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The Cube³: Three Case Studies of Contemporary Art vs. the White Cube

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**THE CUBE³:
THREE CASE STUDIES OF CONTEMPORARY ART vs. THE WHITE CUBE**

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SUBMITTED TO SCRIPPS COLLEGE IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF BACHELOR OF ARTS

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Chapter One: Out of the Box

Physicist Erwin Schrödinger's famous cat thought experiment describes a cat placed in a box with a vial of hydrocyanic acid. Until someone opens the box, the cat is both alive and dead at the same time, exemplifying a paradox within quantum theory. But what if he placed contemporary artwork in a similar box, specifically a white box, and instead of a radioactive substance, the box also contained invisible ideologies related to Modernism? Is the contemporary art considered alive or dead? This chapter is not an exploration of quantum law; rather, through a brief review of the available literature on the subject of the white cube exhibition space, it provides the context to consider the white cube's impact on current decisions involving the exhibition of contemporary art. The thesis as a whole explores this question of how best to display contemporary art through three case studies, all New York museums, all exhibiting "contemporary" art. This analysis raises questions about the place of contemporary art in the spaces, both physical and ideological, of American art museums. Contemporary works challenge art museums because they often test conventional ideas about display, installation, conservation and acquisition. What is the effect of these challenges? Do they inspire museums to change and grow in response to contemporary art, or do they reveal fundamental incompatibilities that suggest many museums are not suitable environments for contemporary art? If museums and contemporary art diverge, what are the implications for both as we move forward?

How did we get to these existential questions? We begin with the white cube. White cube describes the most common appearance of art galleries exhibiting work from

the 20th century on. These spaces typically have white undecorated walls, often unobtrusively lit, and neutral flooring. The result is an environment that de-contextualizes traditional museum and gallery space and appears, seemingly, timeless. This format helps catalyze the viewer's encounter with the isolated artwork, which it detaches from external reality and from historical, economic and social contexts. The white cube has become the default display mode for both modern and contemporary art in North America and internationally. However, while the white cube quietly shapes and supports the aesthetic of modern art, its relationship to contemporary art is more complicated. The rise and prevalence of the white cube are connected to the modern art aesthetic of the late 19th and early 20th century—a stripped down, bare and functional aesthetic. The white cube is constructed for presenting art; however, the changing aims of contemporary art have called attention to its otherwise hidden ideology. The white cube provides the starting point for many contemporary artists as they respond to viewers' *de facto* expectations about display, created by the prevalence of the white cube in museums of modern art. Through this chapter I hope to provide a needed context for understanding how and why contemporary art disrupts the white cube.

The starting point for any analysis of modern art gallery space in America is the scholarship dealing with the white cube. Art historians such as Brian O'Doherty, Carol Duncan, and Douglas Crimp have written about its seeming neutrality, as well as explored the hidden ideologies at work in this format. Brian O'Doherty introduced the term "white cube" in his book *Inside the White Cube* from 1989. In it, he discusses the importance of gallery space throughout the history of Modernism, arguing that the white

cube became the model for the display of 20th-century art because, by removing any aesthetic or historical context from the work, it created a sacred space. That strategy corresponds with the way museums position art as the most highly valued human product. This sacred space brings along with it what O’Doherty calls an “eternity of display.” By removing any indication of a specific period, the gallery achieves a sense of timelessness.¹ O’Doherty relates the gallery space to religious spaces, which decontextualize their environment to suggest that the worshipper can connect directly to the divine. Similarly, the viewer in the pristine white cube can connect directly with the artwork. O’Doherty suggests that art becomes sacred through its context; in Modernism this context becomes the work itself.²

We can see the effect of the white cube on the experience of museumgoers by examining the Museum of Modern Art, opened in 1929, and the first institution to implement this white cube format throughout the museum. As an art museum focused on modern art, MoMA’s gallery environment drew on a Modernist style of art and architecture that was promoted by the Bauhaus in Germany, characterized by clean lines, white walls and a lack of applied decoration (Figure 1). O’Doherty observes that viewers see art displayed in such galleries as more valuable than the same art encountered in the studio environment. O’Doherty concludes that the white cube acts as its own medium, transforming while remaining unchanged.³ Although some critics and scholars of

American museums came to see MoMA as increasingly devoted to a narrow definition of

¹Brian O’Doherty, *Inside the White Cube: The Ideology of the Gallery Space*. (Santa Monica: Lapis Press, 1986), 7

² Ibid.

³ Brian O’Doherty, *Studio and Cube: On the Relationship Between Where Art Is Made and Where Art Is Displayed*. (Princeton Architectural Press, 2007), 33

Modernism, MoMA provides an important example of how a single art institution's insistence on the white cube became the default format for displaying modernist artworks.⁴ Alfred Barr, the first director of MoMA, designed each gallery to be autonomous, yet connected through the larger story of the development of Modern art.⁵ As opposed to museums that displayed works by old masters, often on colored walls or textured wallpaper and elaborately framed, museums adopting the white cube format adhered to principles of modernity. Barr believed it was important to separate art from social factors and thought that social pressures of society had a negative influence on art.⁶ In the traditional pre-modern salon-style exhibition of art, art was hung on all free wall space and an obvious hierarchy became apparent, with the most important works hung at eye-level. Today, in any modern art museum, the space has been neutralized with white walls and with each artwork given its own area at eye level. Importance is more subtly suggested, for instance through placement on a dominant wall, with major masterpieces displayed where viewers are most likely to see them. The simple act of hanging an artwork in the white cube, in fact, elevates it into something assumed to be worth looking at.⁷

Though he was the first to describe the white cube, other scholars joined O'Doherty in looking critically at the white cube's influence on the experience of viewing art. It is so ubiquitous that those who have visited an art museum will be able to

⁴ Shea, Christopher. "When Modern and Contemporary Art Broke Up: The Boston Manifesto That Gave the ICA Its Name." *The Boston Globe*, July 28: 1-5, 3

⁵ Charlotte Klonk. *Spaces of Experience: Art Gallery Interiors from 1800 to 2000*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 205.

⁶ Ibid, 154

⁷ O'Doherty, *Studio*, 19.

predict accurately the experience they will have at other art museums. Carol Duncan expands O'Doherty's ideas about the sacred space created by the white cube in her essay "Art Museum as Ritual," in which she proposes that the viewer's experience is one of ritual similar to a religious experience. The appearance, unspoken rules and expected attitude of visitors all contribute to thinking of an art museum as a reflective, and somehow sacred, space. Duncan discusses a shift from the Enlightenment idea of museums, as didactic, to the early 20th century idea that the museum is designed to enable viewers to experience art in isolation. The goal of the exhibition is to remove all obstacles that might prevent the individual from having a transcendent experience of art.⁸ Through positioning artworks in isolation on white walls in a neutral space with lighting designed to highlight individual works, museum exhibitions successfully create the ritual-secular-religious experience Duncan identifies. In fact, this experience may become a liminal one, meaning to transcend beyond the mundane present and enter a new perspective outside of time.⁹

The influence of the white cube spread quickly in Western displays of art, and by the 1930s it had become the standard form of display in museums and galleries. Though it had originated as a display space for modern art, the white cube was appropriated in non-Modernist settings because of the way it increased the perception of a displayed work's value and importance. For instance, although it referenced parts of the Modernist movement of which he was suspicious, Hitler admired the orderly arrangement of decontextualized works and favored the display style for his "*Grosse deutsche*

⁸ Carol Duncan, "The Art Museum as Ritual." *Art Bulletin* 77 (March 1995): 10–13, 10.

⁹ *Ibid*, 11

Kunstaussstellung” (“Great German Art”) exhibition in 1937, a show of Nazi-approved pieces of idealized figures and landscapes. Shown in the white cube, this asserted the works’ value. The “Great German Art” exhibition, with its message that the white cube is the appropriate space for works of value, was in stark contrast to the simultaneous “*Entartete Kunst*” or “Degenerate Art” exhibition, both in content and environment. The “Degenerate Art” exhibition, also organized by Hitler’s government, displayed modern art but deemed it unworthy of the respect of the white cube; instead the walls were cluttered with graffiti and the viewing experience was heavily contextualized.

Degenerate, meaning something that demonstrates a loss of desirable moral qualities was the descriptive word given to modern art by Hitler during the Nazi regime in Germany. “Degenerate Art,” opened on July 19, 1937, one day after the “Great German Art” exhibition in Munich and was designed to influence the public about the poor and unpatriotic quality of modern art. This is a significant example in showing how influential museum display can be in dictating the perception and aesthetic judgment of viewers. This exhibition had its origins four years earlier in 1933, at the start of the Nazi regime. Employees of the Combat League for German Culture replaced directors of contemporary art institutions and displayed these collections for the purpose of vilifying modern art. These exhibitions, which eventually led to the “*Entartete Kunst*,” were called *Schreckenskammern*, translating to “chambers of the horrors of art,” which defamed both artists and dealers.¹⁰

The artworks deemed degenerate were avant-garde and unrealistic, not

¹⁰ Stephanie Barron, *Degenerate Art: The Fate of the Avant-Garde in Nazi Germany* (Los Angeles: Los Angeles Museum of Art, 1991), 82

representing the Aryan ideal. Modernist artworks including examples of Cubism, Futurism and Dadaism, were considered part of a conspiracy to make fun of German citizens, since their significance or intentions were never straightforward. Many viewers agreed that modern art was confusing and lacked a sense of completeness.¹¹ The exhibition itself took place in ten poorly lit rooms at the top of the archeological museum in Munich. Although the works were supposedly grouped by theme, the designation labels for each room were not necessarily relevant to the art; rather, they defined the atmosphere of German disrespect that these pieces conveyed. These headings included “An Insult to German Womanhood” and “Insolent Mockery of the Divine.” Quotations from related museums, artists and dealers were taken out of their original context and graffitied onto the walls to act as evidence of their degeneracy.¹² Simply put, the display of “*Entartete Kunst*” (Figure 2) was not guided by clean, straight, orderly lines, and the display decisions were motivated by a desire to discredit the exhibition.

Some visitors were also able to see the exhibition of Nazi-approved art shown at the House of German Art and hung in a white cube, orderly, fashion (Figure 3). As a result of this comparison, they were easily influenced by the exhibition strategy of “*Entartete Kunst*.” Although the organizers stated to the press that the audience could decide for themselves how to respond to the exhibition, the chaotic way in which the artworks were presented, hung diagonally and with graffiti on the walls, steered spectators to the only acceptable opinion.¹³ The discrimination faced by the artists whose works were presented in *Entartete Kunst* and by Jewish artists caused many of them to

¹¹ Ibid, 30

¹² Ibid, 28

¹³ Ibid, 35

move to New York City in the 1930s and 40's, which was accepting of more modern and contemporary concepts of art.¹⁴

Modern art took hold in America as a symbol of resilience over destruction; and as America's new, large and affluent middle class began to take a greater interest in culture, they encountered modern art, which offered a way for Americans to place themselves in this new postwar society. However, much like the German citizens faced with The Degenerate Art exhibition, they did not fully understand the significance of the modern artwork they viewed. Modern art was not accessible, as the average visitor didn't have the background knowledge of the continual changes in art in the 20th century that would give it meaningful context. When confronted with a painting by Pollock or late Picasso viewers were often confused and resentful. At MoMA, Barr used white cube galleries, connecting them to show the inexorable logic of the development of modern art. In a different response to this perception of unintelligibility and elitism associated with modern art, and in contrast to MoMA's exhibition decisions, the Boston Institute of Modern Art declared that its institution would become the Boston Institute of *Contemporary Art* (ICA) in February 1948.¹⁵

The example of the Boston Institute of Contemporary Art is a good place to begin to explore a difference in the ways modern and contemporary were defined and used, starting in the first half of the 20th century, with roots in the competing German exhibitions of the "Great German Art" and the "*Entartete Kunst*." The seemingly minor

¹⁴ Martica Sawin, *Surrealism in Exile and the Beginnings of the New York School* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1998), 290.

¹⁵ Serge Guilbaut. "The Frightening Freedom of The Brush: The Boston Institute of Contemporary Art and Modern Art, 1948-1950" in *Dissent: The Issue of Modern Art in Boston* (Boston: Institute of Contemporary Art, 1985): 55-93, 58

word change, from “modern” to “contemporary”, sparked heated controversy in the art world. By changing the name, ICA was able to explore genres beyond the abstraction that had almost come to define Modernism at MoMA. In this way, they were able to focus on art they described as “conscientious and forthright” as opposed to the abstract art that they felt was becoming increasingly esoteric to viewers.¹⁶ The strong response to the museum’s name change made it clear that the terms “modern” and “contemporary” had gained political connotations along with aesthetic ones. Producing a manifesto that redefined the modern paradigm, ICA further signaled that it no longer accepted the traditional definition of the modern. At MoMA, Barr had narrowed the tenets of Modernism to point to a particular understanding of “progress.”¹⁷ Ironically, even after its rejection of the modern label, ICA continued to exhibit “historic” modern art including works by Picasso and Miró similar to the work shown at MoMA. However, ICA tried to disassociate itself from the perceptions associated with an institution of modern art, exemplified by MoMA. Although its title and mission had changed, the setting in which it displayed art had not: ICA continued to exhibit new contemporary work in the white cube, as it continues to do today.

Though ICA and MoMA disagreed fundamentally about the kind of art they displayed, the fact that both found the white cube setting congenial is useful. The average museum-goer usually focuses on the art and does not think explicitly about its setting, especially when the setting offers few contextual clues; as a result, viewers are likely to be unaware that the lack of context is itself based on an ideology that influences the

¹⁶ Nelson W. Aldrich, and James S. Plaut. *“Modern Art” and the American Public : A Statement by The Institute of Contemporary Art Formerly The Institute of Modern Art.* (Boston, 1948), 7

¹⁷ Guilbaut, *Brush*, 61-62.

experience. However, despite the power of the white cube to direct experience, other factors, such as the unreflective viewer and the multiple purposes for his/her visit, can detract from having a sacred and unmediated experience with art. Frequently, visitors are not thinking about the space as providing a ritual experience as much as they might have been before museums introduced the competition of gift shops and cafes, which allow the visitor to partake in other cultural activities besides the viewing of art. MoMA is one institution that has deliberately widened the experience of museum going to transform visitors into responsible “taste-makers” in consumer society.¹⁸ MoMA has its own successful design store separate from the museum. It has similar stores in Soho and Tokyo, two areas associated with superior taste. The success of these stores, which are also designed using neutral colors and orderly display, an echo of the aesthetics of the white cube, reinforces MoMA’s exhibition strategies as reflecting good taste.

