individuality of each museum institution.

3.2.1 Building identity through architecture

What follows is an attempt to structure the design process from the very general and abstract ideas that were discussed in the first stage of the expansion project to the way these were eventually formulated for the architects. By testing the extent to which the three features of consumer culture, that were identified in Chapter One, appeared in the design process, the intent is not to prove or disprove its existence but rather to understand its character and status in the architectural design process.

3.2.1.1 Identification of main intentions

> "... For the reputation of the MoMA will rest upon its successes more than its plan. In the field of modern art chances must be taken. The museum should continue to be a pioneer: bold and uncompromising" [100]

Since the beginning of the expansion project, there was an obvious sensitivity to what it is that will actually reflect the MoMA's institutional identity, its image. The design had to reflect the institution's personal history, and be linked to its memory of place and to its specific urban culture. Especially the latter point seemed to be the

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[99] "Will it unlock the Modern from its old vision of art history and allow it more flexibility? ... Or will it just mean bigger rooms, more art, more restaurants, shops and bookstores? One hopes not." in Michael Kimmelman in *A renewed Modern: More of a museum or more modern?*, The New York Times, Tuesday, November 22, 1994.
[100] Paul J. Sachs on MoMA, quoted in RASMUSSEN [1979].

guiding principle that would help establish the museum's intimate dimension, would enhance the role of the garden and would accentuate the particular quality of being a "street museum". The city of New York, despite its strict zoning codes and densely *gridded* fabric, was a fertile ground in inspirations and diversity of cultures. Above all, the institution had to establish its role not only as the "foremost museum of modern art in the world"[101] but also as the preeminent "urban museum"[102]. A few months after the completion of the competition, it appears that the MoMA achieved its initial objective, a fact that is sealed through its partnership with the City. The museum has been recognized as a promising investment, "that will have long-term benefits for the people of New York City"[103] by serving Public schools, generating 1,849 permanent new jobs and bringing "more tourist dollars into the city"[104].

How is it therefore that the museum achieved this goal? How did it market its new role and consolidate its position after its much-criticized 1984 controversial expansion? Critics mostly said that the MoMA was to choose once again the safe "conservative" and "classic"[105] Modern design. As Koolhaas had remarked in the initial discussions, the MoMA had been definitely a case that didn't need great architecture to succeed as a museum and that its success as an institution with "mediocre architecture" was due to its efficiency in producing and manipulating aura, a process that was "independent from architecture"[106]. It was therefore not surprising that once again the museum would be making headlines without an extraordinary work of architecture, even though there were reviews that honored Mr. Taniguchi's project's elegance[107]. Still, the success of the project and what was so conspicuously missing from its appearance was to be an invisible yet meant-to-be-discernible-through-spatial-experience set of qualities and values that the institution was determined to expose and validate, with the risk of displeasing architects and architectural critics. The debates on the choice and the bets that preceded the competition as to who the future architect would be are very entertaining but the focus of this study lies in the inherent qualities of what an urban museum chose as the major constituents of its marketable image.

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[101] Toward the New MoMA, Executive Statement, http://www.moma.org.
[102] Lowry, Press office, April 24th, 1998.
[103] Ibid., Museum trustee David Rockefeller.
[104] Ibid.
[105] Deborah K. Dietsch, *Museum Imports* in Architecture, June 1997, p. 13.
[106] Koolhaas in Conversation IV.
[107] Julie V. Iovine, *A modest someone redoes the Modern*, The New York Times, Thursday, January 1, 1998.

It was actually at the summary of the Pocantico conference that it was made transparent that *style* would not be as important in the design. The expansion would have to be based on a certain *underlying logic of interior organization* and philosophy of structure rather than the formal aspect of design.

The need to avoid set formal solutions and inspirations was extremely apparent through the use of a multitude of metaphors (see table 2-5 p. 103). There was a great degree of uneasiness towards any idea or concept that could directly be linked to physical structures[108]. This was an expansion that would discuss its architecture on the *basis of space and not form*. This was also asserted by the three points, which were considered as the dominant ideas to have derived from the process. These were Eisenman's "theorizing of space" and not architecture per se, Koolhaas's "urbanity more than architecture" and Serra's "fracture of the box", of the museum's model as a treasure house or safety-deposit. The new model of thought and action on the museum's architecture (because against all phrasing of ideas it was still about the making of architecture) called to attention two important areas of concern. One was that the requirement of the design would be a dynamic relationship between physical space, works of art and people and the other, that this would result from the *interaction* of intellectual, programmatic and physical parameters.

3.2.1.2 How were these expressed?

In *Rethinking the modern*, Terence Riley presented the five concepts, which would constitute the plan for rethinking the conceptual and physical structure of the institution. These were:

1. A "Heterotopic" institution that cannot be characterized by a single type of space or experience. This indicated the need for a diversity of experience that would be expressed in more profound ways than just utilitarian differences.

2. A "Heterotopia part II" which requires the acceptance and theorizing of what is status quo while making sense of existing programmatic and physical diversity. This marks the need for a profound comfort with the whole notion of history and the passage of time.

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[108] A fact which became entirely expressed at Riley's lecture on *Rethinking the Modern*, "I should repeat the caveat that images are not meant to indicate what the museum should look like", MoMA [1998], p. 128.

3. A "Critical space", where individuals are able to "exercise critical judgment of objects and spaces that are themselves the product of the institution's critical judgment".

4. A specific concept of "Interiority". This referred to the relationship between interior and exterior of architecture, which is a very sensitive subject in understanding the role of formal expression in architecture. Riley's position distinguished different notions of interiority such as:

a) being the inverse of the exterior structure,

b) being so important in detail and perceptual effect that the exterior passes unnoticed,

c) Freud's "heightened" meaning of the word,

d) a "vertigo of delay", working as a filtering device, a membrane between inner and outer words,

e) a "vertigo of acceleration", where there is continuity, expression of seamlessness culminating in a precise point and,

f) physical suspension in the way that "suspension heightens the sense of isolation from the world."[109]

5. In the nature of urban culture when

a) "one word with a specific meaning might have imbedded within it the opposite meaning" and,

b) "Not only architecture is [seen as] building the city but also great cities build architecture"[110].

As Richard Serra had suggested, there was a need to break away from the concept of the box, of the container and rethink architecture on another basis. These points were ideas to reflect upon in the design of the expansion and indicated a need to reconceptualize the definition of formal expression. The MoMA recognized the "white box" and "black box" not as neutral spaces but as statements in themselves, spaces believed to have represented an "ideal", endlessly reprogrammable and with a sense of constancy. Breaking away from this notion of the museum meant that there

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[109] Paul Nelson quoted in MoMA [1998], p. 128.
[110] Quotes are from Riley in MoMA [1998], pp. 118-130.

was need for a variety of experiences and a variety of grounds where these experiences could be activated. Flexibility was understood as a chaotic condition that disoriented and confused the viewer thus disturbing the mood for contemplation. In relation to this, Johnson's remark on his 1950s addition that "there was no architecture to it", was seen to reflect the museum's conviction that endless flexibility meant no distinction and consequently, no architecture.

Distinction was therefore very important in the institution's agenda and as Riley mentioned at one point "exception is what makes [people] interested"[111]. The new philosophy that the institution was adopting was that instead of trying to accommodate every possible demand in an all-inclusive adaptable design, there had to be a firm position, a statement, an inherent structure in order to generate future debate and thought. The difference was that in the case of the MoMA, which was shifting its question of identity away from design towards an architecture as "mediating force between the experience of the city and the experience of the museum", distinction was expected to derive from a concept on inner and outer *spaces*, in any way this could be visualized by the selected architects.

It seems that the fundamental characteristic of MoMA's new identity, as expressed through Riley's concepts, was to be based on the idea of *complexity*, no longer conceived as wholeness, but as Mark Taylor had pointed out[112], in relation to "two fundamental aspects of current sociocultural developments: globalization and virtualization". This meant eliminating concepts of homogenization and understanding that all domains and aspects of experience are "not negations of the real" but reconfigurations of it and therefore as Koolhaas later elaborated "not a substitute but authentic and legitimate in itself"[113].

3.2.1.3 How did they appear in the Charette?

The Charette's goal was to basically document possible concepts for the museum's spatial organization, explore urban strategies that would enable better links between the museum and the City and also help elaborate the architectural program which was being in parallel planned by a non-participant architectural firm[114].

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[111] Quotes are from Riley in MoMA [1998], pp. 118-130.
[112] Conversation I.
[113] Conversation IV.
[114] Cooper, Robertson and Partners.

Certain elements that were considered as part of the historical image of the institution were seen as significant to keep, such as the 1939 "Goodwin and Stone" façade and most of the exterior envelope of any retained portion of the 53rd Street frontage, as well as the Garden, or incorporate, such as the large film theater "Titus I" and the open original Bauhaus stairway that used to connect the lobby with the second floor.

It was nevertheless the framework of the exercise that seemed more important than the outlining of directions for the architects to follow. Importance was to be given to the ideas rather than the impressions provided by elaborate designs and presentations. Through the limiting and uncommon presentation format, it became obvious that there was a need to appear as objective in judgment as possible, to seek for the clearest and boldest approach and a straightforward logic of spaces. The submission format, which was also the one used for the first exhibition the museum organized in relation to the project, was identical for all participants, a green clothbound "shirt"[115] box 11 × 17 × 3 inches. The point that was once again being made was the focus on conceptual ideas and not formal expressions. Like the project in itself, there had to be an extreme richness, a maximum of ideas and possibilities expressed in the tightest possible of spaces. And above all there had to be successful communication of detailed thought, which is something that according to the exhibition's public, none of the architects really achieved under such as restrained site. Still, the fact that one had to look into the box to discover the experience, to decipher the architectural language was very much the goal of the entire competition. It would not be the box that would reflect the project's urban image but something that would be discovered within it.

3.2.1.4 How did they appear in the Competition?

In the competition brief, there were clear design guidelines concerning the institution's:

a) *Philosophy*: there would not be one position to be adopted but an environment of "*perpetual, invigorating tension*" where tradition, present and future could co-exist and provide the public with the sense of stability, through points of reference, and movement, through continuous challenges.

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[115] For more information on the Charette exhibition, see MUSCHAMPS [1997b].

This meant that no function or activity would overpower another that could eventually result in their merging and lead to a blurring of the institution's mission and role. Instead there would be a condition that would afford the synergy of heterogeneous experiences.

b) *Identity*: as the greatest collection of modern art in the world, the institution is "*populist* in its aims to inform and educated a broader public, *elitist* in upholding rigorous standards of quality", while being conscious to the fact that its position is constantly debated and evolving. It is interested in being "contemporary, open-ended", yet "historically grounded and *less immediately responsible to fashion or trend*". "As in its sans-serif and classic stylizations, it is mirroring the "complex modern traditions [...] by high idealism [...] presenting an overall *façade of clarity* and disciplined *order* as resolution of indispensable anxieties, arguments *and critical appetite for new challenges* that fuel its *interior life*".

c) *Urban context*: a "midblock" museum in the center of Manhattan where it is crucial to "reinterpret the presence of the Museum in the city as well as reestablish the presence of the city within the museum".

This sums up all that has been discussed previously in the context of the conference and lectures, reflecting the need for a constant and vital relation to the urban culture of the city.

d) *Interiority*: greater interior coherence together with greater integration with the city. Need for an *"expressive and transformative experience"* as *"extension"* of city life.

e) *Historical context/ architectural diversity:* "a place of many places" respecting its patrimony without being "overly sentimental" in order to achieve a "coherent, integrated entity".

f) *Quality of construction*: construction materials would be valued by how they are expressed and its *"integrity and permanence"* would judge quality.

It was therefore very clear upon which values the design would need to be based. It reaffirmed the museum's dedication to "good design" as beyond formal elaboration and "packaging of style."[116] The museum's identity was to be reflected in an archi-

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[116] *Design for Use* in Arts and Architecture, Sept. 1944.

tecture, which *genuinely reflected its process of making*, and this would also constitute the *defense* and *promotion of its image*.