As art museums became increasingly interested in marketing to their visitors as consumers, artists began to question the patronage, admission and overall workings of these institutions. The container-like appearance and constraints of displaying within the white cube caused many artists to become increasingly frustrated. The white cube was employed to isolate and validate artwork, to separate it from ordinary life. Many artists argued that art should be connected to a broader society, not an elite museum audience. Some artists wanted their work to be connected to a certain location and began making site-specific work outside of the white cube. Communities of artists, such as the Art Workers’ Coalition (1969) and the Guerrilla Art Action Group (1969), believed that art

¹⁸ Ibid, 17

needed to be taken out of the hands of the elite and returned to the people in order to be meaningful, and they specifically targeted MoMA as no longer relevant.¹⁹ Although many artists continued to display their work in the white cube, they also began to work with movements that interact much more directly with the sociopolitical context in which art is made, consumed and shown, rejecting the idea that art is best displayed in a decontextualized setting. Four such movements are institutional critique, installation art, performance and participatory art. An example of an artwork from each genre will provide further context about how artists have challenged the ideology of the white cube while also noting how these conflicting ideologies could be expressed in the white cube environment.²⁰

One of the earliest modes of resisting the white cube is through installation art.²¹ Installation art is characterized as three-dimensional artwork that transforms the space in which it is found. Usually these spaces are interior, within the gallery space. For instance, Ukrainian artist Ilya Kabakov made pieces with the intention of creating a “total installation,” hoping to create spaces so self-referential that the viewer would find that time stood still within these artificial environments.²² One such work, *The House of Dreams* of 2005 (Figure 4), created in collaboration with his wife and partner Emilia

¹⁹ Abigail Satinsky, “Movement Building for Beginners.” *Art Journal* 74, no. 3 (Fall 2015): 50–66, 57.

²⁰ Often these genres overlap. These examples overlap most strongly with institutional critique since they are pushing against the container of the white cube.

²¹ Pushing the limits of exhibition space has a long history. Dada artist Kurt Schwitters’ Merzbau installations (1923-1937), for example, were immersive environments of fractured space that was constantly shifting. Marcel Duchamp, as well, installed *Mile of String* (1942) in New York, which consisted of a web of string throughout the gallery space. For more information see Lewis Kachur’s *Displaying the Marvelous* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2001)

²² Klonk, *Experience*, 194.

Kabakov, is made up of several meditation spots, in which viewers are invited to lie down and perhaps even fall asleep within the installation. Total installation, some of which approaches the quality of spectacle, has become increasingly popular. A recent example is *Rain Room* (Figure 5) created by Random International in 2012, a collaborative studio focusing on works that use science and technology created by teams located in London and Berlin.

Rain Room, recently at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, features water, which constantly rains from the ceiling. The interior space that *Rain Room* creates is fluid and only implies walls. Sensors keep the water from falling on visitors as they move through the space. The experience gives visitors the illusion that they can control the rain. Installations such as *Rain Room* override the white cube entirely. These are immersive spaces that can be constructed in any location. However, they are similar to white cubes in the sense that they eliminate all other factors and contexts: while in *Rain Room*, all the visitor experiences is the rain. These contemporary installations, many of them created in the 21st century, require significant construction to remodel gallery spaces. Room-filling installations eliminate the curated experience of viewing art defined by the deliberate placement of works within gallery spaces, which has long been the default experience of visiting a modern art museum.²³ Filling a room with constant falling water does not correspond with a white cube aesthetic and requires the creation of an alternative space in order for the installation to be successful. Such spaces are so separated from the standard white cube galleries that they often require separate ticketing or directions to find them;

²³ Ibid, 195.

visitors will not come upon these installations while meandering through the main gallery spaces.

Beyond installation art, many contemporary artworks are not painting or drawings and thus more easily challenge the influence of the white cube on the viewer's experience. Performance is an excellent example. Take for example, *Catalysis* (1970) by American conceptual artist Adrian Piper, which calls attention to the expected etiquette of public life and, in one of its performances, specifically of a museum visit. *Catalysis* was a series of seven performances, which took place around New York City, and through which Piper challenged the border between art and the violation of normative rules of behavior. In *Catalysis IV* she stuffed a hand towel in her mouth, filling her cheeks, and leaving the excess to hang out while riding the subway. It's debatable whether this performance could be categorized as art, perhaps because it took place outside the museum and therefore lacks the institutional setting to verify it as such.²⁴ However, one of the performances, *Catalysis VII*, did take place in a museum and raised similar questions.

For *Catalysis VII* Piper attended an exhibition opening at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. As a visitor, she drew attention from the exhibition onto herself through a number of ostentatious actions. She walked through the galleries chewing large wads of gum, blowing bubbles and letting the bubbles explode on her face. She had filled her leather handbag with ketchup; she periodically rummaged through her bag as if looking for her keys or comb, and others would notice the smell and ketchup-covered

²⁴ This is similar to the work of Fluxus artists, prominent in the 1960s and '70s, with performances and events taking place outside the museum.

belongings.²⁵ Piper was not making an explicit statement against the white cube through her *Catalysis* series, but commenting on the atmosphere produced by white cube environment. Her actions in the Met could be seen as disruptive, rude and disrespectful to the museum environment and the other visitors.

Recalling Duncan's analysis of the assumed etiquette for museum visitors, Piper's behavior is seen as quite shocking. Piper's choice of gum, a sticky substance, rarely discarded properly and often stuck onto something public, is interesting. It speaks to Piper's choice of elements of the performance and highlights the performance as a critique of the art institution, since food is often not allowed in gallery spaces. Ketchup concealed in her purse and gum contained in her mouth would not be seen by the guards, and therefore created a kind of borderline area where Piper could act as a museum visitor while nonetheless working to disrupt the experience. The smell of the ketchup, the sound of the chewing and popping gum, and the appearance of Piper with gum on her face would be possible to ignore in the outside world, but in the white cube setting they become disruptive of the sacred, liminal (as Duncan describes it) experience.²⁶

Artists also have disrupted the confines of the white cube through the genre of institutional critique, which overtly challenges the authority of the institution by creating exhibits that comment on otherwise invisible aspects of museum culture. Hans Haacke's *MoMA Poll* (Figure 6) is an early example of such a work. In 1970, Haacke installed two transparent boxes with slits in the top, ballot papers and a question posed above them. He asked, "would the fact that Governor Rockefeller has not denounced President Nixon's

²⁵ Lucy Lippard, and Adrian Piper. "Catalysis: An Interview with Adrian Piper." *The Drama Review: TDR* 16, no. 1 (1972): 76–78, 76.

²⁶ Duncan, *Ritual*, 11.

Indochina Policy be a reason for you not voting for him in November?” This was a direct connection between Nelson Rockefeller, the Republican governor of New York and a MoMA trustee, and the United State’s covert bombing of Cambodia. By the end of the exhibition there were twice as many ballots in the ‘Yes’ box as the ‘No.’ Through this piece, Haacke called attention to the political identity and influence of a major donor and board member of MoMA, disturbing the white cube message that art can be separated from the moral impact of those who support it. Viewers were forced to acknowledge that cultural institutions can be affiliated with questionable people and policies. Haacke was not afraid to question and even turn against the people that nurtured contemporary art

MoMA Poll took place at the start of the institutional critique genre (1970), but it was also a participatory artwork.²⁷ Some artists focus on reversing the isolation of solitary experience to create community through a practice of what is known as relational aesthetic. In this genre, artists are interested in working with the audience, which co-produces, completes and activates their work. An example of a relational aesthetic piece is *Meta-Monumental Garage Sale* (Figure 7), created by Martha Rosler. *Meta-Monumental Garage Sale* (2012) took place at MoMA. The work consisted of visitors being able to browse and purchase items out of the 14,000 gathered by the artists and displayed in the museum’s atrium. Rosler successfully calls attention to the nature of the community created by her audience as they all share a common interest or identity, that

²⁷ Artists have been critiquing institutions for a while before a name was given to the genre. Andrea Fraser, a significant contemporary institutional critique artist, was perhaps the first to use the term “institutional critique” in her essay “From the Critique of Institutions to the Institution of Critique” *Artforum* 44, no. 1 (2005): 278-286

of a museum-goer.²⁸ Upon entering an art institution, many visitors expect to encounter people similar to themselves in the gallery spaces. As cultural spaces, which rely on an understood behavior (as Piper's *Catalysis VII* explored), museums may only be comfortable environments for certain people. Museum visitors' comfort level depends greatly on a sense of shared socio-economic status. Garage sales have their own shared identity as suburban sacraments and social gathering places, ones that fascinate Rosler. Many museums charge admission, including MoMA, and therefore visitors can assume a certain socio-economic background of fellow visitors, one that allows investment in such intellectual luxuries as spending time contemplating artworks. In this case, on top of the cost of admission itself, visitors pay real money to take home items from the garage sale that Rosler priced herself. A Barack Obama commemorative plate was priced at \$23 and a SpongeBob SquarePants alarm clock went for \$18. Rosler's decisions about pricing were significant; for instance, if the prices were too low, items might sell too quickly and the garage sale would soon no longer be worth stopping for.²⁹ *Meta-Monumental Garage Sale* is not a symbolic performance but rather a real activity open to haggling (an art in its own right). People can leave with something taken from the atrium of MoMA--probably something they will never have the chance to do again. The behaviors of visitors to *Meta-Monumental Garage Sale* defy all the rules of normative behavior Duncan references in her analysis of how the experience of viewing art becomes meaningful.

These practices adopted by some contemporary artists are a direct challenge to the form and imbedded ideology of the white cube. These include the assumed value and

²⁸ Ibid, 69

²⁹ Randy Kennedy, "No Picasso's, But Plenty of Off-The-Wall Bargains: Martha Rosler's 'Meta-Monumental Garage Sale,' at MoMA," *New York Times*, 16 November 2012: 1-5, 2

etiquette that happens within the space. By looking at these artworks it's possible to see how they and other contemporary works question and complicate the ideologies inherent to the white cube. Contemporary artists often exist in tension with the museum spaces in which they display their work. By bringing the outside world into the museum, they cast doubt on the necessity to be separated from the outside world in order to experience art fully. By flouting museum norms intended to make visitors comfortable, they suggest that art is more powerful when it disturbs viewers and makes them more aware of unacknowledged assumptions. How will museums answer this challenge to their long-standing and carefully cultivated culture of prestige and privilege? It is important for a museum to realize its own limitations if it wants to claim an identity as a contemporary art museum. Once a museum expresses an interest in exhibiting recent work, it must clarify how it will absorb the institutional challenges of evaluating, curating and displaying contemporary work. Institutions that choose not to exhibit work made by boundary-pushing contemporary artists such as Martha Rosler or Adrian Piper are being left out of the conversation and of the times. Institutions that define themselves as "contemporary" have to stay relevant, by definition.

Recognizing the pressure that 21st-century art has put on the white cube aesthetic brings up many questions about what is next for the exhibition of contemporary art. How can contemporary art be incorporated into museums established and designed to display modern art? When is contemporary art no longer contemporary? How can a museum continue to be a contemporary art museum as items in its collection become dated? This question turns us from decisions about exhibition toward an exploration of the collecting

policies of museums of contemporary art. Here, too, competing forces are in play. Museums become loyal to their permanent collections and certain artworks become prestigious staples of specific museums (such as Monet's water lilies at MoMA), but as the museum gets older so does the collection. The gulf between the modern and the contemporary widens, and a new way of thinking of the contemporary, not simply in relation to the modern, becomes necessary. The recent creation of museums of contemporary art in cities like Los Angeles and New York suggests one response; but what if the implication is even more radical? What if the appropriate environment for contemporary art is not in a museum at all? In the following three case studies I try to answer these questions by exploring how three New York museums approach the challenges and opportunities presented by contemporary art. Chapter two looks at MoMA, the arbiter of modern art and a highly successful white-cube gallery space that has fairly recently strengthened its commitment to contemporary art. The second case study is of Dia:Beacon, a repurposed industrial space, thoughtfully configured to display post-modern and contemporary works outside of the city. Finally I explore New Museum, an institution whose explicit mission has been to display the art of the present since its inception in 1977.

Chapter Two: MoMA

Art that lodges uncomfortably in its precincts, art that passes through its shadow, art that rejects its absorptive and exclusionary machine, that leaves it behind, commits to quite other criteria, and, eventually forgets it: this art has the chance of being contemporary.

Terry Smith

The Museum of Modern Art in New York is an established, ambitious, successful museum of modern art that is wrestling with its place in the world of contemporary art. MoMA was the first institution to adopt the white cube as the appropriate space for showing modernist art. It influenced other institutions to use that strategy until eventually the white cube became the default. As stated earlier, this exhibition strategy works well as a setting for the Western story of modernity. The museum's name implies that it is a museum focused on displaying modern artworks, although it also displays contemporary works. This chapter explores the tension between the modern and the contemporary by looking at MoMA's mission statement to see how the institution defines its place within this continuum. Modern refers to an art movement with a specific time period (1840-1950), one that has already stood the value test of time, while contemporary art is the art of now. It continues to push boundaries and defy what institutions and audiences expect.

MoMA's mission statement makes clear that it doesn't see itself as a static museum but as the preeminent place engaged with the art of its time. MoMA defines itself as both a modern and contemporary institution. It does not want to be seen as a place that is "celebrat[ing] its past and waiting out the future."³⁰ Its decision-making and investment in both art and space reveal the tensions inherent in claiming that identity, and

³⁰ Terry Smith. *What Is Contemporary Art?* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2009), 29

the strengths and weaknesses of its approach to the problem. Many museums, like MoMA, have found themselves trying to straddle the space between modern and contemporary art, and how they handle this paradox helps to define the institution.³¹ How does a museum of modern art display contemporary art? How does it make decisions about what contemporary art to exhibit and acquire?

A good place to start to answer these questions about MoMA is to look at the institution's mission statement. The mission statement articulates the purpose of the museum and its role and responsibility to the public. It is what the governing board of the museum uses for planning and policy-making purposes. Basically, it is a broad guideline that is interpreted by directors and curators, leading to decisions on exhibitions and programming. The Museum of Modern Art's mission statement begins:

Through the leadership of its Trustees and staff, The Museum of Modern Art manifests this commitment by establishing, preserving, and documenting a permanent collection of the highest order that reflects the vitality, complexity and unfolding patterns of modern and contemporary art...

Central to The Museum of Modern Art's mission is the encouragement of an ever-deeper understanding and enjoyment of *modern and contemporary* art by the diverse local, national, and international audiences that it serves.³² [Italics mine]

Below this statement a number of bullet points specify the actions MoMA takes in order to meet the goals of the mission statement. It's useful to this thesis to look at the overarching mission in light of the bullet points, the actual implementation of exhibitions within the museum, and the reception or judgment of critics and scholars. Looking at these factors helps to assess whether MoMA's exhibitions of contemporary work achieve

³¹ Ibid, 36

³² Museum of Modern Art, *About MoMA*, Museum of Modern Art, accessed March 8, 2017. <https://www.moma.org/about/index>

its mission. We can also use them to evaluate how the mission, as articulated, influences the kind of contemporary work displayed.

The first point states that, “modern and contemporary art originated in the exploration of the ideals and interests generated in the new artistic traditions that began in the late nineteenth century and continue today.” This sentence identifies a chronology that relates modern and contemporary art in a historical narrative. MoMA uses the widely accepted chronology of modernism to guide the exhibition strategy used for its modernist collection. Exhibitions, excluding contemporary exhibitions, work together to guide the viewer through a chronological history of modern art. This narrative is only one possible history. MoMA’s display of contemporary art breaks this smooth continuity, as will be discussed later in an exploration of the MoMA expansion of 2004. To experience MoMA’s history of Modernism, visitors go upwards through the space, via escalators, but backwards through time.

Modernism presents a historical arc, simply, as Modernism, Anti-Modernism and Postmodernism. Modernism is defined as being against the grain, valuing the new, the avant-garde (what we may call “the contemporary” today), and is seen as a continuous progression, one movement leading to the next. Starting with the Industrial Revolution and rejecting Enlightenment ideals and religion, modern artists reflected the new technologies and ideas of their time. Since the pace of social, political and economic changes accelerated, Modernism is made up of many movements advancing toward something that artists hoped would become the purest form of art. Modernism refers to a specific time frame, roughly 1840-1950: the accepted definition of modernist impulses

creates a defined category. MoMA's first director Alfred Barr created a historical narrative of modern art, famously visualized in his diagram for "Cubism and Abstract Art" (Figure 8). Barr's flowchart of Modernism was made concrete in the exhibition spaces executed in MoMA's galleries; it has influenced and even come to epitomize a conventional history of modern art. Barr's use of the white cube display strategy for MoMA's modern art collection (Figure 9) continued the visual argument of modernist advances in art. The white cube is an appropriate space for this art since it is connected to a style of modernist display characterized by clean lines, white walls and lack of applied decoration meant to create a free-flowing and neutral space.³³ It is the presentation still used today (Figure 10). New York as a traditional cultural center is dogmatically loyal to conventions of aesthetics that have been absorbed from MoMA.³⁴

Other than the second floor, where contemporary art is shown, the museum space is predictably laid out. MoMA's fourth and fifth floors are "fixed" galleries and include masterpieces from the story of modern art. The fifth floor features the artists Matisse, van Gogh and Cezanne. Below displays abstract expressionism, pop art, conceptual art and minimalist works including Jackson Pollock and Joseph Beuys.^{35,36} Although the progression of works remains predictable, the work from the permanent collection exhibited has gone through modifications. For instance, Paul Signac's portrait of Felix Feneon, which had welcomed viewers into the painting and sculpture from 1880-1940s

³³ Klonk. *Experience*, 122

³⁴ Peter Schjeldahl, "Easy to Look At," *New York Times*, 6 December 2004: 1-5, 3

³⁵ Other artists on the fourth floor include: Claes Oldenburg, Louise Bourgeois, Jason Crum, Agnes Martin, Christo, Jasper Johns, Giorgio de Chirico, Dan Flavin, Gerhard Richter and other prominent artists working during the 1940s to 1980s.

³⁶ From March 26, 2016- March 29, 2017 MoMA displayed 350 out of 7,000 artworks exclusively from the 1960s from their permanent collection on the fourth floor.

gallery, was replaced by van Gogh's portrait of Joseph Roulin, also known as "The Postman." This was done in 2006, two years after the museum reopened and after it was acquired by Kirk Varnedoe, then chief curator.³⁷ Down one floor, Pollock's *She-Wolf* was moved into a designated Pollock gallery and the exhibition sequence now begins with *Here, Sir Fire, Eat!* (1942). This is an acknowledgement of the Chilean artist Roberto Matta in an otherwise very Eurocentric understanding of modern art.³⁸ MoMA was vulnerable to criticism that it presents a limited view of Modernism and curators have made changes in response. The effect has been to broaden the definition of Modernism geographically (outside of Europe and North America) and to suggest a more complicated chronology encompassing more centers. However, the works that have been added don't disturb the dominant Western chronology and continue to reinforce the Eurocentric story of modern art. Although MoMA's curators included different voices from different regions when they have reinstalled the collection, Barr's sweeping narrative continues to dominate the experience. Changes in objects displayed remain in the prominent white cube format, which serves a narrative arc of the continuation of history without showing contextual differences. Still installed in a programmatic space, even if it includes other regions, viewers continue to see a progression of Modernism that decontextualizes the artworks. Without context, these works are part of that Eurocentric path where viewers don't question whether Modernism is different in different regions.

³⁷ Note about Kirk Varnedoe: although installation changes occurred earlier than his career at MoMA, Varnedoe is noted for being particularly open to newer work and loosening up the exhibition space compared to his predecessor, William Rubin, although he was grounded in European art history and trained to look at art as a historical progression. See: William Grimes, "Kirk Varnedoe In The Hot Seat As MoMA's Boy," *The New York Times*, March 11, 1990

³⁸ Smith, *Contemporary Art*, 22

Chronology, or evolution, suggests progress. The newer works build upon the art of the past and this narrative, because the works are displayed in progression, dovetails with the ideologies of the white cube, in which one-gallery leads logically to the next neutral space. MoMA seems reluctant to significantly alter that narrative or to take risks with their collection and display strategy. One reason for this is because viewers travel to New York for the sole purpose of seeing some of the “masterpieces” of modern art. If MoMA were to take those pieces away it would be a disappointment, to say the least, to many viewers.

Given this conservative exhibition strategy, MoMA’s recent rehang of the permanent collection is a significant break and highlights the message sent by that decision. On February 3, 2017 MoMA rehung the fifth floor galleries in response to the Muslim Travel Ban by President Trump.³⁹ Seven masterpieces of Modernism, including works by Matisse and van Gogh, were replaced by works by Muslim artists and artists originally from the countries covered by the travel ban. Accompanying these works was wall text:

This work is by an artist from a nation whose citizens are being denied entry into the United States, according to a presidential executive order issued on Jan. 27, 2017. This is one of several such artworks from the Museum’s collection installed throughout the fifth-floor galleries to affirm the ideals of welcome and freedom as vital to this Museum as they are to the United States.⁴⁰

This rare example of MoMA drastically disrupting its traditional narrative will be on

³⁹ Current director, Glenn Lowry, is an expert in Islamic Art, receiving his PhD from Harvard University.

⁴⁰ Jason Farago, “MoMA Protests Trump Entry Ban by Rehang Work by Artists from Muslim Nations,” *New York Times*, 3 February 2017: 1-2, 1

display for several months.⁴¹ Perhaps it heralds another way to connect the modern to the present-day. Rehanging can be seen as a reevaluation and an attempt to change and adjust viewpoints since there are many stories to tell within Modernism. Yet, although MoMA has at times incorporated new elements of the story of modern art, and, in this case, the political environment outside the world of the museum, these changes have not demanded a radical rethinking of the relationship between art and history. Contemporary art poses a different challenge.

Some contemporary art is not as easy to display as modern art. It is difficult to exhibit, not only because it doesn't follow the traditional paradigm of paintings or sculpture that galleries are designed to show, but because it's difficult to contextualize this work within the narrative of MoMA. Contemporary art doesn't follow the categories and stylistic shifts that have been used to sketch a history and assign value. Art historians such as Terry Smith, Richard Meyer and Helen Molesworth have even asked if contemporary art is fundamentally "post history." In 2009, American art critic Hal Foster published a questionnaire in *October* asking editors if contemporary art is a "free floating," post-historical rejection of the periodization museum patrons have relied on to make sense of art.⁴²

Questions like Foster's, which continually appear in art criticism, have made it difficult to place individual works or contemporary artists in a critical and/or universal narrative. A popular argument, known as the contemporary condition, states that art can

⁴¹ Nick Mafi, "This is How One Museum is Resisting Donald Trump," *Architectural Digest*, 6 February 2017: 1-1, 1

⁴² Hal Foster. "Questionnaire on 'The Contemporary.'" *Introduction to a Special Issue, October*, no. 130 (Fall 2009): 3-3, 3

be anything and that artists freely draw from all time periods. However, if anything goes, there are no generally accepted critical standards for museums to rely on. These factors make it difficult for an institution, especially one with an already clear and successfully-implemented display strategy based on a chronologic history of modern art, to find an equally harmonious display strategy for contemporary art. MoMA quietly resolves the question, to some extent, by presenting its contemporary art immediately above the lobby, which continues the chronological pattern already established, in which the top floor presents the earliest examples of modern art and each subsequent lower floor exhibits art in the order in which it was created. In this way, contemporary art simply follows as the next thing after Modernism.

But why would MoMA even be interested in collecting and exhibiting contemporary art when its name and reputation are centered around being a museum of *modern* art? Perhaps because the original conception of the museum equated modern art with the contemporary.⁴³ Is this assumption still valid? Critics have expressed strong opinions about how MoMA should deal with contemporary art. Art critic for *The Nation* Arthur Danto believed that MoMA should become a historical museum of Modernism once the modern and contemporary were no longer synonymous; the museum should decide if it would be a museum of modern art in the temporal sense or collect stylistically modern art that no longer represented the contemporary world.⁴⁴ The museum's founders did account for this in an agreement proposed to the Metropolitan Museum of Art to transfer older works to that institution, while acquiring newer works in order to stay

⁴³ Smith, *Contemporary Art*, 30

⁴⁴ *Ibid*, 27

relevant.⁴⁵ The agreement never came to fruition and was revoked in 1953 for reasons stemming from the boards of both MoMA and the Met. MoMA didn't want to give up major artworks and the Met didn't want to give up their own funding in exchange. With the changes in leadership at both institutions through time and therefore changes in personal connections, the agreement was renounced. This tension continues to be recognized as is clear from MoMA's mission statement, "it is essential to affirm the importance of contemporary art and artists if the Museum is to honor the ideal with which it was founded and to remain vital and engaged with the present." In order to remain engaged with the present, the museum must exhibit works made in the present. As time goes on and the modernist collection recedes further into the past, the addition of contemporary art keeps the museum alive. Curator Helen Molesworth writes in *October* that the museum, in the general sense, "still needs contemporary art- in whatever form it takes- to do the work of helping to keep the museum alive, to help it stay young and vibrant."⁴⁶ Perhaps it is for this reason, to stay young and vibrant, that MoMA's mission statement emphasizes the inclusion of contemporary art. MoMA, like other museums of modern art, has had to respond to the fact that art was changing. Some of those changes resulted in art that was difficult to display in conventional museum settings, i.e. the white cube. These challenges suggest that the white cube is not the ideal default setting for contemporary art. This reality pushes museums to respond and, in the most successful

⁴⁵ Kirk Varnedoe. "The Evolving Torpedo: Changing Ideas of the Collection of Painting and Sculpture of The Museum of Modern Art" in *The Museum of Modern Art at Mid-Century Continuity and Change*, ed. Barbara Ross (New York, The Museum of Modern Art, 1995), 12-74, 14.

⁴⁶ Helen Molesworth. "Questionnaire on "The Contemporary"." *October* no. 130 (Fall 2009), 111-116, 112

cases, leads to creative, innovative decisions about display and the use of space.

In terms of acquisitions, collections grow based on a number of economic and cultural factors including who is on the museum board, the collection committee, and the curators, who may advise board members. Seldom do museums buy contemporary work, waiting to get a better sense of importance and value, which is established by critical review of the artist's work over time. Another complicating factor is the lengthy time frame for the acquisition process in big museums that cannot respond to fast-paced art markets. As a result, the contemporary art in the museum isn't going to be the most recent work. Glenn Lowry, director of MoMA since 1995, stated, "MoMA has had to balance and juggle its commitment to old and new art virtually since its birth."⁴⁷

Despite the obstacles to building a truly distinctive contemporary collection, MoMA expressed its commitment to include contemporary art in dramatically expanding the museum in 2000 to make space for contemporary work. Japanese architect Yoshio Taniguchi, best known for designing open plan art museums with thoughtful use of space, designed the expansion.⁴⁸ Taniguchi submitted his designs in 1997 and an account of the process of expanding MoMA was published in *Imagining the Future of the Museum of Modern Art*, specifically in Lowry's essay, "The New Museum of Modern Art Expansion: A Process of Discovery" in which he discusses the competition for the expansion, which was won by Taniguchi. Chief co-editor of *Museum Worlds* Kylie Message observes in writing about the expansion, "ways of speaking about a project

⁴⁷ Quoted in Smith, *Contemporary Art*, 35

⁴⁸ Ibid, 13-15

translate into ways of seeing a space.”^{49,50} The design competition suggests that in its expansion MoMA was trying to create exhibition space that would complement contemporary art in the way the white cube ideally hosted modern art. Accompanying the opening in 2004, MoMA presented the exhibition “Yoshio Taniguchi: Nine Museums”, showing Taniguchi’s other work and identifying him as an internationally known celebrity architect, thus reinforcing the message that MoMA is a globally relevant institution. The expansion included not only exhibition space but also increased research and educational space. Through this expansion, MoMA worked to balance a vision of the museum as uncompromisingly new and globally relevant, while maintaining modernist purity. The goal for MoMA 2004 was to attract new visitors beyond the faithful regular patrons of modern art, a tacit recognition that the museum audience must expand or the museum will become irrelevant.