3.2.2 The commercialization of the institution

The Museum Store of the Museum of Modern Art has been in continuous operation since 1939. Originally a small sales desk in the lobby with a modest selection of exhibition catalogues, reproductions, and greeting cards, it increasingly offered a wider variety of materials related to the Museum's collections and exhibition program. As the museum grew, so did its retail spaces, moving from one space to another and even in neighboring buildings, which is the case of the current design Store across from the museum. As appears on figure 2-8 below, each expansion has lead to strong increases in sales.
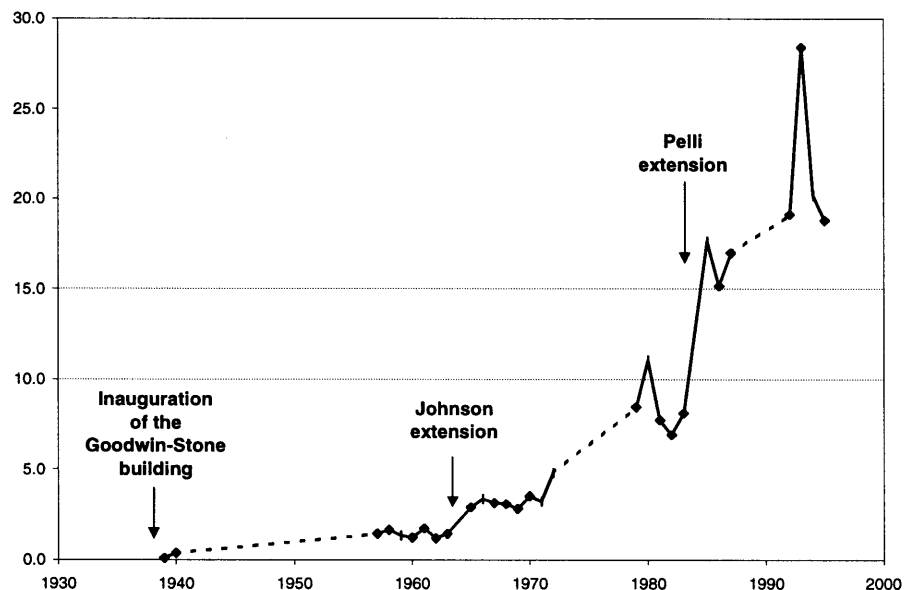
Source: MoMA's annual reports.

Figure 2-8: MoMA store sales, Constant 1995 $ Million.

3.2.2.1 Identification of main intentions

The presence of retail activities and dining services in the new expansion was never discussed in terms of validity of presence in the museum. It appeared clear to everyone that commerce is very much a part of the institutional character and a requirement for the public. In terms of the aura of the original objects, there was a

shared agreement that this was not lost but rather an increased "craving"[117] had been generated through the virtualization of collection items, or their mass production for retail. Attention rather shifted to the concept of aura production in the framework of museum institutions. This was brought into discussion by Koolhaas who referred to the museum as a machine for "media manipulation", for "production of aura" to both original and artificial experiences of objects. Even though this position regarded the status that objects possessed or acquired through their manifestation under different manifestations, it was clear that there was not going to be a negation or removal of the alternative reproductions of art in retail because these had in themselves a certain value for the public. The whole issue was therefore to begin feeling comfortable about the role and place of commerce in the contemporary museum and rather concentrate on allocating it the required and comfortable to the public spaces for easy access and use.

As an article in the Financial Times observed[118], museums have learned "survival skills" through merchandising and licensing of their collections. It is a shared understanding that many people even come to the museum just to shop. According to the Metropolitan's vice president for merchandising[119], "the most democratic thing to do is to let museums help themselves. No one is twisting anyone's arm to buy these things and taste is a very subjective thing". The fact that the museum tends to influence and even enhance people's perception of objects despite taste values is not an issue that seems to affect the general commercial tradition. Museum shops are expanding in footage and number all around the world and as such indicating the public's preferences in this type of activities. As such it is validated and firmly grounded in contemporary cultural institutions.

3.2.2.2 How were they expressed?

MoMA was among the institutions that participated from the start in this tradition and it made sure to confirm once again its position on and support to the matter. In view of its expansion "in a reflection of a new business-savvy approach"[120] it hired as director of retail Bloomingdales' ex senior vice-president and merchandising manager. This was of course done in parallel with the expansion plans and its architect

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[117] Varnedoe in Conversation IV.
[118] Financial Times, December 20-21, 1997.
[119] John Curan quoted in The New York Times, December 10, 1997, p. A27.
[120] NEW YORK BUSINESS [1997].

selection process. As Mr. Gundell said, "there will be a significant retail presence in the new space"[121]. Yet there is a deep sensitivity to the issues that rise with this statement. The line between attracting public and subjecting culture to unscrupulous commercialism is very strongly debated. What the MoMA has chosen to do has been to study the demographics in order to best structure its retail according to the visitors' varied interests and needs. No matter what counter arguments might be expressed, MoMA's new retail director is confident about the fact that "the thing that ties every-one together is MoMA's reputation for fine design [...] We have a unique brand and we plan to work it."[122]

There is nevertheless no proof that this position affects significantly the overall de-sign of the building, or rather affects its organization in a negative way which tends to shift the building type from one kind of experience to another. As we will see in relation to the architects' proposals, selection was very much based on the institution's principles and commitment to clarity and distinction between activities and cultural values.

Space	Area in Square feet
2. Theaters and assembly	14,500
9. Food service	20,000
10. Design and book Store with support	15,000
Total Assignable Space	355,800

Source: MoMA [1998] p. 152.

Note: At this point, theatres were not assigned specific non educational or art related uses but a desire had been expressed in the discussions for these spaces to be part of a "shared [social] experience" (MoMA [1998], p. 139)

Table 2-2: Commercial spaces defined in the Charette program

3.2.2.3 How did they appear in the Charette?

The first issue that was addressed by the architects concerned the drastic com-mercial development of the area and the impact that this had on the urban condition. It was considered critical in their thinking of the future museum to identify the critical characteristics of the changed, highly commercialized urban zone in order to best in-tegrate and reinterpret the older buildings and spatial organization in view of the new addition.

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[121] NEW YORK BUSINESS [1997].
[122] Ibid.

In the brief that the architects were given (see table 2-2), the design and Book Store as well as the catering facilities were part of the assignable spaces, representing the museum's "needs" and "expressed as specific uses". These were already estimated and represented a distinct quantifiable space. As was specified, for the purposes of the Charette, all assignable spaces were described as "blocks of space having a similar use rather than individual rooms"[123]. There was absolutely no indication as to a preferred location for any of these spaces and certainly no restrictions exposed at that stage. As entities, the commercial spaces were equivalent in spatial character to all other assignable spaces, to all other experiences of the institution, indicating probably a first attempt to consolidate the alternative representations of original objects and experiences.

3.2.2.4 How did they appear in the Competition?

The numbers that had been provided for the Charette didn't change much in this stage. The MoMA Bookstore and Design Store were increased and the Theaters were described in detail as spaces of multiple uses, allowing the "exhibition" of films but also providing the grounds for social activities and private functions. It is important to note that the retail spaces were clearly given the possibility to move to underground locations but this was a position that none of the architects chose to integrate in their designs.

Department	Program Area NSF	% of subtotal accessible to the public
Non-accessible Departmental Space Inventory	120,785	
Accessible Departmental Space Inventory	4,700	2%
Gallery Space	133,000	67%
Art Storage	30,000	
Theaters and theater lobbies	19,030	**10%**
Retail Sales floor/Stock Room	16,250	**8%**
Restaurant / Kitchen / Staff Lounge	15,590	**8%**
Other	8,645	4%
Subtotal accessible to the public	**197,215**	**100%**
Total Net Areas	348,000	

Table 2-3: Selection of assignable spaces related to commercial activities based on the Competition brief.

[123] The Charette Appendix, MoMA [1998]. p. 154.

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What follows is the detailed description of the spaces that would generate commercial activity or would provide the potential to generate income to the museum outside the directly artistic and educationally related experiences.

Theaters	[...] The theater should be considered a particular type of gallery [...] However, they, unlike the galleries, are regularly used for multiple purposes: slide lectures, symposia, concerts, performances, meetings, and for private premiers and corporate and institutional events, both during the day and at night when other special events may be occurring at the Museum. [...] The theaters should thus have separate evening access (ideally, with connections to food service and the stores) as well as a daytime relationship to the Museum's principal public spaces.
Retail	Ideally, the MoMA bookstore and MoMA design store, which are now in two locations, should be combined into one retail space. While retail activities provide an important source of income for the Museum, there presence in the museum is ancillary to its mission and their commercial aspect should not overshadow its primary cultural and educational purpose. In order to make the most judicious use of space, the retail facility can be located on multiple levels of the Museum, including attractively arranged below-grade space.
Restaurants	With an anticipated average of up to 6,500 visitors a day, the Museum needs to provide a cafeteria for light meals and refreshments in a space that is attractive and flexible, yet functional enough to accommodate large volume. The Museum also wants to provide a restaurant that offers more leisurely "white table cloth" dining for up to 100 people. In addition, the Museum would like to offer places where visitors can pause, rest and have a cup of coffee or other refreshments; some of these places could be located near the theater or retail spaces and could be available for evening use in conjunction with films or other after-hours activities when the galleries are closed. The cafeteria and restaurant should also be easily accessible to the public after hours.

Source: MoMA [1998] p. 287-288.

Table 2-4: Detailed description of commercial activities according to the competition brief

Through its outlining of these spaces, the MoMA provided a definite and confident position regarding the place of commercial activity in the museum and set the ground for defending its role in any possible debate around the subject. Through their stating that "while retail activities provide an important source of income for the Museum [...] their commercial aspect should not overshadow its primary cultural and educational purpose", it was evident that the institution would seek a balance between cultural and commercial objectives and the creation and interpretation of their relative values.

3.2.3 The cultural reproduction/experience in the institution

This was probably the most complicated component of the design and definitely the most critical one for the final design choice. Most of the desired characteristics of

the museum experience were to be found within the words, the stories and ideas that constituted the initial discussions.

3.2.3.1 Identification of main intentions

Since the beginning of the discussions, needs were clearly identified but the experiential factor, the guiding principle of the design and MoMA's institutional identity, was left undecided awaiting the architects ideas and inspirations. As delineated in 3.2.1, there were several past elements of the museum's identity that were to be conserved. Yet, in outlining its identity and goals, only vague ideas existed as to what could possibly constitute a design that would be "a set of plazas to wander around", "a city of episodic things"[124], "flexible enough", "managed not controlled" allowing for a multiplicity of narratives while holding on to one suggested, but constantly reconfigured and regenerated history of modern art. Even though emphasis seemed to be on movement, it was not expected to be of a forced kind, a conveyor belt, "a moving sidewalk [...] and [at the end] there is the souvenir stand."[125] There was a strong commitment to leaving the visitor as free as possible while conserving the privacy of the museum staff. This distinction between public and staff is indeed dominant in the museum's character.[126] Still, there would be capital attention given to assure constant reconstruction of a flâneur-like experience around the public areas. Only in this case the architectural proposals would need to analyze this experience on a very specific basis. Visual stimuli and mental events were not to be achieved through elaborate formal structures, through designs that projected built perspectives, set views determined by the molding of wall surfaces and the tectonic character of rooms. The shaping process would derive from a cohesive and comprehensible structure that would provide visual indicators directing the viewer through a variety of different yet united parts that, by their individual nature and associations, would enhance the viewer's sense of discovery, selection of itinerary and awareness through rites of passage. The architecture of the museum was understood as a milieu suggesting and allowing an infinite expansion of possibilities towards cultural reproduction, orchestrating social encounters and individual identification of one's social, aesthetic and intellectual choices reflecting the impact of but also the effect to our personally constructed cultural models. The acknowledgment of the public's

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[124] Varnedoe in Conversation II.
[125] Riley in MoMA [1998].
[126] There is no direct access to the staff's offices. One needs to make appointments for all trips to this zone of the museum. To this date, even the library is away from the main galleries.

inherent desire for infinite possibilities and choices through the structuring of one's own curatorial pattern of consumption of visual and mental material is an important reflection of our contemporary capitalist practices, used to outline our preferences, identities and mostly our ability to individually "select from a range of possible consumer goods and the range of quite different cultural meanings"[127] that objects sustain.

3.2.3.2 How were they expressed?

The richest and most operative insights to the kind of experience that was to be obtained or avoided in the museum's reconceptualization lay in the multitude of metaphors that were presented by many different parties all along the project. Metaphors are substitutional mental processes "in which a word or phrase that ordinarily designates one thing is used to designate another, thus making an implicit comparison."[128] Confirming once again that the design process would at no stage refer or outline formal examples, this intended to promote the perception and development of invisible but basic structural qualities by reconceptualizing the museum idea rather than associating it to existing stylistic trends. In so doing the institution was calling attention to one of the most sensitive subjects in architectural practice today which relates to the fine line between design as constant reaffirmation and subjection of various building types to a set architectural language from a head and often star designer and design as a genuinely reborn and ethical projection of the architect's knowledge and expression according to the unique integral characteristics of each project. Considering that this was a much debated topic in the outline of the institution's architect selection process, it would be important to refer to these metaphors and to the different fields of thought and practice that pronounced them, as indicators of an approach that doesn't see production and consumption of architecture as dissociate processes but rather attempts to redefine them as mutually inclusive, interdependent and as operative structures upon which to build the image of and create the essence of a place. In table 2-5 below, the metaphors are brought together in the order they appeared in the text. The text in italic on three of those metaphors is the summarized description of what the museum's director considered as the most resonant concepts to the institution's character, as these were presented at the end of the discussions.

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[127] McCracken [1988], p. 50.
[128] The American Heritage Dictionary of the English language, Third Edition [1992].

Author	Discipline	Metaphor	Concept
Tschumi	Architect	Sponge	Endlessness of combinations, links, seamlessness, *expandable, compressible, layered with different sets of possibilities, held together by infinite webbed relationships*
Taylor	Professor of Religion	Web	Underlying logic, emergent structure based on changing experience and mediation of temporality
Serra	Artist	Spine in center of sponge	Multiple connections, connection of passages, ties, proximities, rupturing the box, *different pieces adjusted, articulated, framed*
Cohen	Architect	Attraction	Circus, show business
		Toolbox	Playground for architects and artists
		Montage	Beyond object, beyond visual and tactile, spatial information blocks, *series of layered experiences, related or disjunctive, a place to go and look at art*
de Bretteville	Artist	Crazy quilt	A random patchwork of assembled possibilities, not one but multiple histories and experiences community without unity non-linear occlusiveness no apparent patterns reflects process of making, reflects individual associations remembering, longing, belonging

Source: MoMA [1998]

Table 2-5: Examples of metaphors used in the conversations

3.2.1.3 How did they appear in the Charette?

At the Charette stage, the major lines were those interpreted in the mission statement and executive statements and a rather abstract programmatic structure. From the exchange between the participating architects' concepts of space and an in-progress needs analysis, experience was to become further transparent through the proposed projects.

As it appeared in the Charette program under the section on non-assignable spaces (see table 2-6 below), there would be a need for three different experiences of the museum. These were for a) the public, b) the staff and c) the service of the museum operations. What was more significant is that these different experiences were basically related to circulation spaces and meeting places and, for the Charette's purposes, the architects had to assume that these would account for a minimum of 40% of the total building area. It was therefore obvious that a great amount of space that was undetermined and dependent on the architects' concepts and designs. This meant that the institution was going to allow but also critically seek for a powerful re-conceptualization of itineraries and movement in its premises. It aimed for a variety of experiences, as much cultural as social and it expected from the drawings to shed

light on imaginative new orders and organizational structures around the museum's principle activities.

1.	Main public lobby
2.	Public circulation
3.	Public restrooms
4.	Staff entrance
5.	Staff circulation
6.	Staff restrooms
7.	Loading docks
8.	Service Circulation
9.	Mechanical Space
10.	Theater lobbies
11.	Lobby for group visits
12.	Elevators
13.	Stairs and other vertical circulation

Source: MoMA [1998] p. 152.

Table 2-6: Non-assignable spaces as defined in the Charette program

3.2.1.4 How did they appear in the Competition?

The major change from the Charette in terms of the experience of the place was that the Garden should remain intact, a position that had been rather flexible in terms of relocation and reconfiguration of the site.

The public areas were considered as the ones to create and affect the public's image of the institution. They were greatly expressed in the identity discussions of the museum and clearly articulated as follows: in the Charette, through a) consolidated quantifiable programmatic requirements and b) abstract assignment of spaces that could only be quantified after a design was selected; through the Competition brief where square footage became more definite and spaces were outlined in more detail.

In search of the "concept design" which had been defined as a "single architectural proposal that provides undefined aspects of the program by means of alternate and optional components"[129], even though there was a budget control at the final stage, the goal was "an aesthetic vision above and beyond programmatic, technical and financial requirements."[130] Accepting that there was not one way of looking at art and constructing one's cognitive map of the museum, the "concept design" had to be the reflection of a coherent and integral experience on both individual and social levels of cultural production and consumption.

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[129] Riley in MoMA [1998], p. 267.
[130] Ibid.

Probably one of the most important organizing principles, which outlined the gallery spaces that would be needed, was provided in the competition brief and can be examined in detail on figure 2-9 below. The basic idea was that there would be no more or less important galleries but a system of fixed-and-variable ones. These, together with what was described as "interstitial spaces" that would "provide facilities for relaxation and educational purposes", constituted the ground for multiple experiences and continuum narratives.
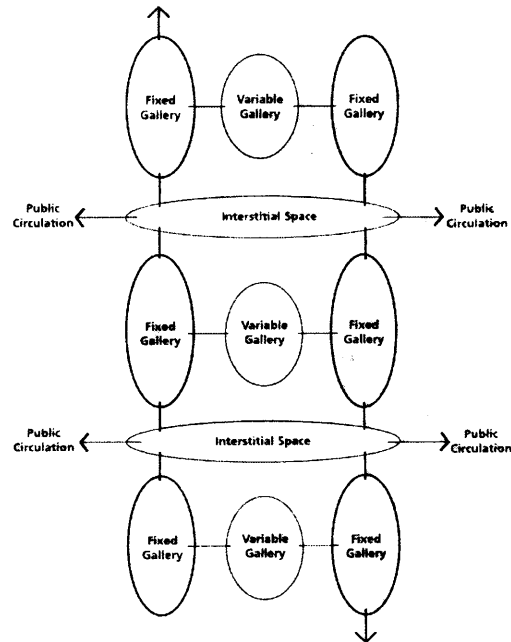
Source: MoMA [1998], p. 286.

Figure 2-9: Fixed and variable gallery system

4. CONCLUSION

The analysis of the MoMA's expansion project confirms the conclusions that were made at the end of Chapter One. Consumption is expressed in this project through:

a) *The choice and marketing of the architecture that would best reflect the institution's identity.* This should be based on an underlying logic of structure rather than the formal aspect of the design. It would need to be as little related to other projects constructed by the specific architects. This leads to the requirement of the project to be as little as possible subjected to the architect's repertoire of architectural vocabulary and as little as possible recognizable as a the architect's style and signature building. The ideas behind the project

should derive from the project's particularities rather than commonalities that could potentially link it to other designs by the same architect. The design would have to reflect the institution's personal history, be linked to its memory of place and to its specific urban culture – including its commercial character- and be distinguished through its integral structure rather than its artifact and commodity dimension. As there was an obvious sensitivity to what it would actually be that would reflect the institutional identity, their image would be created through (and base its marketing on) the design process rather than focus on the elaboration of a signature building.

b) *The commercial spaces.* These were distinctly defined from the beginning as important elements in the various functions and social considerations of contemporary museums. Even though the Charette did not suggest any specific location for these spaces but rather left it to the architects' choice, it was specifically stated in the competition brief that they could even be moved to underground zones. Retail was not desired to have a control over the cultural experience and its presence did not appear anywhere as threatening to impact on the building type through its dominance of function or to the overall architectural design. The only concern would regard its logic of use, security and the need for it to be accessible independently from exhibitions. Retail was therefore consciously recognized by the institution but its character was distinctly differentiated from other activities.

c) *The cultural experience and reproduction.* The focus on this point would be on choice, movement and appropriation of one's personal story through personal constructs and links to one's individual memory bank. There would be no controlling itinerary or forceful education pattern but simply possibilities to explore material available in more or less direct ways and a variety of *authentic* experiences. The MoMA assumed a position that distinguishes the museum's ritual experience from that of a "moving sidewalk" that controls the viewers movement through the building and manipulates one's consumer instincts by placing souvenir and gift shops at the end of the cultural encounter. The goal was to provide a variety of events and activities and the maximum of possible freedom to a diverse and continuously broadening public.

Under this understanding, differentiation should come as a result of both the integrity of the institution's inner organizational and spatial logic as well as the crea-

tion of a public place in the realm of a specific urban culture. The appearance of the building therefore derives from this exchange of patterns and desired conditions rather than the interpretation of a set architectural language. Its architectural identity results from the righteousness of the museum's mission *and* the way it negotiates the museum's relation to the city.

Nevertheless what becomes interesting in this specific museum's position in the debate around consumption is the fact that it does not indicate a negation of its role in the realm of architectural design, but a reconfiguration of the thought and practice processes that are related to it. Consumption in the MoMA's design is seen:

a) In an attempt to move away from the debates of signature buildings, becomes conveyed in the need and requirement for an institution to outline and reflect its brand, its status quo and identity through its inherent mission and objectives,

b) In the role of retail instead of negating its presence to affirm its contribution to the museum's finances and the continuation of its ultimate cultural mission and to establish it clearly within its structure, and

c) In the role of cultural experience and reproduction to acknowledge that through contemporary social, technological, educational and other realities, it has become necessary to reconsider the art-viewer relationship, allow for the individual to construct his/her own curatorial pattern, breaking away, to the extent that the collection's security, the museum's surfaces and the museum's collecting principles and standards make it possible, from controlling ritual, cultural or economic in nature incentives and structures.

In its attempt to position the project with respect to current debates around consumption and the commitment against current trends, the MoMA has indeed built its argument and design goals around the three points outlined in Chapter One. The major difference is that, this time, it has provided an insight on its role as a structural component promoting critical thought and practice rather than a detached controlling mechanism, overpowering all possibility of choice and personal expression in its serving and advancing institutions' business planning.

Chapter 3
Consumption and the MoMA: The architects' proposals

a) "The architects enter the process more or less with their intellectual position intact [which] gives the architect an awful lot of leverage in the relationship [with the clients]", or

b) "[The clients] think of the architect as someone who is being asked to provide a service, and not someone who brings to the job a highly developed intellectual position." [1]

Challenging this pattern, the MoMA chose to pursue a competition through which it assumed that there would be a greater exchange of information and knowledge between the architects and the institution towards a more collaborative model of design. The architects' proposals should therefore be approached in this perspective to the extent that they fulfilled the goals that the institution wanted to publicly communicate.

In order to map the different submissions in the context of this study, these have been organized in two different sections: a) the first phase participants and b) the finalists.

In order to define a manageable field of investigation, the proposals that assumed a more ambiguous approach in the debate between consumer culture and the museum institution are only briefly reviewed (p. 109), while those that had a clearer and more focussed statement are examined in detail, namely Rem Koolhaas' (p. 113) and the three finalists' (p. 116).

Terence Riley stated in terms of the architects' proposals that the selection progressed with the following criteria: "the extent to which (the architects) addressed

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[1] Riley in The MoMA expansion: A conversation with Terence Riley, October 84, Spring 1998, p. 4.

issues *specific* to the institution and its dense urban fabric," [2] both of which needed a firm thesis on this ongoing debate and its effect on the museum's architecture, its relation to the city and cultural development. In the analysis that follows, each project is examined according to the three points resumed in the end of Chapter Two, based on the specific position the Museum chose to assume in relation to the character, the location and practice of, both intellectual and material, consumption in the future design.

1.   CONSUMING CONCEPTS: THE FIRST PHASE PARTICIPANTS

This section briefly reviews the major concepts of the first phase participants, examining their position to questions of institutional identity, the location of commercial spaces and the articulation of the cultural experience. Koolhaas' submission is examined in more detail at the end because of its distinct point of view on the place of consumption in the museum.