The result was a conflicted identity. The expansion is no longer the child of Alfred Barr who, in his original statement, called “MoMA an instrument of change, the megaphone of newness.”⁵¹ MoMA 2004 is about careful balance and lacks the element of risk that was at the heart of Barr’s founding mission. Barr wrote that historical museums, such as the Met, whose collection is believed to express lasting and accepted values, cannot afford to run the risk of error in acquisition, while modern art museums must take

⁴⁹ *Museum Worlds* is a self-defined “annual journal that publishes work that significantly advances knowledge of global trends, case studies, and theory relevant to museum practice and scholarship around the world.”

⁵⁰ Kylie Message. “The Shock of the Re-Newed Modern: MoMA 2004.” *Museum & Society* 4, no. 1 (March 2006): 27–50, 41.

⁵¹ Quoted in Message, 27

chances on the work they acquire.⁵² To some extent, this is a false dichotomy, since traditional art museums have taken risks in buying underappreciated work and have made mistakes in valuing and attributing work. Risk-taking continues to be a central theme as curators take on more public roles in presenting contemporary art exhibitions, especially in the ways in which curatorial vision has come to dominate biennials. Unlike smaller museums of contemporary art, however, MoMA, because of its scale and staff size, has more invested in each exhibition, which may discourage risk-taking. On the other hand, their reliably large paid attendance from an audience drawn to the permanent collection could insulate them from the potential loss of staging a contemporary exhibition that does not attract visitors. Thus it seems that financial considerations are not the only reason MoMA appears not to be willing to take risks in its contemporary shows. Instead of MoMA acting as a museum taking on the responsibility of pushing our culture into the future, the institution seems more interested in conserving the idea that modernity is our cultural center. The hierarchal galleries do just that, with the help of the white cube: they present a hierarchy of taste with MoMA as its arbiter.

So just what *is* the experience of contemporary art at MoMA? Upon entering, viewers walk through an open lobby with ticketing, information, and entrances to the museum shop and exhibition space. With tickets in hand, visitors make their way up to the second floor atrium. The atrium acts as a large gathering point from which visitors may explore other cluster-like gallery spaces or ascend to the top floor to follow Barr's history of modern art. Visitors can look down into the atrium through windows on the

⁵² Smith, *Contemporary Art*, 30

floors above. These are more than conventional windows and look like long vertical slices that were a key part of Taniguchi's vision to connect the historical to the present. The atrium is a transitional space, permitting more experimentation than the temporary galleries. Some of the more unexpected contemporary work, such as Martha Rosler's *Meta-Monumental Garage Sale* (Figure 7), was displayed there, although older work, such as Monet's *Water Lilies* (1914-26), have also been shown there. If chairs are placed in the atrium, as they sometimes are, visitors use this space to sit and check their phones. The contemporary gallery spaces, which adopt the white cube format, compared to the atrium, reveal how white cube space in itself sends the message that work on display has significance.

From the atrium visitors may enter the contemporary exhibition galleries, which are on the same floor and easily accessible. This prime real estate offers the best views of the city, allowing visitors to look out of the windows onto the city street. Otherwise MoMA's interiors lack connection to its urban location, making a clear distinction between those within its walls and those outside. There is a certain level of privilege assumed of those who can afford the \$25 admission fee into a museum like MoMA, and the view from the second floor, where the contemporary art is exhibited, emphasizes that. Placing contemporary art exhibitions in this privileged space presents MoMA as cutting edge, with an outlook of global significance.⁵³

Despite Taniguchi's design of the space and the open, even undefinable nature of contemporary art, the addition to MoMA seems to have been designed to support and

⁵³ Message, *Re-Newed Modern*, 31

enhance the experience of modern art and its distinctive identity. Before the museum closed for its four-year renovation in 2000, MoMA's chief curator Kirk Varnedoe wrote, "Contemporary art is collected and presented at this Museum as part of modern art- as belonging within, responding to, and expanding upon the framework of initiatives and challenges established by the earlier history of progressive art since the dawn of the twentieth century."⁵⁴ Varnedoe approached art as an academic and curator. His statement describing contemporary art as a continuation of the modern was an important official position. Before the contemporary addition, MoMA was widely understood as being unaccepting of and disconnected from new art. Varnedoe worked to reconnect the museum with the present day art scene and to reconsider its presentation of modern art history. His decisions gave more prominence to works by Russian, German and Italian artists amongst the previously narrow and exclusive view of Modernism focused on work from France and the United States. These changes are now widely accepted although they were not universally agreed upon at the time.⁵⁵ Varnedoe's statement suggests that MoMA thinks of modern art as a progression much like Barr. Perhaps what the museum might be trying to do with the addition of the contemporary galleries in their privileged second floor spot is to revitalize the way its modern collection is experienced. It may be trying to distance itself from the view that its status and permanence means it is static. Clearly, at one time modern art *was* contemporary art, commenting on the past, responding to the present, experimenting, and expressing a way of seeing the world as it hadn't been seen before. In this sense, does MoMA's treatment of contemporary work

⁵⁴ Quoted in Smith, *Contemporary Art*, 28

⁵⁵ Michael Kimmelman, "Kirk Varnedoe, 57, Curator Who Changed the Modern's Collection and Thinking, Dies," *New York Times*, 15 August 2013: 1-5, 3

allow it to influence the way its modern collection is seen? If so, how will that influence artists and audience? Will the museum's contemporary exhibitions come to be seen as a contrast or a continuation of its modern?

An early indication of how that question might be answered may be found in the exhibition that marked the opening in November 2004. "Contemporary: Inaugural Installation" revealed MoMA's attitude toward contemporary art through the institution's curatorial decision making. The exhibition included Jasper John, On Kawara, Jeff Koons, Richard Serra, and 48 others. Early reviews noted that the contemporary gallery space is huge, positioning MoMA to adjudicate art's future.⁵⁶ The high ceilings allow for sprawling environmental or conceptual works such as a Serra installation. Critics noted that there seemed to be little that connected the displayed works, commented on "high art's vacuuming up of high culture" and observed a distinct lack of digital art.⁵⁷ Ultimately, the exhibition appeared to critics as a "grab bag" of contemporary works where everything looked lost.⁵⁸ *New York Times* critic Michael Kimmelman described it as a "sea of curatorial indecision."⁵⁹

Contemporary art at MoMA, as of now, is displayed in temporary exhibitions, as opposed to the virtually permanent exhibition of the modern art collection. This suggests that MoMA hasn't written a history of contemporary art with clear masterpieces and that contemporary work has not stood the test of time as modern art has. Time, in

⁵⁶ Schjeldahl, *Easy*, 3

⁵⁷ Smith, *Contemporary Art*, 25

⁵⁸ Schjeldahl, *Easy*, 3

⁵⁹ Michael Kimmelman, "Racing to Keep Up With the Newest," *The New York Times*, 19 November 2004: 1-6, 5

contemporaneity is, always, just beginning.⁶⁰ When enough time has passed and contemporary art gains a history (and perhaps takes on a new name) that can be assimilated and understood as fitting into an interpretive frame, it seems likely that MoMA will display its contemporary art the way it displays its modern art, as a connected progression. Is this desire, on the part of MoMA and of MoMA's loyal viewers, something that's good for art history?⁶¹ Making exhibition decisions according to an interpretive scheme establishes a sense of relation between art works and provides the viewer with a coherent experience. However, viewers are limited by this curated journey, pushed into a predetermined way of seeing. Is contemporary art amenable to that? How will we know? Perhaps the answer to that question will only come in the future.⁶² Looking at the way contemporary art is currently displayed, as temporary exhibitions presented in a space that doesn't dictate an order of viewing, suggests the possibility that MoMA may not add galleries in a chronological sequence to tell the story of recent art. They may instead try to accommodate a different kind of storytelling, one that better captures the essential qualities of contemporary art that demand a narrative different from the historical, Western-oriented, pre-high-postmodern story of modern art.

The contemporary exhibitions at MoMA have been criticized for remaining modern in style and "look" as the museum attempts to "celebrate its past and wait out the future."⁶³ Terry Smith, Australian art historian and artist, says that MoMA has abjured

⁶⁰ Smith, *Contemporary Art*, 35

⁶¹ Smith would say, "no"

⁶² Unhelpful if you're looking for an answer, I know.

⁶³ Smith, *Contemporary Art*, 29

major movements in contemporary art.⁶⁴ He further states that the contemporary work MoMA shows is conservative, derivative and safe; it merely updates modernist procedure and taste. Although critical in tone, his observation makes sense. When collecting, it's important for the institution to acquire works that will fit into its pre-existing collection, which, for MoMA, is modern. However, not all significant contemporary art (especially contemporary art that is "vital" and "complex") is in relation with the modern and MoMA would most likely not be interested in acquiring such works. Some contemporary artists challenge those very procedures and tastes, and that work may be seen as perhaps more global.⁶⁵ The general assumption in the museum is that viewers passively encounter work. This is unsatisfying to social practice artists such as Rirkrit Tiravanija, creator of *Pad Thai* (1990). His art, which involves cooking and socializing with visitors, becomes difficult to accommodate within the museum.^{66,67} Obviously, huge installations requiring major disruptions of construction are also not easily accommodated.⁶⁸ This raises the question of how committed to the contemporary an institution can be if its shows are determined by the constraints of its physical plant and adherence to certain exhibition norms? All museums turn away art projects; it's part of the institution's responsibility to make decisions about what to show.⁶⁹ Museums don't display everything and, in fact,

⁶⁴ Ibid, 26

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ *Pad Thai* took place at the Paula Allen Gallery in New York. The work consisted of cooking and feeding Pad Thai to guests who visited his exhibition. After the initial cooking was finished the plates, pots, packets of food and trash were left as a reminder of the event that had taken place.

⁶⁷ Claire Bishop. "Antagonism and Relational Aesthetics." *October* 1, no. 110 (2004): 51–79, 56

⁶⁸ Carsten Höller's untitled slide installation is an example of such work and is discussed in chapter 4, the New Museum case study.

⁶⁹ Some institutions address this issue by acquiring additional spaces that are congenial venues for

their selection process largely defines them. For MoMA's inaugural exhibition of contemporary art, the institution chose to display works that reinforced their interpretation of modern art and their reputation as a modern art museum. At MoMA, visitors experience art as an art historical continuum, not as an effort to disrupt this experience. To restate an earlier point, despite changes over time in what MoMA has included in the permanent collection exhibitions, it remains in service to the narrative arc of Modernism. This arc is at odds with the context of reception and interaction highlighted by contemporary artists whose work challenges the white cube.

This is not to say that MoMA doesn't meet its mandate for contemporary art. MoMA is affiliated with a more contemporary space, MoMA PS1 in Queens. Alanna Heiss founded PS1 in 1971 in an effort to rehabilitate abandoned spaces around New York City. This repurposed public school space is left semi-raw and is better able than MoMA to respond to the ideas and processes of many of today's artists. PS1 became the museum's permanent space during the years of their renovation, but it has a long history of exhibiting cutting-edge contemporary art before its affiliation with MoMA in 2000. Due to this preexisting history, Heiss had her own vision of how the museum should serve contemporary art and the museum's surrounding neighborhood. As a result, MoMA's major expression of contemporary art is not in midtown Manhattan but in Long Island City, at the margins. PS1 is solely devoted to the advancement of contemporary art as an active meeting place for the public, bringing audience and artists together. It functions very differently from MoMA by covering the area MoMA does not. However,

work that doesn't fit well in their main space. PS1 is an example of such a space, affiliated with MoMA, which will be discussed further in the next paragraph.

it raises the question for MoMA itself of how to bring two such different programs together and see them as a cohesive whole.

It's easy to find negative criticism about MoMA since everybody beats up on it. Nevertheless, MoMA is famous and successful for a reason: it is committed to modern art, and the white cube display strategy works for what it wishes to accomplish. Although there are many stories to tell within Modernism, a historical arc works well. MoMA has shown evidence that it can incorporate some of the other stories of Modernism, impelled by Varnedoe's vision.⁷⁰ These changes, such as including artists from outside the European tradition of Modernism, could be seen as tweaks rather than full-hearted commitment to a broader understanding. However, the same display strategy for modern art is not compatible with contemporary art. Beyond the physical space, the way in which modern art is displayed is not suitable for contemporary art. It can't be understood by a historical narrative alone because it has no clear history.

In between the modern icon and PS1, the rougher contemporary space it has grafted onto its mission to display contemporary art, is a postmodern institution I will explore in chapter three: Dia:Beacon. Rather than choosing recent works that fit a pre-existing physical and ideological space, Dia:Beacon created a physical plant that fit the artwork. It claims to have no historical narrative guiding the collection, and the building itself is a stark contrast to the white cube. However, as we shall see, despite the clear intentionality behind the construction of Dia:Beacon's space, it too may fail to provide the ideal setting for today's contemporary art.

⁷⁰ See: Arthur Lubow, "Re-Modernizing," *The New York Times*. 3, October 2004.

Chapter Three: Dia:Beacon

With exposed brick wall and ceiling trusses, Dia:Beacon appears to be the antithesis of MoMA. The museum is adamant that its visitors understand that it is not presenting a historical narrative of art. Rather, Dia:Beacon celebrates minimalist work, which breaks away from the modernist narrative. In physical appearance it is the total opposite of MoMA's sleek white cube galleries, but since Dia:Beacon's mission is to showcase a particular aesthetic of work made within a limited timeframe, the museum creates a similarly restrictive space for showing other kinds of contemporary art. Minimalism had a strong presence in the American visual arts especially during the 1960s and early 1970s. The style is characterized by simple design and the use of industrial materials that called attention to the materiality of works. This approach was a direct contrast to movements such as Abstract Expressionism, loaded with symbolism and overt emotional content.