1.1 Wiel Arets: "Broadway Boogie Woogie"
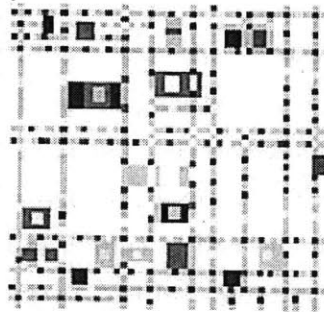
Source: MoMA [1998], p. 169.
***Figure 3-1: Piet Mondrian, "Broadway Boogie Woogie"***

Even though the architect based his design on MoMA being an urban museum and on systems of circulation through the void, the architect was very critical to the creation of powerful imagery and architecture as attraction that is used to endear a place to the public. The fact that architectural distinction was equivalent in the architect's mind with formal elaboration and his project made no attempt to provide a landmark that would reflect the institution's unique role in the city, were probably the reasons for which the project was eliminated. His description of the project as one

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[2] MoMA [1998], p. 270.

that breaks from the code of imagery[3] could be seen as an attempt to promote the project through an entirely anti-commercial, anti-image-making structure. Also, by blocking the view to the garden from the entrance area, the direct experience of art that the museum intended to introduce for the public was lacking. Instead, there was a public passage-like space that indicated almost nothing of the building's cultural mission and could, as it actually did[4], provoke remarks on the institution's politics in the hierarchical structure of spaces and activities.

1.2 Steven Holl: "Bracketing" and "Cutting"
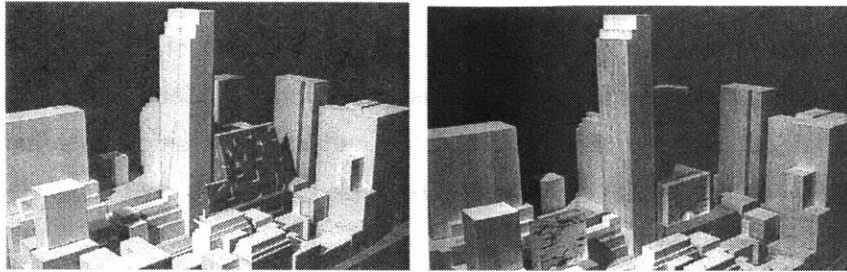
Source: MoMA [1998], pp. 174, 175.

Figure 3-2: Cutting and Bracketting.

Even though he began his statement by discussing that the museum was "a place to think, consider deeply and at length"[5] he devoted the entire ground floor in both proposals to the museum's services and retail activities, except for a long corridor which he called the Hall of Reverie, probably inspired by the Holocaust museum's concept of various Halls devoted to certain experiences, which was situated between the garden and the design store and had a very ambiguous and definitely no ceremonial undertone to it. Adding to his unclear circulation patterns and objectives there were no enhanced views to the garden from the lobby area except serving the stores, thus diminishing its role of a quiet oasis but extending to it the role of a backdrop tangled up within the city's rapid movement. Apart from extending the city's commercial character and overwhelming the viewer upon entering the building, the basic gallery concept of troglodyte structures was very similar to his Museum of Contemporary Art in Helsinki. Adding to that, his sketches of the 53rd Street façade were reminiscent of his red façade of his Cranbrook Institute of science thus indicating no extensive reconsideration of museum design according to MoMA's unique character.
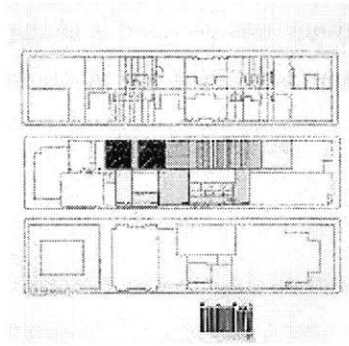
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[3] MoMA [1998], p. 160.
[4] See Sylvia Kolbowski in FOSTER & RILEY [1998], p. 7.
[5] MoMA [1998], p. 170.

## 1.3 Toyo Ito: The "Bar(r) Code"

Source: Adapted from MoMA web site.

Figure 3-3: The Bar(r) Code   ***Figure 3-4: The "lying skyscraper"***

Based on the concept of the bar code, the project was envisioned as a "lying sky-scraper" was given identity through the conceptualization of a 3-dimensional bar code. This was probably too strong of an image to generate and coherently hold an interior organizational structure. Even though there was an attempt to spatially reconfigure the inner experience, it appeared that the whole project was subjected to an image based principle, which apart from its reference to New York's urban fabric it also had strong connotations of the institution as a consumer good reflected by its a codified price tag. One other notable point was the architect's concept of "abstract space"[6] and possibility for "all galleries to be interchangeable", a position that indicated perhaps too much flexibility for the institution.

1.4 Dominique Perrault: "Aside", "Above" and "Along"
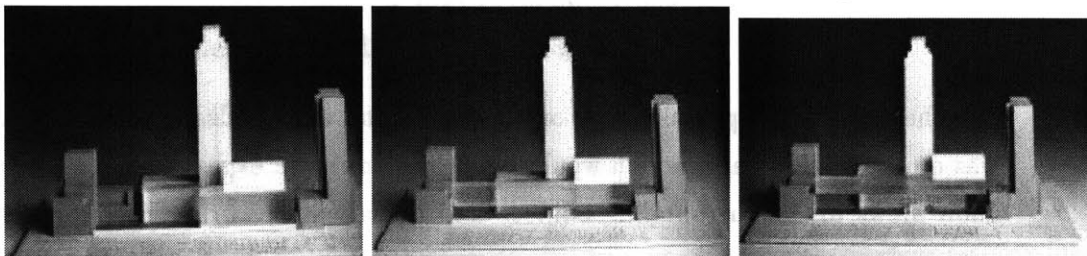
Source: MoMA [1998], p. 202-207.

Figure 3-5: Aside, Above and Along

The central concept was that of an abstractly defined block, called the "open space", which would be added to the existing structures. All resolution of interior organization revolved around this block's position in relation to the past structures.

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[6] MoMA [1998], p. 180.

Even though the concept of bringing in to the project a unifying, "democratic"[7] element without trying to rethink the older buildings was respectful of the MoMA's history and memory of place, it probably was seen as limiting the institution's desire for strategic regeneration.

1.5 Rafael Viñoly: "10 schemes"

Even though his Tokyo International Forum in Japan was described by Herbert Muschamp as "The Crystal Palace of Culture and Commerce"[8], a concept key to the needs of the MoMA according to the outline of their desired identity, the architect's many and indistinct proposals probably showed no specific engagement in truly and imaginatively resolving the institution's needs.

1.6 Tod Williams/Billie Tsien: "Bridge" and "Non-bridge"
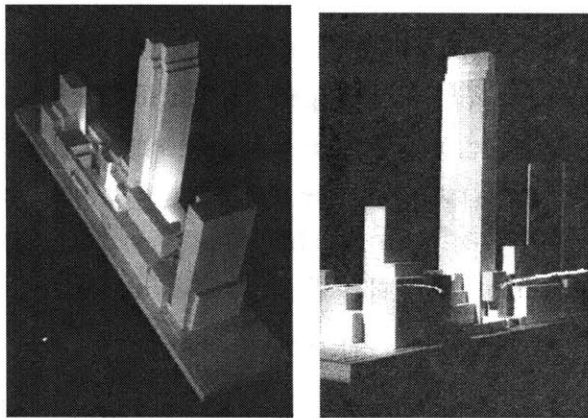
Source: MoMA [1998], pp. 223, 228.
Figure 3-6: Bridge and Non-bridge.

The entire concept was based on the generation of a "walking" experience. Focus was on circulation paths which would best slow down the experience of the place and allow views to the surrounding edifices and contained artwork. This project's commitment to outlining a temporal experience of the museum, focused on relating the speed of movement mainly to itineraries and offered no further insight on spatial differentiation and variety of events and experiences for the public that could in themselves orchestrate the speed of assimilation, an issue that constituted a major requirement for the MoMA. Summing up the project's architectural "presence or lack of

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[7] Reference to Tocqueville's concept of democracy by the architect in MoMA [1998], p. 201.
[8] Architecture View, The New York Times, Sunday, 12, January 1996.

an elevated connection along the North boundary of the garden", indicated that the architect remain undecided on the garden's character.

1.7 MoMA, INC.: Rem Koolhaas

Probably "the most-watched figure in the world"[9], Koolhaas's proposal did not come as a surprise after his strong, sharp and unsentimental review of the institution's existing architecture. To anyone reading his statements in the Pocantico conference, his position was already very clear on the institution's objective to produce and manage aura.[10] Perceiving the museum as a "successful institution with mediocre architecture" that owes its distinction to its "strength in media manipulation"[11], he considered that the institution should undergo a complete rethinking of its organization and structure. Ideally, it should reflect functions that underlie and support the aesthetic encounter, which it has so well and "artificially"[12] produced over the years.

Koolhaas conceived of the new MoMA as a product and a program that could reflect in itself the "process" of the museum's cosmopolitan functions, providing the means and funds for experimentation with art. He proposed an "architecture (that) is finally unmasked as the mere organization of flow — (as in) shopping centers, airports — (where) it is evident that circulation is what makes or breaks public architecture."[13] Organizationally, the "ambiguous treasure house"[14] would have to bring its "frozen assets", which were the "aggressively hidden" collections, to view and allow for them to be retrieved and exposed according to individuals' desires. In so doing, based on the museum's expressed need for a variety of narratives, personal constructs of exhibitions and experiences to be sustained in its future expansion, the architect, rather than thinking the display, reconceptualized this idea by questioning and dismantling the structure of storage and choice of artworks. His scheme would be achieved at large through a reconsideration of the storage spaces, which would have to be put on display for the public to critically interfere in a selection process that would be supported by robotic retrieval of the desired material. Allowing to the public to personally handpick the exhibited works of art was probably to radical a position for the museum. Even though it would still be the institution that would make the pur-

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[9] Jane Merkel, Oculus editor quoted in New York, March 31, 1997, p. 43.

[10] MoMA [1998], Conversation IV, pp. 62-63.

[11] Both quotes here are from MoMA [1998], Conversation IV.

[12] Ibid.

[13] Koolhaas in Charette statement, MoMA [1998], p. 191.

[14] Koolhaas's statement in the Charette, p. 190.

chasing and initial selection of the art that would go in the storage, this configuration would totally eliminate any tradition of expertise and education behind the museum, thus eliminating the need for curatorial departments and scholarly; value judgment.

Koolhaas's scheme also proposed a reorganization of the building volumes to serve the institution's functioning structure. He suggested that Johnson's East wing should become "MoMA, INC.", which would serve as the fundraising and administrative tower. Central to the financial chain that would steer artistic choices and actions, the 1939 building would accommodate the curatorial offices and galleries, where the "thinking" and "knowledge" would filter the funds from MoMA INC to the galleries, in turn situated in a new building, "the box." Having the building reflect the underlying operational structure of the institution would crush all initiative the museum attempted to present for a place in the city that would be free of inner politics[15] and beyond power, financial and social ambitions.
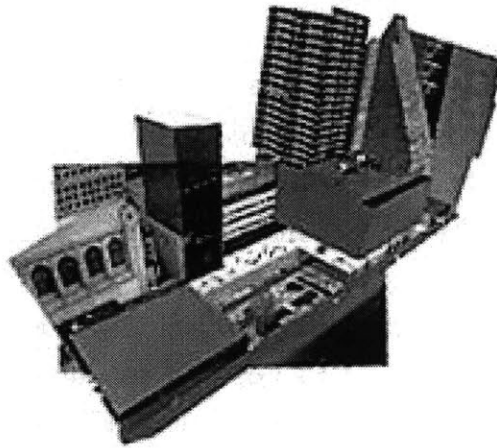
Source: MoMA web site.

**Figure 3-7: MoMA INC., the Old MoMA and the Box**

Koolhaas's approach was one of the most focused on the role of the architect and his potential in transforming the urban scene. Yet, his design reflected an icy and caustic logic that simply supported his theories of urban space, specifically his concept of "Manhattanism" where architecture is seen as mainly sustaining a "culture of congestion"[16], as founded on a worldwide development where economic structures and shopping have become the last and driving public and social activity. Even

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[15] Riley discusses this point at The MoMA expansion; a Conversation with Terence Riley, pp. 4-5.
[16] See more on Richard Vine's discussion of Koolhaas's book "Delirious New York", in *Post-Delirium*, Art in America, April 1995,

though the architect was initially invited, and considered by some as the primary candidate for the commissioning of the project[17], mainly because of his friendship with Philip Johnson[18] and Terence Riley[19], his intellectual position was undoubtedly too arrogant for the MoMA to adopt in its new phase of modernization. Conceptualizing of the MoMA as a corporate structure and public plaza where the public as individual consumers "shop", facilitated by a novel transportation system (Odyssey, see figure 3-8), for their own construction of cultural meanings, was a major statement at a time where art and consumer goods continue to have a vague relationship. It nevertheless, indicated the breakdown of intellectual values to the advantage of materialistic ones and this was definitely contradicting the image the museum intended to establish through its expansion project. Although the museum was willing to re-launch, through its architecture, its commitment to the constant questioning of the differences between art and everyday life commodities, upon which the Department of Architecture and Design were founded, the view that dominated their intentions was one of clarification rather than further blurring the relationship and particularly at the expense of art and sound design.
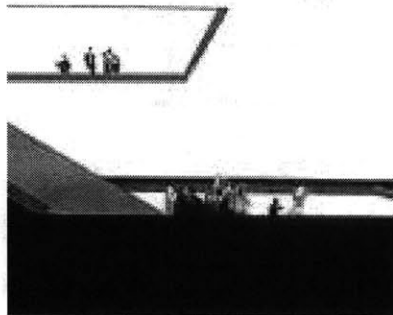
Source: MoMA [1998], p. 199.

Figure 3-8: Odyssey system of transportation: combining vertical, horizontal and diagonal movement.

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[17] See more in MoMA's Boys, New York, March 31, 1997.
[18] Richard Vine in *Post-Delirium*, Art in America, April 1995, p. 37,
[19] Riley curated a series of called Thresholds including Tschumi's and Koolhaas's work.

2. THE FINALISTS

> "... The three architects have not approached the design of the new Museum simply as a *reiteration* of a particular building type; nor have they conceived of the urban context as a *formulaic adherence* to a series of height and setback restrictions. Rather [they indicate ...] profound understanding of the *unique* character of this *particular* architectural problem for this *particular* institution, fusing historical precedent with pure invention."

2.1 Not a shopping mall: Jacques Herzog and Pierre de Meuron

From early in the Charette up to their final proposal, the architects set the ground for their project, situating themselves immediately away from any building type and place of commercial activity. Their concept was based on the conviction that the museum is *not Disneyland, not a shopping mall, and not a media center*. The focus would be on the encounter between people and works of art, on creating a place for art and people.
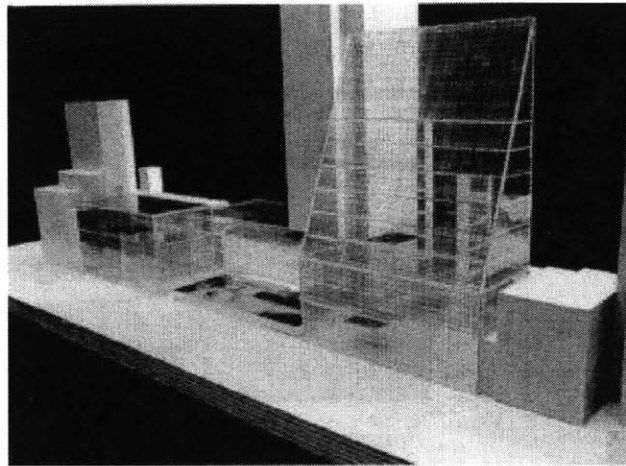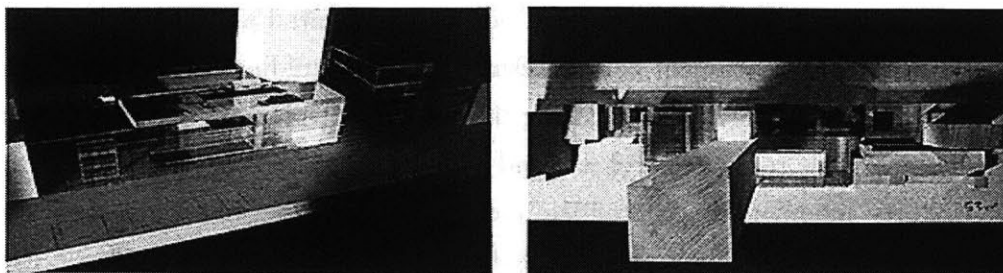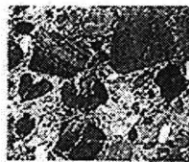

Source: MoMA [1998], p. 233.
Figure 3-9: 54th street façade

In terms of the Design Store and Bookstore, the position varied from one proposal to the other showing no clear justification for its location, leaving them on the side of all other activities in an attempt to probably give it the most discreet link to the interior. The architects nevertheless provided for an additional separate entrance in an attempt to link them rather to the street than the museum itself, on both 53rd and 54th Street on the first stage and then limiting its access to the 53rd. It became clear that in their final proposal, the architects advantaged even less the links between the cultural

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and commercial activities by leaving a small and hidden entrance to the store through the lobby behind circulation conduits. In terms of the restaurant, there was a proposal for collaboration between the architect and an artist, an interesting idea that would probably bring another atmosphere to these services and appropriately link them to the museum's mission.

Since the early stages, Herzog and de Meuron also made the point that their spaces should "find approval not only of architects and critics but of artists and visitors," [20] directing their design to a wider and socially differentiated public and possibly calling attention to the ongoing criticism on the inclination of established architects to serve elite groups of clients. Patrons were to occupy a secondary role. The museum should focus on the direct experience of art and the underlying logic of the proposed concept was based on a building as artificial *"landscape"* where people could choose to move through "complex spatial structures", "transparencies", "courtyards and surfaces" and "layerings of spaces."[21]

These spatial configurations were to be represented through either an "agglomerate type" of building, like a "still life" where different pieces could be added or removed through time and needs, or a "conglomerate type", expressing the richness and diversity of experiences.

Source: Adapted from MoMA [1998], p. 235.

Figure 3-10: From Herzog-de Meuron's Charette proposal: The conglomerate type

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[20] Architects' submission in MoMA [1998], p. 230.
[21] Ibid.

In outlining their structural logic, Herzog and de Meuron chose the concept of a linear skeletal structure, a central spine, which would be the "center of gravity." Around this multiple choices would open up to the visitors and would enable a continuous flow through the museum. The galleries, according to their "topographic" location, would be divided into cores, "islands of memory and stability" which would assist "geographical and historical orientation", and satellites. Last but not least, through a series of courtyards, roof gardens, façades and interiors enhancing depth of building complex, and a variety of stairs, the experience would be that of a recreated landscape in the middle of the city.

In the final design, merging the two Charette building types and comforming to the museum's desires, it was clearly stated that the emphasis would be on:

a) a "heterotopic space",

b) embracing the "idea of the critical observer",

c) "rejecting the absolute universality of the white box",

d) providing "no capricious and incomprehensible spaces",

e) A "distinctly urban sensibility" by extending public spaces into the museum.

Always paying close attention to the formal aspects of their architecture, the new building the architects offered at the Charette was outlined by the zoning codes, a solution to formal discussions that had been adopted also by Holl and Koolhaas. This building was complexly reconfigured in the final stage to give a "tower" for curatorial and support staff, an asymmetrical polygon "conceived as a complex volumetric form ... reflecting the current zoning restrictions and building codes ... and rigorous approach to formmaking,"[22] recalling the "eccentric volume"[23] of one of their previous designs. This remark, which beyond indicating the building's distinction and the architects' intentions to differentiate themselves from "deconstructive, neoexpressive or symbolic clichés,"[24] probably signaled the rejection of the project. Aside from the fact that the qualities of this complex resolution of all formal anxieties around the museum, this was probably too much of a trademark mechanism of dealing with form and space which was applied rather than generated by the project itself.


[22] Riley in MoMA [1998], p. 271.
[23] Ibid.
[24] Apparently from architect's statement.

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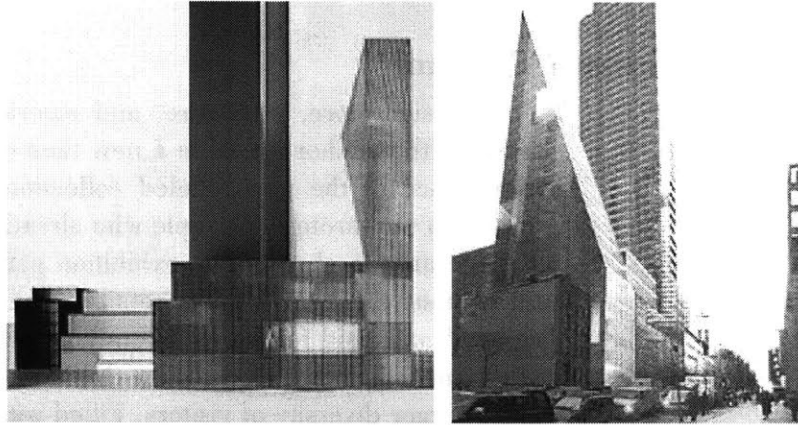
Source: MoMA web site.

Figure 3-11: From the competition design: The new Tower from 54th and 53rd Streets.

Adding to this the material choice of "glass shell", which through the use of printing and etching of the glass provided "a unifying element, communicated a variety of impressions and acquired an urban dimension of its own" was also a signature trait of the architects' architectural vocabulary[25], probably too acute for the "subtle" image the museum desired. Adding to this, the architects are currently building the new Tate gallery in London that is expected to open in the year 2000 and the possibility of relating in people's minds the two buildings would fail MoMA's desire for distinction and tradition of innovations and firsts[26].
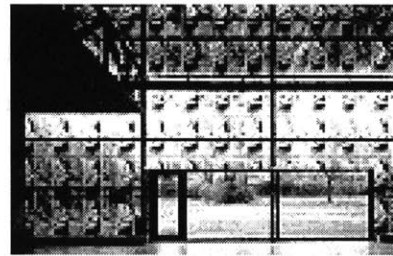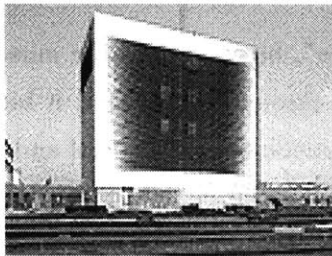
Source: Adapted from MoMA [1998], p. 241.

Figure 3-12: Façade treatment in the architects' buildings for Signal Box Auf dem Wolf, Switzerland and Ricola-Europe SA, France

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[25] See Signal Box Auf dem Wolf, Basel, Switzerland and Ricola-Europe SA, Mulhouse-Bruunstatt, France, both recent projects by the architects.
[26] See MoMA's *Today and Tomorrow* [1961] report.

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2.2 MoMALL: Bernard Tschumi

> "The design store, bookstore, and eateries (Modern Meals) serve as the anchor stores in a new theme mall; they use the importance of the unparalleled collection of modern art to appeal to the throngs of people who already come to the Fifth Avenue area to shop... The exhibition galleries are scattered throughout the mall behind retail storefronts; each is "accessed" and paid for independently as one more commodity in the mall. In this fashion, the exhibitions are able to draw a much larger diversity of visitors. Filled with picnic tables, the garden becomes the obligatory food court."[27]

Probably the architect, who thought deeper on the conceptualization and design of the future MoMA, Tschumi had the same opportunity as Koolhaas, to be among the competitors to participate in the initial discussion sessions at Pocantico. Very clear and open-minded in the definition of his "Ten Points for MoMA"[28], his "conceptual armature"[29] for the development of the project, and imaginary in presenting the metaphor of the *sponge* that reemerged in most discussions, he nevertheless failed to provide a coherent experientially and understandable spatially proposal. His lava concept of older, consolidated historically permanent galleries on the edges of the building and newer, temporary ones in the center of the structure, was one that promised an interesting articulation and resolution of spaces. Yet, the end project was one of an obsessive concern over circulation and basically in the form of stairs[30], leaving the galleries as vastly unresolved white walled playing fields. (Insert galleries)

In his 10 point "Urban Museum manifesto", he described the museum not "as a sculptural object, but as an interior city" and through his design, it became obvious that weaving the city meant circulation more articulation of a social and cultural experience.