Dia:Beacon is one of the elements of Dia, a project of Heiner Friedrich and Philippa Menil who, in 1974, founded the Dia Art Foundation "to help artists achieve visionary projects that might not otherwise be realized because of scale or scope" through sponsorship, production and presentation.⁷¹ In the 1970s, most of these artists were creating site-specific installations. During the 1980s, Dia temporarily stopped adding to its collection due to finances. The effect was to freeze the collection in time, which unintentionally established the historical framework for

⁷¹ Dia Art Foundation, *About Dia*, Dia Art Foundation, accessed April 17, 2017
<http://www.diaart.org/about/about-dia>

the collection. The Foundation's goals cite support for contemporary art but its collection is focused on Minimalism. American work of the 1970s responded to social and political unrest of its time, as did art after World War I when both production and collecting reflected modernist traditions such as Cubism, Dada, De Stijl and Surrealism.⁷² However, the Dia Art Foundation's multiple gallery spaces present many, distinct locations, which prevent Dia from establishing a coherent narrative of the historical moment or connecting it to other historical moments. Dia Art Foundation is associated with spaces across New York and land art sites throughout the country. Dia:Chelsea opened its main space in 1987 to presents temporary exhibitions, lectures and readings on West 22nd Street in New York City. Dia is also affiliated with long term and site-specific projects, including *Spiral Jetty* (1970) in Great Salt Lake in Utah, Walter DeMaria's *Lightning Field* (1977) in New Mexico, as well as sites such as the Dan Flavin Art Institute in Bridgehampton, New York. While the Dia's scope is limited temporally, they are expansive geographically in number and location of sites. Dia Art Foundation is a particular type of entity, different from other art foundations, and Dia:Beacon, founded in 1994, must be understood in the context of this very specific structure. Dia:Beacon, located in a suburb of New York City, is a celebration of Minimalism, capturing a specific moment in the history of contemporary art. Minimalism, including late Minimalism, is at odds with the modernist sensibility by denying the interpretive value of any symbolic meaning or biography.

⁷² Lynne Cooke, "Dia in Context" in *Dia:Beacon*. (New York : Dia Art Foundation, 2003): 15-45, 15

In 1988 the Dia Foundation began collecting again due to success in real estate and art sales. The Dia Art Foundation began to collect works of similar ambition to Serra's large-scale work. By 1994 the Dia Art Foundation had acquired more than 700 works and needed expanded space for exhibition. The Foundation's director Michael Govan drew on his experience at Mass MoCA, a contemporary art space in a former industrial site, as the template for a new exhibition space. He found the site in an empty factory that had produced boxes for the Nabisco Co. in Beacon, New York (Figure 11). The presentation at Dia:Beacon puts most of the collection under one roof and thus may come the closest to representing a historical period, although that was never Dia:Beacon's intention.⁷³

The Dia mission statement:

Dia Art Foundation is committed to advancing, realizing, and preserving the vision of artists. Dia fulfills its mission by commissioning single artist projects, organizing exhibitions, realizing site-specific installations, and collecting in-depth the work of a focused group of artists of the 1960s and 1970s.⁷⁴

The Foundation's focused collection of work is found at Dia:Beacon, located along the Hudson River. Dia:Beacon reflects the Foundation's mission in its exhibition strategy –which is to show work in depth, in a location and circumstance dictated by the artist, or based on previous installations by that artist, as long-term or permanent exhibitions. Dia:Beacon accomplishes this goal by presenting each artist's work in isolation, in individual galleries. Thus, the exhibition or museum space is experienced as a collection of individual environments, disrupting any idea

⁷³ Ibid

⁷⁴ Dia Art Foundation, *About Dia*, Dia Art Foundation, accessed April 17, 2017 <http://www.diaart.org/about/about-dia>

of a single narrative. Dia:Beacon creates displays that are specific to the ambitions of each artist for their work. When they were made, these works were often not universally seen as artworks, since they are usually large, made from unconventional materials. Over time, 20th century artists exploring Minimalism became more interested and involved in the context of presentation, an interest reflected in the exhibition decisions at Dia:Beacon.⁷⁵

Not only were artists consulted about the design of the interior and the installation of their work as Dia:Beacon was being planned, but they influenced the exterior as well. Dia artists with an interest in the relationship between art and architecture--Dan Flavin, Donald Judd, and Walter De Maria--inspired the entire space of Dia:Beacon. Judd in particular saw the value of locating museums in preexisting buildings, claiming “so much money spent on architecture in the name of art, much more than goes to art, is wrong even if [the] architecture were good, but it’s bad.”⁷⁶ Not only does using a repurposed industrial space eliminate the problem of a higher expenditure on architecture than art, it also does not impose the architect’s aesthetic signature on spaces that should reflect the artist. Museums, such as the Guggenheim Museum, Bilbao, have spectacular architecture that is not related to what is exhibited and the space can overshadow the art itself. This is not to say that the repurposed Nabisco factory is neutral. In fact, it has a straightforward integrity that was attractive to artists, and it provided architectural

⁷⁵ Cooke, “Dia in Context”, 28

⁷⁶ Quoted in *ibid*, 28

limitations that inspire spatial dialogue.⁷⁷

The Light and Space artist Robert Irwin designed the refurbishment of the Dia:Beacon building in 1998. Irwin was a logical choice both because of his existing relationship with the Dia Art Foundation, which had collected and exhibited his work, and because of his previous work in spatial exploration. Repurposing the industrial space for the Dia Foundation's purposes required careful consideration to create spaces that effectively integrated the surrounding area and the works housed within the building. For nine months in 1999 Irwin studied the space, eventually moving to the Hudson River Valley. Being in residence allowed him to understand the relationship between the structure and the landscape through firsthand experience over time. One of Irwin's most successful changes to the space is in the window design. Using the existing factory window openings, he created a hybrid window of frosted glass panes interspersed with clear glass. A clear glass window would distract from the art with color and outdoor activity. The frosted glass creates the same sense of separation as a wall, while the few clear glass panes still include the outside. Through decisions like this one, Irwin created a way to mediate the separation between the exterior and art works.⁷⁸

When it was built, Dia:Beacon was the largest contemporary art building in the country and initially housed work that was too grand, too expensive, or too time-consuming to produce to fit into a private collection or other museum settings. Though spaces for contemporary art have evolved since then, the work displayed at

⁷⁷ Ibid, 21

⁷⁸ Ibid, 38

Dia:Beacon continues to demand very specific installation context. Museums that need flexible space in order to accommodate changing exhibitions can't always accommodate these specific demands. The curators of Dia:Beacon take issues of display very seriously. This commitment to display can bring certain tensions with the art itself, as the critic Terry Smith notes: the challenge now becomes exhibiting the work without it being entirely overpowered by the institution's embrace.⁷⁹

Dia:Beacon tackles this potential conflict by implementing an exhibition strategy that highlights each artist, in spaces specifically designed for that work. The museum is divided vertically into three sections from the basement to the second floor, which is a type of loft. On the main floor, there is no central corridor or enfilade around which galleries are oriented.⁸⁰ While many museums offer visitors a map that makes the chronologic or geographic connections between the works in the galleries explicit, that isn't the case here. The best way to think of Dia:Beacon's spatial organization is that it embodies the minimalist sensibility that the space is subservient to the artworks.⁸¹

Although the intention was to configure the building to create spaces that work for every artwork in the collection, some works are more successfully integrated into the museum space than others. Comparing two specific installations reveals otherwise unstated aspects of the ideology of this museum and its view of contemporary art. Sometimes an artist's work is calibrated so precisely to a space

⁷⁹ Smith. *Contemporary Art*, 42

⁸⁰ Ibid, 43

⁸¹ Ibid, 40

that it illuminates the museum's otherwise unarticulated value system. Richard Serra's work, *Torqued Ellipses* (Figure 12), is one such work; the way it and the space complement one another provides a way to discuss the space itself. Richard Serra's work successfully commands the space with its clear form and masculine representation. The installation of *Torqued Ellipses* has come to represent the Dia aesthetic: the desire to eliminate everything except the purity of the artwork. The installation transcends the messiness of historical context and shows late minimalist sculpture within the framework of contemporary art.⁸² The idea of the purity of the artwork relates to future-oriented ideas found in Modernism, which presents a chronology of art progressing to some indefinable artistic utopia. In his essay on Minimalism, modernist art critic and art historian Michael Fried argues that Minimalism rejects the modernist narrative.⁸³ The artworks Dia:Beacon chooses to display, complemented by installation decisions, are meant to enable viewers to respond to each work in isolation, in the present moment. Therefore, despite Serra's works connection to Modernism, the viewer encounters them as fully present in that moment of experience, thus embodying pure contemporaneousness.⁸⁴ Serra's work furthers Dia:Beacon's ability to produce "a perpetual moment of intense experience" as Hal Foster describes in *The Art-Architecture Complex*.⁸⁵ As Fried argued, the experience of minimalist art is a theatrical one, connected to the anthropomorphic

⁸² Ibid, 44

⁸³ Michael Fried. "Art and Objecthood" in *Minimal Art: A Critical Anthology*, ed. Gregory Battcock (New York, 1968), 116-47.

⁸⁴ Smith, *Contemporary Art*, 45

⁸⁵ Hal Foster, *The Art-Architecture Complex*. (Brooklyn: Verso, 2013), 118

relationship between viewer and work.⁸⁶ Work is exhibited at Beacon in ways that emphasize that directed theatrical experience. It is similar to the white cube, which was meant to eliminate outside distractions to viewing art. However, the installations at Dia:Beacon present the art as existing without the pressure of prior art, historical context, or social framing.⁸⁷ If the white cube was the perfect display space for the modernist progressive ideology, Dia:Beacon's space, although very different, achieves a similar effect. It draws the viewer into an unmediated experience with the artwork, in this case with Serra's art, allowing it to exist without the pressure of context.

The second Dia:Beacon piece we will consider is by Louise Bourgeois, who deliberately places her work in locations with spatial and contextual elements that many artists would prefer to eliminate from the viewing experience. Dia:Beacon has a significant collection of Bourgeois' sculpture. Her work is displayed on the third floor, in an attic-like space reminiscent of the lofts-turned-studios that many minimalists appropriated at the start of their careers. Bourgeois' work is anthropomorphic, rounded and organic, creating forms that evoke the human figure. These are different from the hard-edged geometric forms created by Donald Judd, for example. Bourgeois' *Crouching Spider* (2003) is found in a small room directly off the attic where most of her works may be found. While other works in the museum, such as Michael Heizer's *Negative Megalith #5* (Figure 13), are displayed in specially configured spaces, *Crouching Spider* (Figure 14) is not. *Negative Megalith #5* is a

⁸⁶ Fried, *Art and Objecthood*, 129-130

⁸⁷ Foster, *Art-Architecture*, 119

levitating rock form placed within an alcove purposely built to maintain very narrow completely equidistant space between the rock and the edges of the alcove on all sides. By contrast, *Crouching Spider* is placed in an L-shaped room off the main third floor gallery, one that that hasn't changed architecturally from its days as a Nabisco factory. The spider's legs expand out but don't fill the room completely. The piece blocks the way to the back part of the room, which remains empty. Visitors can walk under and through the sculpture to reach this part of the room, but apart from this area and the doorway, the room is too confining for a viewer to back up and take the whole piece in at once. The experience is immersive and the viewer is almost put into the position of the spider's prey. Bourgeois supervised the installation in keeping with curator Lynne Cooke's ambition to work directly with artists to ensure their work was exhibited, as they preferred. In this case, as spiders are often found in attics away from the daylight, this location appears to be the perfect setting for the sculpture.⁸⁸

Bourgeois' spider sculptures provide an interesting way to explore the relationship between art and the environment in which it is experienced; she has created several of these and they have been displayed in a variety of spaces— from white cube galleries to outdoor public courtyards. Each setting provides viewers with a specific context within which to interpret the work. The white cube directs one meaning and an exterior plaza evokes another (Figure 15). Public art is often

⁸⁸ Elaine Reichek, "Artists on Artists," lecture at Dia:Chelsea, 3 March 2008. <http://www.diaart.org/media/watch-listen/video-elaine-reichek-on-louise-bourgeois/media-type/video>. (accessed 17 April 2017)

planned and executed to be in the public domain, which is a very different context than the protected space of the white cube. It becomes part of people's everyday experience, as they pass it on their daily commutes. The installation at Dia:Beacon differs from those other contexts. The repurposed warehouse setting seems ideal for this work by Bourgeois since it will prompt viewers to think about the meaning behind her work. In a 2008 lecture presented at Dia:Beacon, artist Elaine Reichek spoke of the way Bourgeois' work was presented. She noted that the relationship between the works exhibited in the first room, such as Bourgeois' *Janus* series, and *Crouching Spider*, creates a context in which the former appear as if remnants of the spider's prey. From its small attic space, the gothic spider exerts its power over the entire museum.⁸⁹ This power emerges partly from the quality of the building itself and the past history it evokes. While the works displayed on lower floors, like many minimalist works, emphasize their shape and objecthood, Bourgeois' work includes emotional content that needs to be addressed.⁹⁰ Bourgeois has not been reticent about explaining the traumatic past her work has come to represent. She identifies the spider with her mother, who was simultaneously her best friend and the object of her contempt while growing up, naming one of her spider sculptures *Maman*. Bourgeois works to rehabilitate the reputation of the female spider from the killer to a more nurturing and patient creature. When Bourgeois' spiders are displayed in the white cube, the viewer is not so explicitly exposed to the gothic inspiration behind her work because the white cube neutralizes idea of prey and predator because it is

⁸⁹ Ibid

⁹⁰ Fried, *Art and Objecthood*, 117

a neutral ideal space.

Whereas Serra's work reveals the ways in which Robert Irwin's design of Dia:Beacon supported the art that it would house, Bourgeois' rehabilitation of the female spider is similar to reincorporating an old industrial building into a new culture. At Dia:Beacon historical narrative is downplayed; the emphasis is instead placed on the relationship between art object and architectural setting. This one-to-one creation of meaning between artwork and setting is the opposite of the display strategy at MoMA. At MoMA, the historical narrative (subordinating each piece of art to the narrative arc of meaning) is the driving force behind the exhibition strategy.⁹¹ When first experienced, Dia:Beacon might seem the total opposite of the museum's white cube. However, on reflection, it becomes clear that there are more similarities than at first apparent.