Excitingly, the only architect to have considered, under the menacing debates discussed in chapter one, the daring scenario of the Mall as a building type within which to regenerate the institution, he was selected to participate in the Competition. As was probably expected, he didn't pursue this scheme in the final proposal. Still,

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[27] Bernard Tschumi in his Charette statement, MoMA [1998], p. 255.
[28] See Riley's summary of Tschumi's statement in MoMA [1998], pp. 278-282.
[29] Ibid. p. 254.
[30] See also Riley's reference to Tschumi's "chutes and ladder's", in *The MoMA expansion: A conversation with Terence Riley*, October 84, Spring 1998, p. 17.

his focus on public circulation and the concept of the museum as an extension, through the form of multiple courts, of the garden's "qualities of programmatic flexibility and social space", ended up uniformalizing the experience of the different spaces that floated around this elaborate circulation system of "routes". Possibly effected by his Mall proposal, his concern shifted to the generation of movement through space, through a sequence of resembling rooms, resulting in a linear Mall-like experience of the art on each floor and thus contradicting, at least graphically, his expressed intentions[31]. In a similar way as in his Le Fresnoy Studio National des Arts Contemporains in France (top picture, p. 265), the longitudinal section of his project (p. 262 and p. 259) indicates a prominent, monumental grand staircase[32] marking the passage from one floor to another, an element that strongly indicates a, negative for the institution's objectives, similarity in the approach of ritual movement and transitional space in both structures. Also, his Charette sketches on the Whitney wing and later the East garden building, were similar in their basic design concept to the Lerner student center at Columbia.

Like Taniguchi, as will be seen in the following section, Tschumi identified 53rd Street for commercial use and 54th for cultural activities. What must have nevertheless seemed problematic to the institution, was the location of the Design Store and Bookstore all along the thruway linking the two streets and above all his calling attention to this commercial zone by naming this "Fifth And A Half."[33]
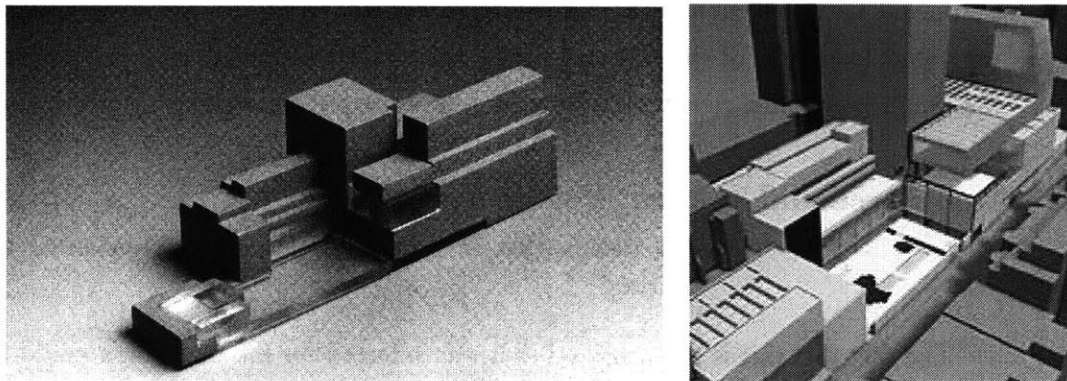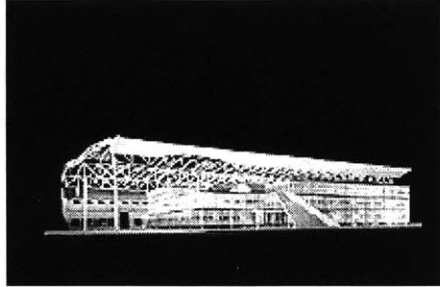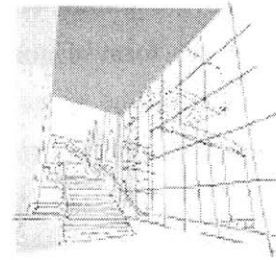

Source: MoMA [1998] pp. 236, 326.

Figure 3-13: from the charette to the competition design: 54th Street with Penthouse structure.

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[31] " ... Rather than a singular linear pathway". Tschumi in his competition statement, MoMA [1998], p. 279.

[33] See on Ground Floor plan (p. 238).

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Source: Adapted from MoMA [1998], p. 326, 265 and 259 consecutively.

Figure 3-14: The Grand staircase in Fresnoy **Figure 3-15: The Grand staircase at the MoMA**

In his final proposal, Tschumi misunderstood[34] the institution's efforts to, aside from opening up the institution to more unconstrained use of its grounds, to hold on to the privacy of its curatorial and administrative staff members. In so doing, he suggested "a clear and continuous relation between staff and public space"[35], allowing for semi-public spaces and for some offices to even be visible from the lobby.

Probably the major point upon which the institution could have been unfavorable to the project was the architect's proposal of a "penthouse" overlooking 54th Street, above his proposed "Upper garden", which would serve as "a highly visible architectural symbol for informational signs and temporary multimedia installations."[36] The idea of a Times-square like visual attraction and advertising stage could have been perceived by the institution as a boisterous element in the overall architecturally understated character of the design process, especially since this would be overlooking the quiet, residential street and disturbing the inherent tranquility of the garden.

2.3 Commerce and culture: Yoshio Taniguchi

> "A design that is subtle yet polemical, substantial and enduring" [37]

The fact that this is the proposal that was selected for the expansion could be seen as an influence to its analysis. As examined earlier in this chapter, Taniguchi's scheme has been widely debated, the institution has been largely seen as supporting a cooperating rather than a star designer and a design whose qualities would not be

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[34] This is a position that is very strongly felt by the restricted to any visitor without an appointment access to the office tower and even the library where it is located today.

[35] From the architect's statement in MoMA [1998], p. 281.

[36] Riley's description of the architect's statement, p. 279.

[37] MoMA [1998], p. 284.

concentrated in the formal elaboration of its envelope but rather the process of its making.
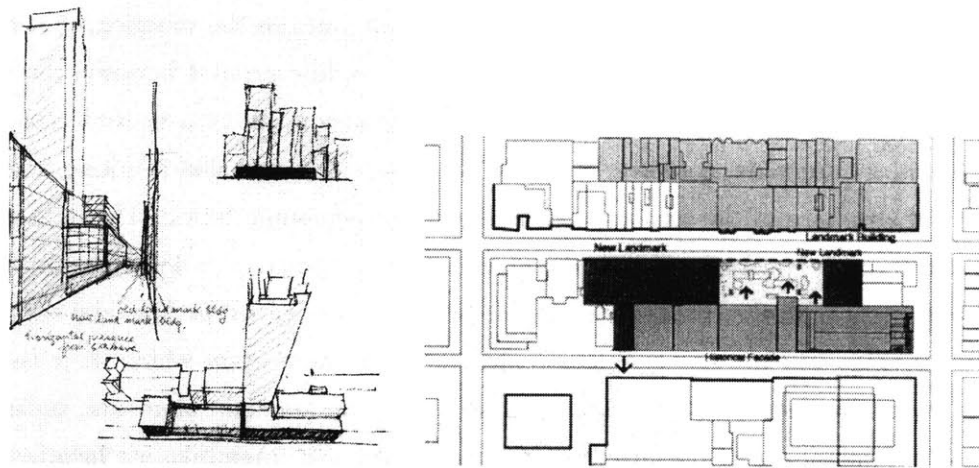
Source: MoMA [1998], pp. 249, 246.

Figure 3-16: 54th Street exterior perspective and site plan.

It is nevertheless important to note that this proposal was by far the clearest and better-communicated one in both the architect's simple drawings and statements. The architect began by addressing five points relating to a) the layout of gallery and public spaces, b) the function of distinct blocks for efficiency of use, c) the respect for the institution's history, d) the relationship to the city and the e) need for an architecture for growth[38]. Conserving as his guiding principle the desire to "create an ideal environment for the interaction of people and art" rather than making thunderous statements on world culture, the transformation of the status of architecture, the focus on image and aura production and the "malling" and "airporting" of contemporary public institutions and places[39], he distinctly drew his argument from these prudent, and naturally derived from the program, elements. These five points were re-articulated for the competition proposal but while the main lines remained the same, this was a proposal that was more sensible to the museum staff's working conditions and experience.

Like Tschumi he identified the difference in character of 53rd and 54th streets and integrated these in the organization of his ground floor. The major contribution that Taniguchi's configuration offered to the institutional structure, was the definite cut

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[38] Taniguchi's statement in MoMA [1998], pp. 242-243.
[39] This has been resumed from architects' previously examined statements at large.

between consumer and cultural spaces, by devoting half of the floor, with entrance form 53rdrd Street, to all commercial and entertainment activities and the other half, whose entrance was on 54th Street, to cultural and educational ones. He therefore offered a solution that accepted the coexistence but not the merging of commerce and culture. In so doing, his scheme provided a middle ground between the two types of spaces, generating a new axis for future expansion, along a central East-West direction, a core zone, a future "arcade"[40] woven within but also resulting from the inherent structure of the city's social, cultural and economic fabric. This was probably the strongest of positions among the architects in pragmatically dealing with this issue, respecting both the intellectual resources but also the need for financial support of these activities and not using it as a contestable argument upon which their concepts were built. Commerce and culture were seen as programmatic elements, indispensable to the functioning of the institution and deserving an unambiguous location in the museum's organization and the public's mind.
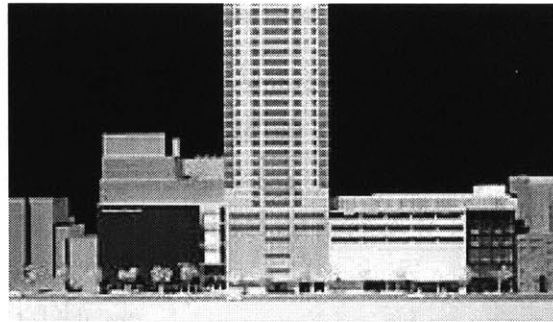
Source: MoMA web site.

Figure 3-17: 53rd Street façade, access to commercial activities

Taniguchi proposed a project whose identity would be constituted by its "integrity and not appearance"[41], whose qualities would be reflected through an internal logic, based on the need for a variety of experiences and viewpoints on art. His was the most detailed proposal among the finalists in presenting an overall model (insert picture) of the entire new building's layout of galleries and flows. His idea to reverse the chronological order of the exhibitions, situating contemporary art at the first gallery level, a concept that was apparently favored by the curators and director who has reportedly said that in this way, the museum would remain "grounded in the present"[42]. There was a strong feeling that Taniguchi's proposal was entirely based on the

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[40] Taniguchi's statement in MoMA [1998], p. 243.
[41] Riley's summary of Taniguchi's statement, MoMA [1998], p. 275.
[42] Mark Stevens in *Post-MoMA-ism*, December 16, 1997, p. 41.

ordering of an exciting, dynamic and constantly regenerated experience for the public. The ritual needed to begin on the level of contemporary life, of "art in our time", as a result of the ongoing artistic, cultural and social production and of all forces that may possibly drive intellectual activity, debates, value judgements in an ever-changing urban and global culture. Upon leaving the vitality and inherent tension upon which everyday life is structured the distance will increase between the individual and the context that gave birth to earlier artworks. Thus, there will be a possibility to choose and evaluate historical events and objects through one's own lens, drawing from a set, but often revised story, the elements that will constitute a multitude of privately and collectively formed realities. Experience was carefully crafted in this project as a series of movements, layers and events whose physical representation corresponded to a detailed thought of the site, the lighting conditions and spatial sequencing between interior and exterior views, lower and taller spaces but also a sensitivity the passing of time within the gallery spaces themselves. These were the qualities to which Riley referred to as the architect's "trademark design moves": "the procession from light to dark: the sense of compressed space opening to an expanded space, stairs that aren't just for circulation but make you aware of the act of going up - corresponding to what Yoshio might do for us"[43]. Adding to this it could be a consideration that, due to Mr. Taniguchi's origins, he was the one architect to mostly respect the character of the garden and commit to keeping its symbolism and spirit intact. The images that follow, are an important insight to the architect's treatment and sensitivity to exterior spaces, nature and the interaction between the building and its surroundings.
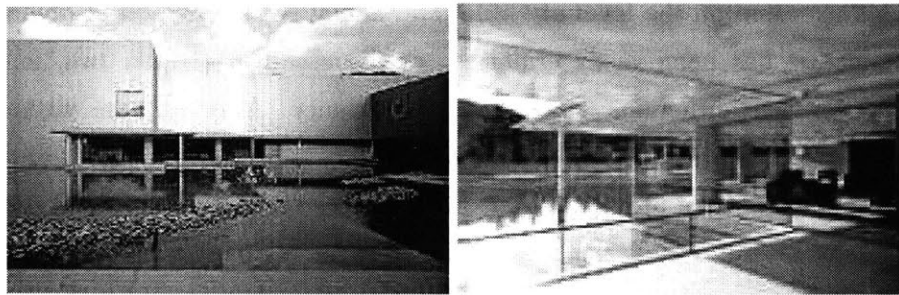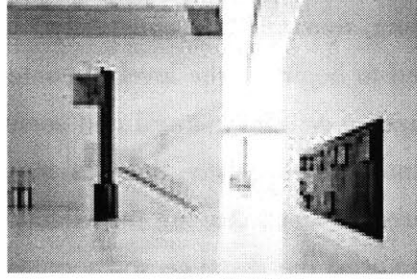

Source: MoMA [1998], p. 252.