As discussed earlier, artworks gain value in viewers' eyes, simply by being presented in a white cube setting that eliminates distraction and context. Although not as immediately obvious, Dia:Beacon similarly asserts the value of the works it displays by investing in customized spaces in which to display them. Although initially it might appear that Dia:Beacon is much more hospitable than MoMA to contemporary art, an analysis of exhibitions reveals a similar selection criteria for work that "fits" its space aesthetically. Although Dia:Beacon offers temporary exhibitions of more recent artwork than its core collection of minimalist work, it maintains the commitment to the Dia aesthetic of a rapport between art and

⁹¹ Foster, *Art-Architecture*, 119.

architecture.⁹² They prefer to maintain the integrity of the modified industrial space and exhibitions design and install works within that paradigm. There are spaces available at Dia:Beacon for temporary exhibitions but they are seen as compatible with certain kinds of work. So even though there may be temporary exhibitions of work that is more recent than the bulk of Dia:Beacon's collection, the type of work and exhibition are constrained by the minimalist aesthetic that governs the rest of the museum.

Finally, Dia:Beacon is not the Dia Art Foundation's only location. A new space in Chelsea, compromising some of its preexisting buildings on site, will provide a venue for Dia to show newer work continuing the institution's legacy of one-artist installations for one year. Their site in Beacon doesn't have to be the site for contemporary art. Much like MoMA, which in 1997 solidified a relationship with a contemporary art exhibition space, MoMA PS1, Dia Foundation recognized a need to exhibit more contemporary work while remaining adamant that Dia:Beacon is not that space. Whether in white cubes or in repurposed warehouses, museums have yet to find an appropriate way to accommodate cutting-edge contemporary art, which has at its core a challenge to earlier formulations of art and display. The answer perhaps lies beyond identifying the ideal form of physical exhibition space, and is found instead in a museum's commitment and practice, which focus on accommodation and experimentation. How does a museum decide what kinds of art it should collect, or more radically whether it should collect art at all? If it doesn't

⁹² Ibid, 113

collect, it is a *kunsthalle*, a home for temporary exhibitions. What kind of identity does a museum have if it's not affiliated with a collection? The next chapter explores a space that has a completely different idea of how collecting and exhibiting contemporary art should be handled: New Museum.

Chapter Four: New Museum

A *kunsthalle* is the German term for a space that operates similarly to an art gallery in English. The defining factor of a *kunsthalle*, compared to other spaces that exhibit art, is that the *kunsthalle* doesn't have its own permanent collection. A good example of such a space is New Museum in New York City.

New Museum was founded at the start of the New Year in 1977. It was the vision of Marcia Tucker, who had worked as a curator at the Whitney Museum of American Art for nine years before being fired.⁹³ In her professional experience, Tucker was troubled by the disproportionate time and attention paid by institutions to already established artists at the expense of artists making cutting edge work in the present. She wished to bring the scholarly practices of established museums, along with the respect society accorded these institutions, to the work of younger artists. New Museum was the result of this vision and became the first museum to be devoted to contemporary art established in New York City since World War II. Focusing on the work of living artists who were not yet widely known and displaying work no more than ten years old, New Museum positioned itself somewhere between a traditional museum and an alternative space.⁹⁴ Roberta Smith, art critic for *The New York Times*, commented that New Museum was created in Tucker's image: chaotic, idealistic, and always questioning the nature of art. It included art that was excluded elsewhere because, "it was difficult, out of fashion,

⁹³ Tucker was fired over a Richard Tuttle exhibition she curated. Although not dealing with sensitive content, i.e. heavily political or social commentary, it disrupted ideas about what constituted art.

⁹⁴ New Museum, *History*, New Museum, 2012, revised 2016, <http://www.newmuseum.org/history>

unsalable or made by artists who weren't white or male or straight."⁹⁵

Before New Museum moved into its permanent space on Bowery in 2007, it occupied several different spaces.⁹⁶ The first exhibition, in July 1977, was curated by Tucker at C Space, a location not far from the museum's temporary offices on Hudson Street. This exhibition, entitled "Memory," inaugurated the museum's subsequent practice of accompanying each exhibition with a scholarly catalogue. In this way, Tucker both created a history, documenting the exhibition for future reference, and aligned New Museum with traditional museum practice. Shortly after "Memory," New Museum moved exhibition space and offices to a smaller gallery, part of the New School for Social Research. Tucker continued to curate its early exhibitions. Six years later, in 1983, New Museum worked out a long-term lease in the Astor Building in SoHo with much larger gallery and office space, eventually adding a bookstore carrying international publications on art, theory and culture.⁹⁷

In its early years and throughout the 1980's, New Museum exhibitions focused on emerging artists and presented group shows on themes of social and political significance. These exhibitions, many of them designed by curators Lynn Gumpert, Ned Rifkin and Brian Wallis, helped establish the museum's reputation as one engaged with Postmodernism and critical theory. Exhibitions at New Museum embraced mediums other than painting and sculpture, such as film, video, television, photography and

⁹⁵ Roberta Smith, "Marcia Tucker, 66, Founder of a Radical Art Museum, Dies," *The New York Times*, 19 October 2006: 1-3, 2

⁹⁶ The museum required galleries and offices but, because New Museum decided not to collect, did not require collection storage, which consumes a lot of the space in traditional museums.

⁹⁷ New Museum, *History*, New Museum, 2012, revised 2016, <http://www.newmuseum.org/history>

performance. As the museum entered the 1990s, curators Dan Cameron and Gerardo Mosquera highlighted significant international artists not yet recognized in the United States, such as Xu Bing, whose work they displayed in 1998. During this time, at the height of the AIDS crisis, the museum amended its original mission, which had stated that it would show only living artists, in order to include recently-deceased artists, and it remained constant in its commitment to engage with social issues.⁹⁸

The decision to assert the term “museum” has been a significant aspect of New Museum’s identity. While it operates like a *kunsthalle*, with no permanent collection, the identification with a museum harks back to Tucker’s original mission. Tucker was interested in “bringing the scholarly practices of these older institutions to younger artists and their work, Tucker imagined an institution devoted to presenting, studying, and interpreting contemporary art.”⁹⁹ Referring to the space as a museum further validated this idea. New Museum is not the only institution to display work it does not collect. For instance, Mass MoCA in North Adams, Massachusetts doesn’t have a permanent collection rather exhibits work on long-term view; it too claims an institutional identity as the Massachusetts *Museum* of Contemporary Art. The title of “museum” carries connotations: a certain rigor and an expectation of being open to the public and conserving artworks. In some ways, however, the definitions of “museum” and “gallery” seem to be conflated at places like New Museum and Mass MoCA. Though we think of galleries as places where art is for sale, many galleries display but don’t sell art. However, it seems clear that the association with museums is important to New Museum,

⁹⁸ Ibid

⁹⁹ Ibid

which has kept its name throughout its history even through changes in leadership and location.

In 2002, three years after Lisa Phillips was appointed director, New Museum announced plans to construct a new building to better accommodate the dynamic scale that best served the international contemporary work the museum sought to showcase. Kazuyo Sejima and Ryue Nishizawa/SANAA Ltd., a young architecture firm that had never built anything in New York, designed this new space. Phillips described the choice as consistent with the museum's mission to support new artists working in many forms, including architecture. SANAA recognized that the flexibility of the building is similar to the changing nature of contemporary art. The inclusion of windows and skylights was a response to New Museum's identity since contemporary culture is dynamic and always shifting or changing.¹⁰⁰ As Paul Goldberger, architectural critic and former writer for *The New Yorker*, observed, New Museum intentionally established itself as radical.¹⁰¹ In this way, its mission resembles that of MoMA, as articulated in the 1930s and discussed in the second chapter. However, while MoMA grew distant over time from its radical beginnings, the decision to move to the Bowery may have been New Museum's signal that it intends to stay on the cutting edge. In his review of the museum before its official opening, Goldberger hoped the New Museum would not become "a victim of its own success," a reference to what happened to MoMA.¹⁰² Based on the exhibitions mounted at the new site, New Museum intends to maintain its radical identity. The museum's

¹⁰⁰ Joseph Grima and Karen Wong, *Shift: SANAA and the New Museum*, (Baden, SUI: Lars Müller Publishers, 2008), 47.

¹⁰¹ Paul Goldberger, "Bowery Dreams," *The New Yorker*, 19 November 2007: 1-4, 2

¹⁰² *Ibid*, 4

current location opened on December 1, 2007. New Museum now has five floors of gallery space and a theater in lower Manhattan, easily visited by artists, students, and residents of the Lower East Side. Although the museum has grown in both scope and reputation, its success has not come at the cost of its mission. Since the beginning, New Museum's exhibitions have engaged sociopolitical issues and mounted critiques of standard exhibition strategies. Some of their earliest exhibitions include "'Bad' Painting" (1978), curated by Tucker, which questioned the conception of taste and was part of a larger exploration of theories of Postmodernism. The show commented on the kinds of exhibitions of contemporary work that could be seen at a place like MoMA. If MoMA really sees itself as a taste-making institution, as argued in the first case study, that perspective would also seep into their decisions about what postmodern work was of value. By contrast, the artists whose work was shown in "'Bad' Painting" consciously reject standard ideas of draftsmanship in favor of their own personal style. New Museum comments on the fluidity between terms such as "good" and "bad."¹⁰³ Another notable project is the museum's Windows series. Invited artists included Mary Lemley, Jeff Koons and Richard Prince who created installations in the street-level windows along 5th Avenue. This recurring exhibition became a distinctive feature of New Museum's programming in the Astor Building location as it challenged ideas about where art can be displayed.

Perhaps most radically, in comparison to most other museums of contemporary art, New Museum does not collect. Being the "New" Museum, it makes sense that they

¹⁰³ New Museum, "'Bad' Painting," New Museum, 2012, revised 2016
http://archive.newmuseum.org/index.php/Detail/Occurrence/Show/occurrence_id/5

wouldn't collect, since collections inevitably become "old." While the traditional institutions that inspired Tucker and where she developed her career do acquire contemporary pieces to build a permanent collection which will become part of an ongoing exhibition program, New Museum presents only temporary exhibitions. However, the scholarly catalogues New Museum publishes capture the historic existence of each exhibition, thus giving it a place in the history of art while not negating the essentially transitory nature of the contemporary. After an installation has run its course, usually for only a few months, it is de-installed and the work returned; a new exhibition, never before shown at New Museum, will be installed. Often these exhibitions take up the majority of the five floors of exhibition space accessible via elevator and stairs.¹⁰⁴ It's notable and unusual that a single contemporary exhibition is given this much space and does not have to compete with other exhibits for viewers' attention.

An in-depth look at Chris Burden's exhibition "Extreme Measures" in 2013 shows how accommodating the curatorial team of New Museum is when it comes to disrupting both the interior and exterior of the museum in order to best present an artist's work. This New Museum exhibition, organized by Lisa Phillips, spanned all five floors of gallery space, and included work hanging from the exterior of the building, *Ghost Ship* (2005) (Figure 16) as well as a rooftop installation. Chris Burden (1946-2015) was a conceptual performance and installation artist. His retrospective at New Museum, up for three months, was the first New York survey of his work and the first major exhibition of his work in over 25 years. Burden's most influential work emerged in the 1970s and

¹⁰⁴ New Museum, *History*, New Museum, 2012, revised 2016, <http://www.newmuseum.org/history>

often explored the theme of boundaries, constraints, and limits, both physical and moral. His early performance work was radical, as it often involved extreme elements of self-harm. One of his most famous works, *Trans-Fixed* (1974), involved Burden being nailed through his hands to the hood of a Volkswagen Bug, reminiscent of the crucifixion of Jesus. In other works, he had been shot in the arm, starved, and hidden out of sight for days in gallery corners. The exhibition presented the archive of Burden's past works—shown in video and photographs—on the fifth floor. These were a stark contrast to the room-consuming installations on lower floors. However, these early works are critical for understanding Chris Burden and his legacy. The issues he engaged with via performance often related to the current sociopolitical climate. His self-harming performances physicalized the pain of the nation during the race riots, Kent State shootings, and Mai Lai brutality that he and his fellow Americans were experiencing.¹⁰⁵ In this way, Burden is a particularly appropriate artist for New Museum to show, as his work also relates New Museum's mission to present art that related to something bigger than simply aesthetics.¹⁰⁶

Initially Burden wanted to leave the museum empty and exhibit all of his work on the exterior of the building. Deciding to simplify, he settled on two works that could be seen attached to the façade.¹⁰⁷ *Ghost Ship* and *Twin Quasi-Legal Skyscrapers* (2013) (Figure 17) were the two pieces that made it onto the exterior. *Two Quasi-Legal Skyscrapers*, placed on the roof of the museum and altering the silhouette of the building

¹⁰⁵ Lisa Phillips, "Double Blind" in *Chris Burden: Extreme Measures* ed. Lisa Phillips and Massimiliano Gioni (New York: Skira Rizzoli Publications, 2013), 18.

¹⁰⁶ New Museum, *Chris Burden: Extreme Measures*, New Museum, 2012, revised 2016, <http://www.newmuseum.org/exhibitions/view/chris-burden-extreme-measures>

¹⁰⁷ Initially Burden and New Museum curators explored how to hang *Urban Lights* upside down

within the skyline, was an easier installation than *Ghost Ship*. *Ghost Ship* installation was meant to hang off the building much like a lifeboat hangs from a larger ship and required architectural and engineering consultants to address issues of safety. A risky installation like this required confidence in engineering solutions that could withstand unforeseen complications due to extreme weather. Hurricane Sandy had occurred not long before this exhibition. The connection details to hang *Ghost Ship* weren't finalized until the week before the installation as they were constantly adjusted to satisfy city code, engineers, architects, curators and the artist, and to deal with variable conditions imposed by the weather. The demands of the installation added to the meaning of the exhibition, as part of "Extreme Measures" was to explore the way in which Burden has pushed material, personal and architectural limits.

Not only was the external installation of *Ghost Ship* ambitious but also the installations inside were ambitious large-scale projects. Burden moved from performance to sculpture in the 1980s. The exhibition included a full-sized motorcycle, pickup truck, and sports car. For an institution that is vertically oriented, as New Museum is, with each floor acting as one room of gallery space, the installation of sculptures at that scale was a challenge. This can be seen in *The Big Wheel* (1979) (Figure 18), in which a motorcycle is mounted on a wooden platform and connected to an eight-foot flywheel weighing three tons. A gallery assistant would rev the motorcycle's engine, which would spin the flywheel forcefully. The piece starts as a sculpture but turns into a loud, disruptive and vaguely threatening performance of sorts, catalyzed by the New Museum employee; thus it becomes a performance piece made possible without the presence of the artist.

A second artist displayed at New Museum also challenged the limits of exhibition space in ways that reveal the accommodating and experimental environment New Museum works to create. Carsten Höller's exhibition "Experience" in 2010 was even more disruptive to the space than Burden's would be. Holler emphasizes experimentation as he creates interactive environments that challenge visitor's perceptions. At New Museum, for example, his *Swinging Curve* asks visitors to wear goggles that render the world as upside down as they walk through a short, curving, white tunnel. The highlight of the exhibition, however, was one of Höller's slide installations (Figure 19). Running from the fourth to the second floor, Höller's spiral slide deposits visitors onto the second floor after a total loss-of-control and exhilarating experience. The vertical space at New Museum seemed to be a perfect fit for this kind of installation, which took a week to install; the installation began with cutting through the floors and was overseen by the German slide-fabricating company Höller always works with.¹⁰⁸ The New Museum galleries are unusually tall to accommodate massive installations and a slide makes ideal use of the space, since it requires more height than width. This is another example in which the artist has taken up all of the space at New Museum. Each floor represented a different theme in Höller's work and the exhibition, as a whole, was the most comprehensive of Höller's work in the United States. These comprehensive, and somewhat chronological, collections of an artist's work over time epitomize New Museum's mission to bring attention to original living artists not as widely recognized as New Museum thinks they should be.

¹⁰⁸ Gary Carrion-Murayari, "The Making of 'Caster Höller: Experience'," interview at New Museum, 14 November 2011. <http://www.newmuseum.org/exhibitions/view/carsten-hoeller-experience> (accessed 17 April 2017)

Through these two examples of exhibitions, it is clear that New Museum is an unusually accommodating space for contemporary artists to show their work in a museum setting. In the temporality of exhibitions, New Museum's practices resemble those of contemporary biennials, which periodically display temporary exhibitions of high-profile contemporary work selected by high-profile curators. The term "biennial" was coined first by the Venice Biennial, established in 1895. Perhaps the biennial most philosophically in sync with New Museum's mission to show art that comments on sociopolitical issues is *documenta*, first established in 1955 and repeated every five years in Kassel, Germany. *Documenta* was established in Kassel as a response to the social and political environment of Germany in 1955 during the recovery from WWII. The first exhibition showed works presented in the "Entartete Kunst" exhibition by artists such as Wassily Kandinsky and Hannah Höche, but subsequently moved to show contemporary works, much like the Venice Biennial. This focus on present-day art signaled to visitors that the country could move into the future and be rehabilitated from past damage. *Documenta*, and other exhibitions like it, tend to appoint one curator or curatorial team to lead the exhibition. The first *documenta* curator was Arnold Bode. Subsequent directors have included Catherine David (*documenta X*, 1997) and Okwui Enwezor (*Documenta 11*, 2002), each notable for bringing a unique perspective to the show as the first female and the first non-European to hold the job. Perhaps partly in recognition of the non-European perspective of its curator, *Documenta 11* focused on themes of migration, urbanization and the postcolonial experience. Every *documenta* exhibition lasts for 100 days and is nicknamed "the museum of 100 days." In this time-limited exhibition strategy

it evokes the practices of New Museum. *Documenta* work is not for sale and does not become part of a *documenta* permanent collection. *Documenta* has led to over 100 biennials in cities worldwide. Although some are more popular than others, they are universally known as platforms that promote experimentation and diversity.

Beyond *documenta*, and particularly relevant to this thesis' focus on contemporary art in New York City, is the Whitney Biennial, another way an established institution commits to showing art urgently engaged with today's issues. Although the show is devoted to the most contemporary American art, the work is exhibited in rather conventional white cube galleries. The only accommodation made to the demands of the artwork chosen for view is the scale of the cube. It's possible to connect the Biennial hosted at the Whitney, where Marcia Tucker worked before moving to New Museum, to New Museum's practice of engaging with social issues and difficult material. Consistent with her commitment to explore the complexities of contemporary art, Tucker was fired from the Whitney in 1975 after curating an installation by Richard Tuttle, an American postmodernist known for his small and subtle artwork. Hilton Kramer, art critic for *The New York Times*, described the show before it opened, "A stick of wood rising from the floor. A bit of wire fastened to a wall embellished with a few penciled lines. Some bits of string arranged on the rug. Some dyed fabric tacked up to resemble a painting."¹⁰⁹ Others were similarly dismissive and didn't care to understand Tucker or Tuttle's disruption of what art could mean. The exhibition was rearranged a few times but the overall environment continued to be the white cube. The negative reviews of the show

¹⁰⁹ Hilton Kramer, "Tuttle's Art On Display At Whitney," *The New York Times* 12, September 1975: 1-2, 1

contributed to Tucker's dismissal. However, the Tuttle exhibition suggests that Tucker's vision for contemporary art in a museum setting is compatible with the idea of the biennial in terms of temporality. Based on the eager anticipation for each Whitney Biennial and the prestigious reviews it receives from prominent critics, the periodic temporary exhibition of curated contemporary work has achieved mainstream status.¹¹⁰ Such exhibits appear to be increasingly accepted as effective ways of presenting contemporary art, which is always changing and reacting to the present sociopolitical climate, which is also always changing. From Burden to Höller, we see that New Museum is willing to make radical commitments to the vision of contemporary artists, rather than be constrained by construction difficulties or the costs of satisfying building inspectors.

New Museum is about as far as a museum can go in terms of accommodating the needs of contemporary art, and as we have seen compromises still need to be made. For one thing, the artwork is still confined, even if it's in a way that makes the constraints visible. New Museum has created a space with remarkable high ceilings but unless the art being exhibiting is large-scale and utilizes the extra height that the gallery allows for, pieces can seem drowned in the space. The space may feel empty even if there's an exhibition of contemporary paintings or photographs on view. New Museum has been most successful in displaying contemporary art that pushes the *physical* boundaries of the exhibition space. However for artists whose work conceptually challenges the idea of

¹¹⁰ The Whitney Biennial is routinely covered in *The New Yorker*, *The New York Times* and *Artforum* to name only a few publications.

museum exhibition, New Museum is as unsatisfying as any other museum setting.¹¹¹ In many ways New Museum has approached the tension of displaying contemporary art differently than MoMA and Dia:Beacon does and with many successes. However, it's not a full solution.

¹¹¹Nonetheless, museums need to exist in order for social practice artists or artists working in institutional critique to do their work, if only to provide a focal point of reaction to the institution.

Conclusion

The museums we have explored in this thesis have sought to find the right relationship between contemporary art and the space in which it is displayed. It's not immediately apparent that the white cube isn't such a space; in spite of its subliminal ideology, it offers apparently neutral space that can be adapted to serve the needs of contemporary pieces and exhibitions. It's easier to modify, if necessary, than other default colors and configurations would be. Yet, as becomes clear in the first case study of MoMA, implementing the white cube format to display contemporary art is problematic. The space, so closely identified with the modern, serves a chronological narrative where each piece builds on the ones before it. The white cube, already compartmentalized, tells the story of modern art, one object at a time, but it proves unsuccessful for contemporary art, whose story doesn't necessarily involve work that came before it: much contemporary art consciously separates itself from a tradition. Contemporary art has proven to be frustrating to display historically, since we don't yet know what its story will be. The history is superimposed onto the art only after a pattern and perspective are identified. Dia:Beacon poses its own solution to the problem of displaying contemporary art in an appropriate setting, but it too includes complications. With a static collection, one that was contemporary at the time of its purchase, Dia:Beacon hired Robert Irwin to create space specifically calibrated for it. Although great for the postmodern/minimalist works of this collection, the industrial space constrains contemporary art of the last few decades which doesn't fit seamlessly into the historic moment exhibited at Dia:Beacon. Back in the city, New Museum makes a

different accommodation between display and collection than does either MoMA or Dia:Beacon. Usually displaying a single artist over the five floors of the museum, New Museum readily reshapes its flexible space to serve the art, all of it temporarily on display and none of it collected by the museum. Though some artists' work gains more from the space than others, New Museum has remained faithful to its original mission to present the work of current and significant artists not necessarily acknowledged by major institutions. Even New Museum, which I'm suggesting is the closest to an appropriate way of displaying contemporary art, is not entirely successful. Although by definition contemporary is temporary, their temporary format leaves the role of patron of contemporary art to wealthy collectors who are building their own museums (Perez, Rubell and Broad to name a few). These collections have lifespans and will inevitably become museums of recent Modernism, especially because they represent the vision of a single person or couple.

All three museums are clearly committed, ideologically and financially, to doing justice to contemporary art. So the fact that they are not entirely successful raises a question about the relationship between this art and the museums that display and/or acquire it. Resolving the issue may lie not with specific decisions made by individual museums but in recognizing the possibility that there is an irresolvable tension between the contemporary and the very idea of a museum. The cultural construction of a museum is a traditional idea of tastemaking, preservation, historical record, governed by curation. By contrast, the contemporary isn't yet absorbed by tradition. The museum has to change fundamentally or find ways to celebrate the tension as part of the work itself. In any

space, be it the historicizing MoMA chronology or the custom-built Dia:Beacon or the accommodating “anything” space of New Museum, contemporary art bursts the bounds of museum space. Strange and vital, such works as Rosler’s garage sale and Piper’s performance art remind visitors of the world outside the museum and of the artificial nature of the space in which the art is displayed. Museum experiences have conditioned us to expect that the artwork should be in harmonious dialogue, rather than in disruptive competition. Yet the contemporary resists any effort to fix it in space or in tradition, and thus contemporary art will continue to challenge institutions. This might not be a bad thing.

I’m not original in my exploration of such a topic; this tension has existed for a long time and to date no one institution seems to have offered a permanent solution. Contemporary art requires museums to modify their sense of the space they hold in human culture: to move from the idea that they are repositories of artifacts to thinking of themselves as the location of experiences. These journeys of experience might be built around artifacts, but they don’t have to be, as social practice artwork has proven. The value of the experience of art isn’t derived from being in the presence of objects, as the white cube exhibition strategy suggests, or even having the chance to take an educational and predetermined journey of learning. Instead it lies in openness and interaction: interaction with ideas, with contemporary life, and with other viewers. Contemporary art itself compels a change in what museums are or how they operate. Hopefully that opens a wider sense of where and how art is experienced. With New Museum, the solution has been to make the space larger, to accommodate art of large scale, but doesn’t address

conceptual artworks, especially those that challenge the very idea of an institution. This tension has proven unsolvable since often it's the conceptual aspects that drive artists to challenge the institution.

This thesis has looked at how different institutions have grappled with this problem. While solutions aren't obvious, one thing is certain: artists will continue to break the boundaries, whatever those boundaries might be.

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Images

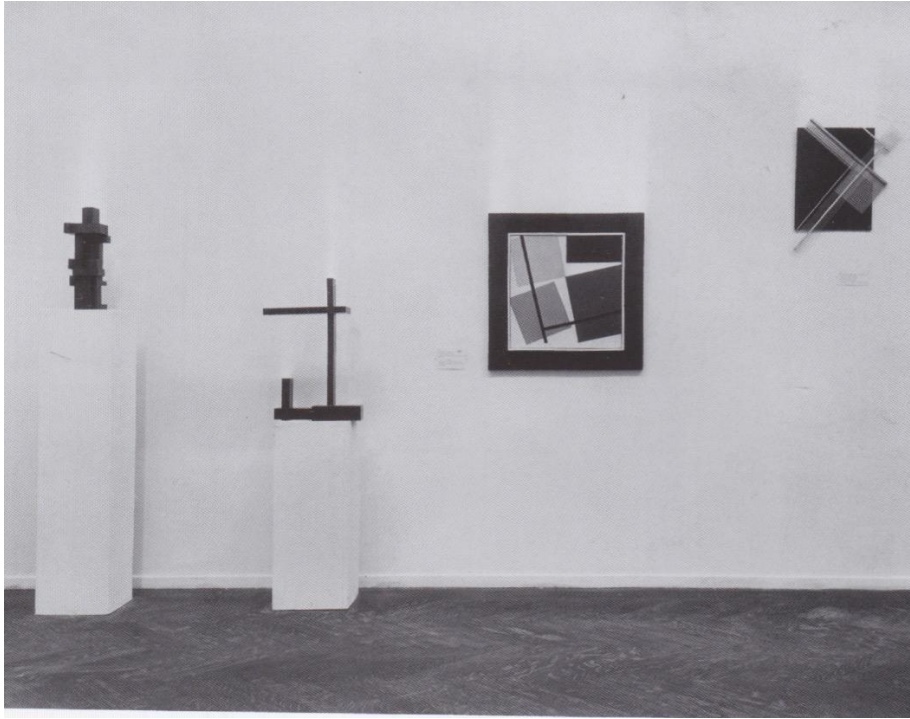


Figure 1. Alfred H. Barr, Jr, designed exhibition of work by Dutch Constructivists in “Cubism and Abstract Art,” Museum of Modern Art in New York, 1936. Image source: Charlotte Klonk. *Spaces of Experience: Art Gallery Interiors from 1800 to 2000*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 139



Figure 2: Adolf Ziegler et al., *Dada-Wall*, “Entartete Kunst” exhibition at the Archäologisches Institut in Munich, 1937. Image source: Charlotte Klonk. *Spaces of Experience: Art Gallery Interiors from 1800 to 2000*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 129



Figure 3. Heinrich Hoffmann, installation of “Grosse deutsche Kunstausstellung” in the Haus der Kunst in Munich, 1937, postcard. Image source: Charlotte Klonk. *Spaces of Experience: Art Gallery Interiors from 1800 to 2000*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 126