Figure 3-18: Nagano Prefectural Shinano Art Museum, Japan, façade and interior with view to pool

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[43] Julie V. Iovine, *A modest someone redoes the Modern*, House and Home, The New York Times, Thursday, January 1, 1998, p.5.

Source: MoMA [1998], p. 253.

Figure 3-19: Toyota Municipal Museum of Art, Japan, gallery space

The museum never negated the common practice of an architect's selection being based upon the finding - and not imposing – of an architectural expression that reflected and physically structured its intentions[44]. Yet, the museum found in Taniguchi a vocabulary and intellectual position, which was expressed on a different level from the one that architects appear to have mainly worked with. His vocabulary was not exceptional in the resolution of the building's envelope and overall appearance but rather in the articulation and richness of the interior spaces, at least in their formulation and initial presentation[45]. His proposal offered a new landmark that was "no instantaneous flash signaling the arrival of an outrageous new development"[46]. Nevertheless it allowed for the architect's vision to craft the spaces and flows and interpret the specific but nevertheless extremely theoretical concepts and desires that had been provided by the institution.

Last but not least, this was a project that justified and asserted the existence of different but valid displays of objects on an additional level, beyond the spheres of commercial consumption of reproductions and intellectual consumption of originals. This operated on the level of virtual and actual representation of objects, another domain that has been vastly criticized, as discussed in chapter two, in relation to the questions of authenticity in cultural experience. After all, the virtual site that the MoMA offers today leaves the visitor anticipating for more in terms of collection items presented, while it offers a rather detailed account of a multitude of products that can actually be purchased electronically and by mail. It is nevertheless in the museum's intentions to invest more energy in the future on its technological resources in order to meet the variety of experiences it is hoping for. Acknowledging the existence of the

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[44] Such a position would have been absurd judging from the institution's concept of the architect as someone who does not solely provide a service quoted at the beginning of the chapter.

[45] The quality of these spaces will only be judged upon the opening of the new museum.

[46] Riley, quoted in Julie V. Iovine, *A modest someone redoes the Modern*, House and Home, The New York Times, Thursday, January 1, 1998, p. 6.

virtual realm of cultural reproduction and the fact that there is a public willing to consume the experience that this may in the future offer, Taniguchi clearly relates a physical structure to this kind of viewing.
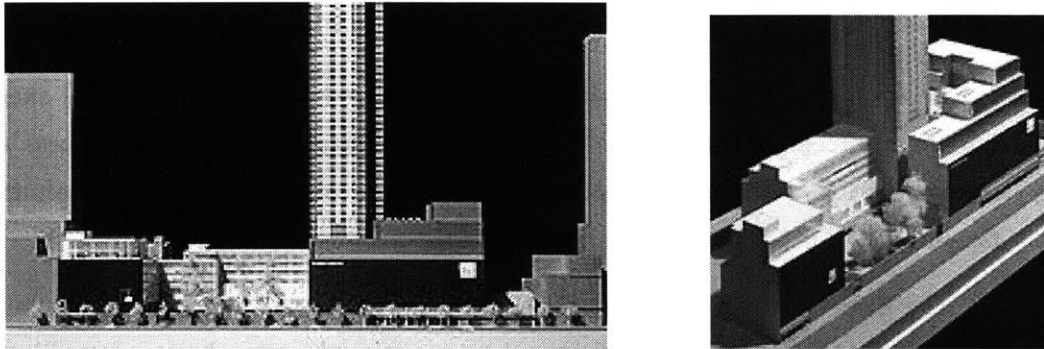
Figure 3-20: 54th Street, the cultural activities: the educational center and gallery building
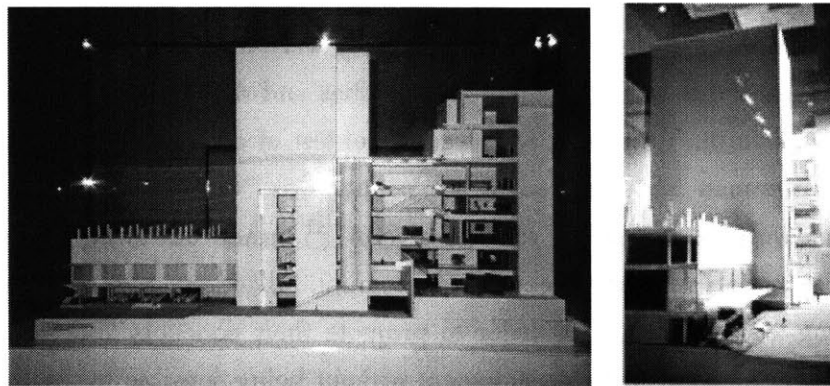
Source: Photos by the author.
Note: Pelli's much debated "shopping-mall" structure, the Garden Hall is removed.

Figure 3-21: East-West section through the galleries

Overall, this project could be considered as a proposal for multiple *reordering* in both the cultural and social realms towards a new equilibrium that accepts and works with the various and often contradicting, underlying tensions that tend to either blur all possible distinctions between fields or dig irreconcilable gaps between them. More of a stabilizing factor, this is a project that, for whatever reasons this competition may have and will continue to serve, will be characterized by its careful focus on the process of making things happen in architectural design. Adding to this, it has indicated the need for and importance of mutually defined objectives in each distinct project, as well as the architect's role in the marketing of a project's inherent qualities. It has argued for a style that is *dynamically outlined by process* rather than rigidly

adopted by a controlling elite for groups of controlled consumers, which would be therefore exposed to more political criticism and sociocultural debate.

3. CONCLUSIONS

Looking back at all the projects that participated in this architectural exercise, it has been interesting to observe that to a great extent, the selection process was determined by the architects' positions on the debate over consumer and cultural practices in the production and consumption of the museum institution.

The three finalists, together with Koolhaas, who didn't reach the final stage, represented the entire spectrum of arguments on the subject and were actually the only architects to actually confront and determine a powerful viewpoint regarding this controversial issue.

In observing the younger generation of architects it became obvious in their ideas and fashioning of their arguments that they were trying to market their ideas by overlooking or condemning commercial activities and their professional peers' preoccupation with form. Taniguchi, who was the oldest of all and belonging to the generation that Eisenman had referred to at Pocantico as "the end of a dying line" that was "stuck with a tradition (of) *theorizing form*",[47] turned out to be the most respectful of the institution's history, needs and program. All others basically focussed on determining a strong image in order to promote their concepts and saw the project as a means to make a personal statement without being sensible to the institutions unique character but their own need for individual affirmation and redefinition of architectural practice. Against probably the institution's expectations and besides the fact that the obvious stars had been excluded in the first place, it was the younger participants who were trying to promote commercially their designs and predetermined intellectual positions.

In reviewing the drawings and concepts that the architects presented, Taniguchi's selection was perhaps the most sensible conclusion to the competition. Most decisions seem to have been played out on the basis of the ground floor configuration, as this represented the visitor's initiation to the experience and his design was from the beginning focused on the location and distribution of the cultural and commercial characters of the institution. In terms of the building's exterior appearance, Taniguchi's

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[47] Eisenman in MoMA [1998], Conversation I.

project was the only architect not to strive for justification and grounding of his design. All others outlined their envelopes by seeking an anchorage in zoning codes, complex theories or mathematical equations "between abstraction and figuration"[48], with engaging results but nevertheless contradicting the institution's formal intentions. Taniguchi's "two simple geometric forms, one accommodating the galleries and the other the educational facilities, symbolize[d] the dual mission of the museum" and his volume of "honed, black slate, gray marble, and anodized aluminum panels (that would be) readily identifiable as the principal element of the reorganized museum"[49] were probably seen as the perfect counterpoint and unifying solution to the collage of the 53rd Street façades and the whiteness of the 1939 original building.

What the MoMA wanted was not to visualize an architect's idiosyncratic visualization of a building but a fruitful exchange between the architect and the institution in order to outline prudently its future on the basis of concept and process. Taniguchi's was the approach that best suited these objectives and his award of the project could be seen as the logical conclusion, since his proposal was the less ideologically charged of all.

Amusingly, through this emphasis on process, it was argued that, "MoMA's trying to get away from the museum-as-shopping-mall and get back to the cutting edge."[50] In a research that has precisely focused on these ideas and debates and has attempted to understand the extent to which they have an impact to architectural design, it has been inspiring to observe that consumption is manifested under a far more complexly discernable form than what has been debated. In the same article it had been also estimated that the project's cost would reach a maximum of $ 100 Million while today it has been announced, as was also mentioned in chapter two, that it will be of $ 650 Million[51]. Both of these ultimatums make it altogether entertaining to see how Taniguchi's project has been an example of architecture where appearances have failed to reflect its structure, worth and potential.

In this chapter, the participants' submissions have been observed through the different phases of the design exercise, their relation to and interpretation of the issue of consumption in the realm of museum architecture, leading up to the selected project that was intended by the MoMA to contest contemporary production models. Based

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[48] This was Herzog and de Meuron's description of their Tower's form, MoMA [1998], p. 271.
[49] Taniguchi quoted in Riley's summary of the architect's statement, MoMA [1998], pp. 275-278.
[50] James Russell, quoted in MoMA's set for a makeover, in Peter Slatin, New York Post, December 9, 1997.
[51] MoMA Press office release, April 24th, 1998.

on the findings of this analysis, the final chapter attempts to provide insights on the contribution of this design process to our future thinking and practice of architecture.

Conclusion
The role of consumption in the design process

> "To the extent that these three proposals so skillfully demonstrate the *potential role for the architect* in transforming the built environment, the Competition results can be seen as a *primer* of architectural strategies for the next century..."[1]

1. CONSUMPTION IN MUSEUM ARCHITECTURE

In the course of this research, we have seen that, in moving away from the past models of the *treasure house*, the *palace* and the *temple*, new museum architecture is increasingly becoming an ambiguous field of practice. Due to the lack of a set typology and to the preoccupation with experiential aspects of design, a domain that (even though largely researched in fields like marketing and advertising) remains largely inoperable for the architectural design process, it has been subjected to almost all debates that have touched the profession in the last years.

Consumption has been seen as a dominant force in the shaping of our physical environment and notably in the production of museum architecture, since this constitutes a critical ground for the presentation of objects, their cultural reproduction and formation of artistic and/or commodity status. This study has reviewed the prevailing debates on these issues, it has attempted an understanding of the way consumption operates in the design of museum architecture in general and focused on a project that recently contested contemporary models of museum practice. The objective has been to promote awareness on the nature and role of consumption in new and expanding museum architecture in order to provide an operative framework for future thinking and design.

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[1] Riley in MoMA [1998], p. 270.

2. MoMA's EXPANSION

> "[...] If a political process is defined as one through which he who has the most influence selects the winning architect, without any reference to the intellectual issues involved, then this has been an intellectual process as opposed to a political one."[2]

We have observed that MoMA's desire was, from the early stages, to make the design process "more of a dialogue"[3] and "to influence the program by architectural thinking."[4] The fact that this institution intended to challenge preconceived notions and selection patterns found in existing art museum models became apparent as we increasingly saw the rejection of formal references and the effort to base on metaphors all concepts relevant to design. By engaging in a complex design process, the institution moved from very general discussions (that nevertheless produced an extensive array of intellectual material) to a Charette that sought to reveal the participating architects' thought processes and major concepts, to finally conclude with the Competition for a single optimized design. Through this interaction of theoretical and design information, the project's needs and program were continuously challenged, re-analyzed, and redefined, thus progressively leading to a scheme that would be structured upon the *partnership* between architects and institution and justified from precisely the *process* rather than the strength of design. What MoMA specifically wanted was:

a) To avoid a signature building by a *star architect* where the client would have "no intention to exert control over the design," as in the case of Gehry's Guggenheim museum in Bilbao[5],

b) To avoid a *"king-maker"* process, in which the architect would have no "standing" and would bring "nothing but *gratitude* [...] for [the institution to] have *bestowed* upon [him] the commission,"

c) And above all, to *"clearly understand what it wants to be and be able to express it clearly"* so that the architect *"understands what is being communicated."*[6]

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[2] Riley in FOSTER, RILEY *et al.* [1998], p. 5.
[3] Ibid., p. 5.
[4] Ibid., p. 4.
[5] This is a comparison that was natural after the widely publicized 1997 opening of this museum.
[6] Riley in FOSTER, RILEY *et al.* [1998], p. 5.

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Assisting the institution's objectives and position in relation to architectural practice, consumption clearly appeared under a variety of forms, in the preliminary discussions, the assembling of the program and the architects' concepts. Through the analysis of the process' major stages, we observed how it came to be considered as:

a) a driving force for thought and action around issues of institutional *identity* and promotion of its physical presence within the urban culture,

b) a necessary element of the institution's *operation*, assuring the funding and continuation of its research, the expansion of its collection and its ability to provide for a broader public with various interests,

c) a reflection of contemporary society's need for a multitude of visual and mental challenges and experiences and, above all, the importance for the institution to allow for a near-infinite number of individually and collectively constructed *narratives*.

Even though these points were not new to contemporary debates, we observed that in this process, they were approached with different sensibility in regard to their nature. This translated as follows:

♦ *Identity* was sought in the institution's acknowledgment of its role, needs and desires and the interpretation of these structural elements was sought in concepts and designs that derived from an *exchange* between the institution and the architects' intellectual and creative refinement, *rather than the adoption* of a set, idiosyncratic design.

♦ *Commercial activities* were given a clear, indisputable and quantifiable position at a very early stage in the framework of the museum experience and its organizational structure. Even though the institution's plans indicate that "there will be a significant retail presence in the new space,"[7] in the competition brief[8], architects were clearly given the possibility to move retail spaces to underground locations.

♦ *Cultural experience and reproduction* were approached with a broader perspective, accepting the existence of various, *different yet authentic* forms of

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[7] *Where art meets commerce*, Crain's New York Business, June 16, 1997.
[8] See section 3.2.2.4.

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interaction between the individual and the artistic objects. In so doing, the institution confronted possible criticism on its control over the public's assimilation of cultural material and consumptive practices.

We have naturally recognized that the incentives behind the uncommon expansion process that led to these findings can be perceived as part of a marketing strategy, which, under a new generation of administrators and curators,[9] has been revitalizing MoMA's image and seeking for "a more nuanced, more complex"[10] view of the history of modern art. What however remains the crucial contribution of this study is the detection of an unconventional manifestation of consumption in the architectural elaboration of the institution's goals; a revised approach to design activity, independent of architecture as commodified object, and relative to architecture as experiential structure, supporting intellectual and corporeal challenges.

3. WHAT HAS BEEN LEARNED THROUGH THIS INQUIRY

In an attempt to outline a filter through which to examine and detect the role of consumption in the actual conceptualization and design of new art museum architecture, it was observed that the main points upon which attention was centered were the issues of:

a) The existence of a museum's building type, its identity and the integral (and ethical[11]) stance of the architect and/or the client in elaborating its design and supporting.

b) The presence of retail activities and the extent to which their positioning and surface occupancy alters the museums cultural character and,

c) The experience of the various cultural resources that the museum offers under a more or less controlling way, in view of generating additional income to the institution.

Even though all three points were equally important to discuss separately, it became apparent that they were interconnected and mutually inclusive. One depended from and reflected on the other and the overall relationship was not one that allowed

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[9] See more in ARTNEWS [1997], pp. 130-135.
[10] Ibid., p. 130.
[11] Due to the fact that this is an issue that underlies all discussions on architectural production and would require more of an extensive study than time would allow for in this research, its definition will be left to the reader's discretion.

for categorization of priorities in dealing with the different aspects that were presented. The estimation was that they all together constituted a *network of relations* underlying, driving but also interwoven in a multitude of design choices, yet never taken into consideration in an absolute and controlling way over other needs and functions of the institution.

Along the process, the degree of interaction between the three points would change and, according to the design phase, this would appear more or less important in relation to one of the three points examined. Interestingly, the quantifiable aspect of consumption in the retail activities, even though it remained basically stable along the process in regard to the institution's intentions, became an important element of the architects' conceptualization of the museum. The architects outlined their concepts based upon their position on consumer practices, affirming their projects' identities, mostly promoting an anti-consumerist attitude, neglecting to affirm a firm position on the role and location of these spaces in relation to the general museum experience. The large majority of participants did not take the experiential aspect into deep consideration at the Charette stage. Focus remained on the personal, stylistic approach of the museum's architecture and, as we observed at the end of Chapter Three, it was the organization of the proposals' ground floors that must have significantly guided the institution's finalist choices. However, what the analysis of the finalists' projects showed was that, without the institution abandoning its objectives, it was through the architect's spatial vision that these were translated to form an institutional image which was determined by its experiential consumption. This evolution is outlined on figure 4-1 below.
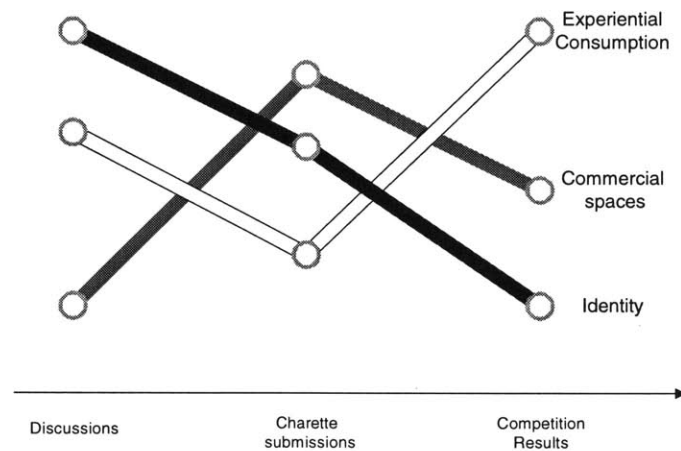
Figure 4-1: Evolution of the concern for the 3 dimensions of consumption

It became therefore apparent that consumption's influence was a structural element but not a controlling principle. It was rather a concept that generated thought in the elaboration of a ground that would afford the public more experiential choices and provide the possibility for individual and collective curatorial patterns of mental consumption of the art objects. This was above all reflected in the concept of and the call for an experience of *interiority* as a way to start thinking about design in terms of:

a) one's immediate, felt, and even haptic, space

b) assisting people to focus on the act of looking and thinking, and

c) allowing for possibilities of multiple viewpoints and personal assimilation of objects and their context.

Under this speculation of interiority we have reached the second and concluding level of critical analysis of museum architecture as has been activated by this design process and more specifically, grounded in the selected project.

4. A FRAMEWORK FOR EXPLORING THE DESIGN OF MUSEUM PROJECTS

The fact that a Japanese architect was selected to design the MoMA's expansion is in itself a point to delve upon when looking at the future of museum design. While Western culture perceives museums as a fertile ground for major architectural statements, for the Japanese, the museum is a cosmopolitan phenomenon "lacking the religious connotations of its Western counterpart."[12] Approached in a relaxed spirit, within metaphysical rather than functional considerations and without aesthetic codes or methodological pressures, it offers the possibility for unrestrained creativity and imagination. Also, according to Kurokawa, Japanese culture is based on the "sensibility to topos"[13] rather than attached to permanent structures and therefore is more involved with process than the permanence of monumental structures.

The Japanese art museum is "a distinctly impure phenomenon that can indulge the sense, tickle the comic spirit, proclaim a commercial or mystical program, or simply display objects of high elitist concern [...] a creature indistinct from what Isozaki calls "ma", or the sense of space always existing in time, of the immateriality of mate-

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[12] DAVIS [1990], p. 98.
[13] Kurokawa [1993], New Wave Japanese architecture, p. 7.

rial forms, which in Western terms refers to the incurably existential natire of the museum at the end of this century, redefined every time it is built and opened."[14]

What therefore appears to be the exceptional and creatively engaging aspect of this approach is the acknowledgement of a variety of concurrent and often contradictory forces towards the elaboration of each museum design. This allows for structures that are situated within a range of ideological tendencies and discourses, thus providing ambiguous spaces with intertwined functions. It is rather a playful and experimental materialization of mental images rather than a representation of solid institutional doctrines varying from one historic period to another and arguing for a single definition of the museum as a type or for a vague sense of purity in expression and styles. Under these considerations, museum architecture allows for multiple mental events to occur and poses perceptual challenges for individual readings and synthesis. It is seen less as an object of consumption subjected to the forces of capitalistic politics but rather as a ground where experience, culture and life can be consumed through the formation of social relations and a variety of authentic, mental but also materialistic practices.

Fumihiko Maki outlines the character of public Japanese architecture as one "not to be found in the building [...] but in its space and territory [...] in the sensitivity to borders, both marked and unmarked; in the multiple layering of space by means of shoji and other screens; and in spatial arrangements structured not by the idea of a center but by the idea of depth [...] all of which are described as constituting a quality of dignity and ceremonial." This account of the dominating features of contemporary Japanese architecture probably reflects the shift that is occurring today in Western museum architectural practice in the need to move away from the "primacy of design"[15] and endless concern with the theorization of the formal, tangible aspects of the object which constitute the building's shell, its centrally distributed sense of order[16], and the level of complexity of their relation.

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[14] Davis [1990], p. 98.
[15] Ghirardo [1996], p. 27.
[16] This is apparent even in the design of the Bilbao Guggenheim.

This heralds an architecture preoccupied with the relations and tensions between voids, the "hollowness" of spaces, the interaction of spaces through light, materials and scales based on the structuring of:

♦ The *peripheral structure* of the building, determining continuity and fractures, thus animating observational speed in capturing the immediate environment and the duration of contemplation in one single space at a given time.

♦ The *layering of spaces*, determining the sequence of inputs and the perception of bodily movements through space, by creating filters, "rites of passage", thresholds. Through the multiple layering of space, architecture provides the ground for a sequential development and construct of narrative promenades, allowing for the space to unfold and sustain a ceremonial quality.

♦ The *depth of focus*, determining the visual and spatial perspective within which the object is perceived. Through the drafting of details, of views and relations between the object and the exterior environment but also by allowing the viewer to have a variety of viewpoints[17], this quality provides a sense of order to the exhibition, a coherent pattern allowing for the object to stimulate the viewer.

Approaching museum design by shifting the priority from a formally charged gesture that will eventually contain the experience we are attempting to produce and communicate as architects, to one that tries to express the inherent tension and sensation to be consumed within individual and adjacent spaces, where the physical outline comes as a support of the invisible but verbally and mentally expressible qualities, is probably the most insightful feature revealed through this design process.

At a time when the durable and material elements of architectural production are perceived as idiosyncratic gestures acquiring commodity status and exploited in order to attract public and consequently accumulate capital, design needs to acknowledge more than ever the continuously transforming cultural and social realities. Production of place has moved from the concept of public space as produced by a monumental structure to one that tries to interpret meaning by acknowledging the fact that each individual appropriates and internalizes a physical environment through its potential to produce mental and operational challenges. Without denying architecture's role in expressing meaning through the visible durable structures it appears that the value of

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[17] See MoMA [1998], for an example of this in the case of large-scale sculpture as proposed by Taniguchi, p. 319.

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places is increasingly produced not through the crystallized qualities of the perimeters of a structure but "out of the meeting of present energies"[18] attached to and reflected in the processes of making.

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[18] Ignasi de Solà-Morales, *Differences*, quoted in HARVARD DESIGN MAGAZINE [1997], p. 43.

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