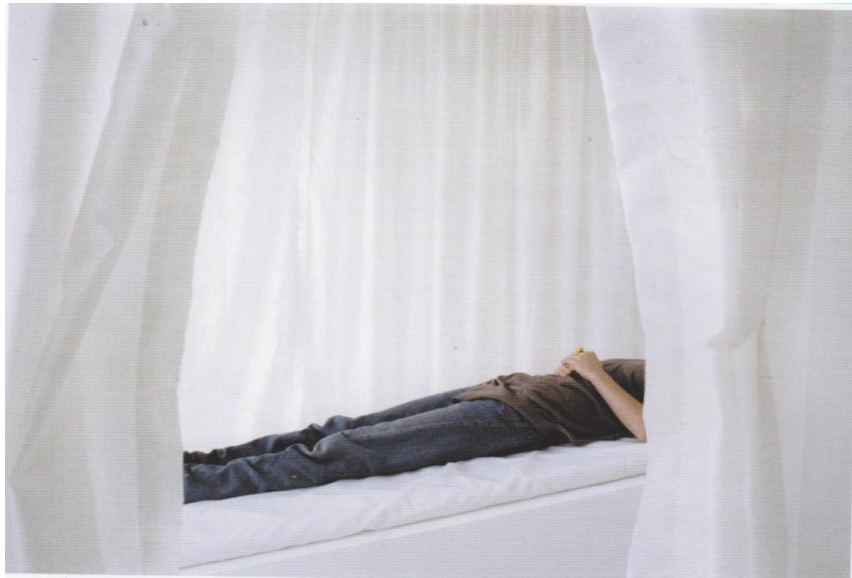


Figure 4: Installation view from the exhibition “Ilya and Emilia Kabakov: House of Dreams,” Serpentine Gallery, London (19 October 2005 - 8 January 2006)
Image source: Charlotte Klonk. *Spaces of Experience: Art Gallery Interiors from 1800 to 2000*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 195



Figure 5: Random International, *Rain Room*, 2012. Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles. Water, injection moulded tiles, solenoid valves, pressure regulators, custom software, 3D tracking cameras, steel beams, water management system, grated floor. Image source: <http://random-international.com/work/rainroom/> (accessed April 11, 2017)



Figure 6: Hans Haacke, *MoMA Poll*. 1970. Museum of Modern Art, New York. Image source: <https://www.moma.org/interactives/exhibitions/2015/messingwithmoma/> (accessed April 11, 2017)



Figure 7: Martha Rosler, *Meta-Monumental Garage Sale*, 2012. Museum of Modern Art, New York. Image source: <https://www.moma.org/calendar/performance/1261?locale=en#installation-images> (accessed March 8, 2017)

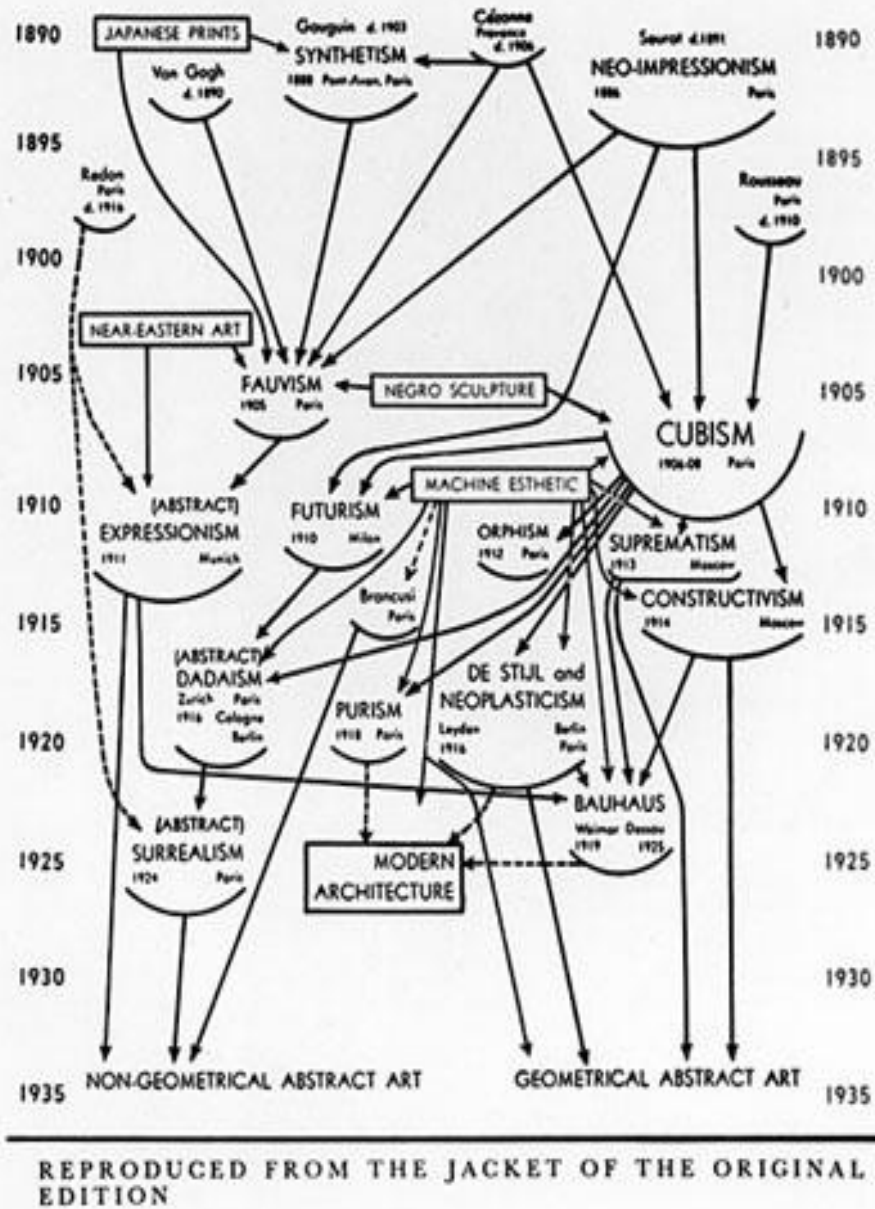


Figure 8: Alfred H. Barr, Jr., Flow Chart. 1936. Museum of Modern Art, New York. Image source: https://www.moma.org/interactives/exhibitions/2000/madm/start/01_03/barr_pop.html (accessed March 8, 2017)



Figure 9: Installation view “Recent Acquisitions,” Jan 31-May 7, 1950. Museum of Modern Art, New York. Image source: <https://www.moma.org/calendar/exhibitions/2871?locale=en> (accessed: 22 March, 2017).



Figure 10: Installation view “Contemporary: Inaugural Installation,” Nov 20, 2004-July 11, 2005. Museum of Modern Art, New York. Image source: <https://www.moma.org/calendar/exhibitions/3531?locale=en#installation-images> (accessed March 22, 2017).



Figure 11: Dia:Beacon, aerial view. Beacon, New York. Image source: Lynne Cooke and Michael Govan *Dia:Beacon*. (New York : Dia Art Foundation, 2003).

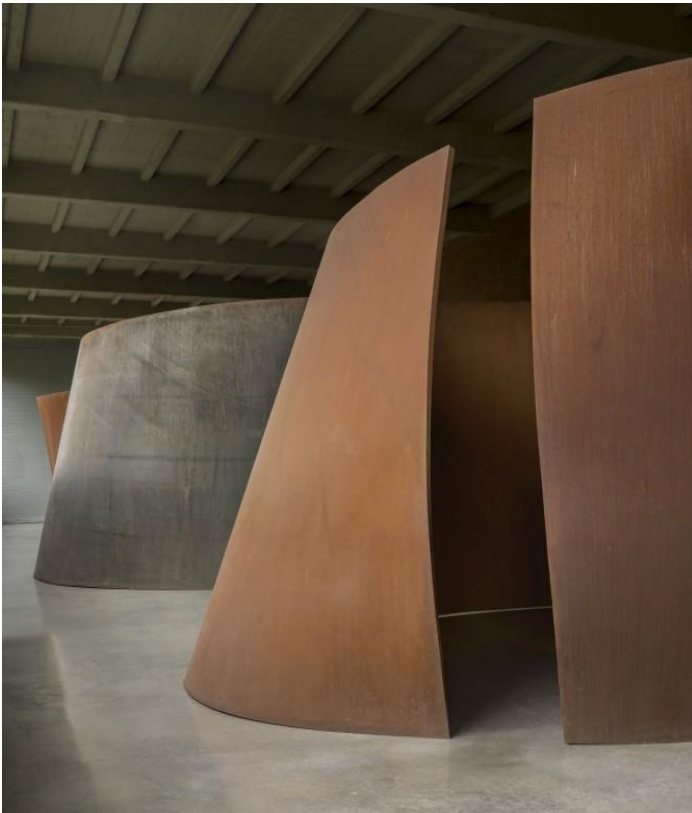


Figure 12: Richard Serra *Torqued Ellipses*. 1996-97. Dia:Beacon, New York. Weatherproof steel
Image source:
<http://www.diaart.org/collection/collection/serra-richard-torqued-ellipse-i-1996-1997-001> (accessed April 11, 2017)



Figure 13: Michael Heizer, *Negative Megalith #5*. 1998. Diorite granite and steel. Dia:Beacon, New York. Image source: <http://www.diaart.org/collection/collection/heizer-michael-negative-megalith-5-1998-1-2003-076> (accessed April 11, 2017)



Figure 14: Louise Bourgeois, *Crouching Spider*. 2003. Bronze, black and polished patina, stainless steel. Dia:Beacon, New York. Image source: <http://www.diaart.org/collection/collection/heizer-michael-negative-megalith-5-1998-l-2003-076> (accessed April 11, 2017)



Figure 15: Louise Bourgeois, *Crouching Spider*. 2003. Bronze, black and polished patina, stainless steel. Dartmouth College, New Hampshire. Image source: <https://news.dartmouth.edu/news/2012/10/dartmouth-college-announces-installation-louise-bourgeois-crouching-spider-maffei-arts> (accessed April 11, 2017)

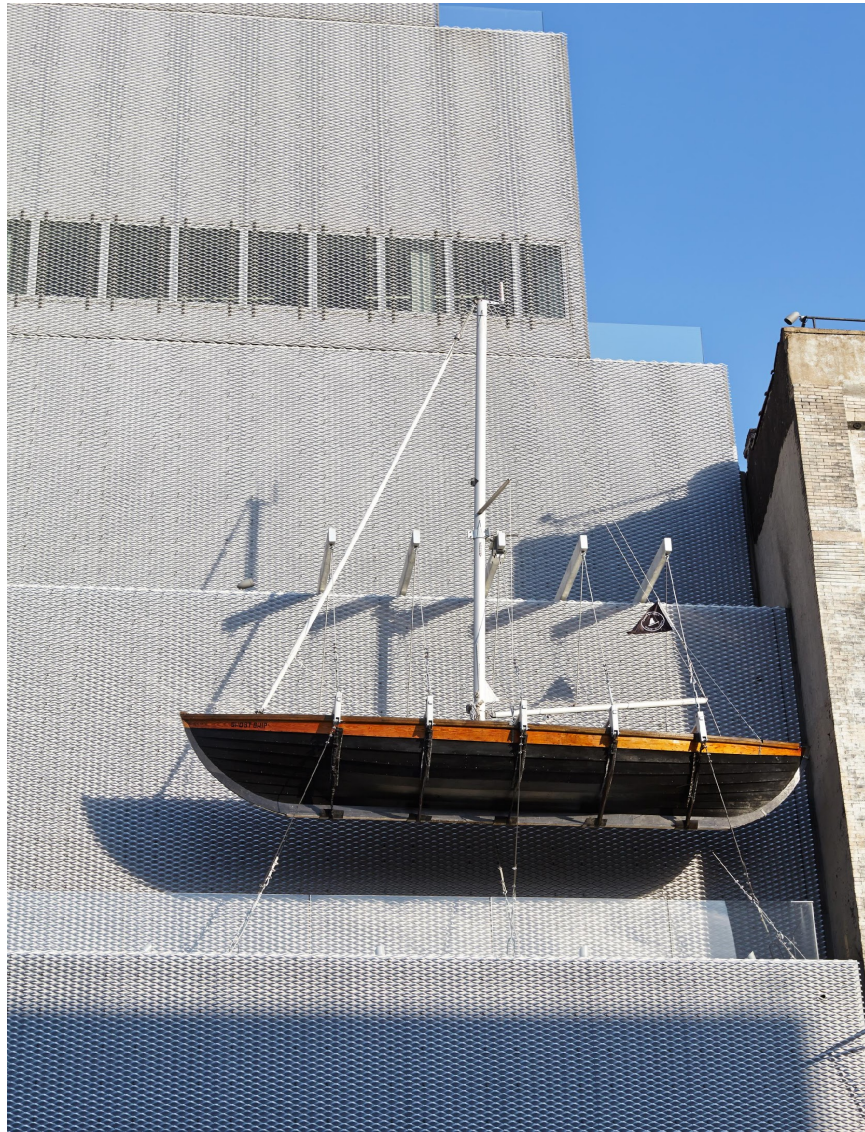


Figure 16: Chris Burden, *Ghost Ship*, 2005, installed New Museum, 2013. New Museum, New York. Thirty-foot handmade sixern sailboat, aluminum mast, computers and software, hydraulics, GPS system, auto rudder and rigging. Image source: <http://www.designboom.com/art/chris-burden-extreme-measures-at-new-museum-10-05-2013/> (accessed April 11, 2017)



Figure 17: Chris Burden, *Two Quasi-Legal Skyscrapers*, 2013. New Museum, New York. Structural aluminum framing, glass, wood 2 x 4s, steel hardware (stainless steel cable, turnbuckles, clis and angles, t-nuts, half-inch bolts) Image source: <http://www.newmuseum.org/blog/view/chris-burden-at-the-juncture-of-art-and-architecture-collaboration-and-risk> (accessed April 11, 2017)



Figure 18: Chris Burden, *The Big Wheel*, 1979. New Museum, New York. Three-ton, eight-foot diameter, cast iron flywheel powered by a 1968 Benelli 250cc motorcycle. From: <http://animalnewyork.com/2013/chris-burdens-big-wheel-makes-some-noise-at-the-new-museum/> (accessed April 11, 2017)



Figure 19: Carsten Höller, *Untitled (Slide)*, 2011. New Museum, New York. Stainless steel, canvas mats and mixed mediums. Image source: <http://www.newmuseum.org/exhibitions/view/carsten-hoeller-experience> (accessed April 11, 2017)