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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

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t/here

importing spectacle

Why are we drawn to images of the extraordinary, the dangerous and the sublime? It is human nature to look to the spectacular as a means of entertainment and profit. Each spectacular moment offers a temporal escape from our everyday reality into a realm of delight and intrigue. From the Roman Coliseum to the exotic imports of international expositions, our threshold of reality blurs with each defying instance of spectacle. Architecture and design are not immune to the commodification associated with spectacle. For centuries patrons imported architects from around the globe to produce buildings that evoke uniqueness and prestige.

Contemporary media exploits this fetish to get our attention, increase ratings, and sell the product. We live in a time where sex, violence and reality TV turn quick profits, only to be trumped by the next bigger and more outlandish scheme. Facing the problem of post-industrial identity, cities pursue the spectacle in an attempt to put their name on the map, increase prestige, and reshape the civic landscape. The Midwest is no exception – scattered throughout the region, buildings designed by the biggest names in the business stand as monuments to culture – Calatrava in Milwaukee, Hadid in Cincinnati, and Graves, Nouvel, and Herzog & de Meuron in Minneapolis.

It is within the context of global issues and regional identity that we present *t/here, a journal of architecture and landscape*. In this and future issues, we seek to inspire conversation on contemporary issues relating to the changing nature of our built environment. The theme of this issue, *Importing Spectacle*, brings to light a global phenomenon playing out in our city. We encourage you to engage in this transformative drama as it plays out in cultural institutions from coast to coast.

-THE EDITORS

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architecture &
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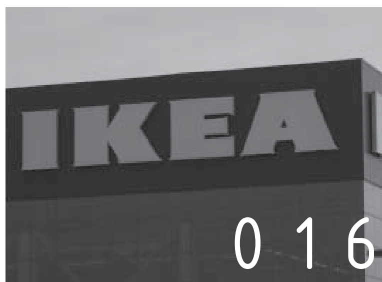

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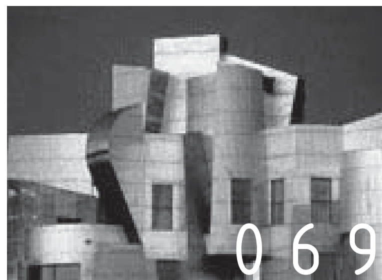

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Thomas Fisher
University of Minnesota

Thomas Fisher is Dean of the College of Architecture and Landscape Architecture at the University of Minnesota, and formerly the Editorial Director of Progressive Architecture magazine.

Friedrich Nietzsche argued that Western culture has long cycled between an Apollonian love of reason and moderation on one hand, and a Dionysian fascination with the irrational and the extreme on the other. In architecture, we have gone from the Dionysian 1960s, with its countercultural utopianism, to the Apollonian 1980s, with its neo-classical post-modernism, back to our current Dionysian infatuation with complex, convoluted and computer-generated forms.

While the cycles Nietzsche identified have occurred for a very long time, the rise of mass media and global communications has accelerated the frequency of the oscillations between our Apollonian and Dionysian selves. What once took a century or more to change now happens in a decade or two. Several factors fuel this cycling back and forth in architecture: both the media and the general public seem drawn to buildings that are stimulating or novel, and communities continually seek ways to attract new visitors and investors. A downturn or up-tick in the economy can lead to new high-profile projects either as an economic stimulus or as a place to park excess capital. New leadership at the local or state level can cause a burst of new investment in building as a way to prime the economic pump or mark a new era. And social shifts in a community, be it the return of people living in center cities or the influx of young people to a region because of jobs, can lead to new investment in cultural organizations, which attract the major wealth producers of the white-collar economy.

Four new civic buildings in Minneapolis reveal the full range of these forces at work. Each has a “star” designer from outside the Twin Cities: Michael Graves from Princeton for the addition to the Minneapolis Institute of Arts (MIA) and the Children’s Theater; Cesar Pelli from New Haven for the new Minneapolis Public Library; Jean Nouvel from Paris for the new Guthrie Theater, and Herzog & de Meuron from Basel for the addition to and renovation of the Walker Art Center. Each also has a local architectural firm working alongside the out-of-town designers: RSP for the MIA and Children’s Theater, the Architectural Alliance for the Public Library and Guthrie Theater, and HGA for the Walker addition.

All four projects have been funded and constructed in the middle of a recession, which speaks to the philanthropic nature of Minnesotans. At the same time, each client has sought not just to increase the size of its institution, but also to use architecture as a vehicle toward increasing its presence on the local, national, or international scene.

As the competition increases for more media attention, for the best employees or leaders, and for larger amounts of investment or philanthropy, clients themselves willingly take on aesthetic risks in order to make a more visible statement. This, of course, varies from one client to the next. Some clients, who seek a national pres-

1.1. The Minneapolis Institute of Arts: view of the Michael Graves addition from Target Park.

ence with a minimum of risk, will often go with architects whose stardom has somewhat faded: name brands offering a good deal of certainty with regard to the result. Other clients, seeking to play a national or even international leadership role, will frequently invest more risk capital in the design of their facilities. They have less certainty as to the aesthetics of the final design, but they also have a chance of gaining a great deal of global interest, attention, and respect. How the four Minneapolis institutions have responded to these choices reflects Nietzsche's cycles and the full range of Apollonian and Dionysian ideas inherent in them.

ACROPOLIS OF ART

The most Apollonian of the four projects are the additions to the MIA and Children's Theater, designed by Michael Graves & Associates, with RSP Architects. Graves has a high public profile because of his product designs for Target, whose CEO sits on the MIA board and who no doubt had some influence on the architect's selection. The stripped-down classicism of the additions alludes to the MIA's original Beaux-Arts building, designed by one of the first celebrity architectural firms in the U.S. – McKim, Mead & White. The revered Japanese architect, Kenzo Tange, added an addition in the 1970s. Graves has largely ignored the starkly modern Tange-designed wings, and added two creamy, stone-clad structures, whose color contrasts with but whose rhythms and proportion echo the original building.

The classicism of Graves' designs represents a relatively low aesthetic risk for these institutions, even as Graves' popularity among the public offers them relatively high visibility. Graves' designs, and the Apollonian sensibility in general, appeals to a yearning among some people for permanence and order in a world that seems to change with ever-greater speed, a yearning also addressed by the MIA, with its historic art, and the Children's Theater, with its classic plays. So, while Graves' post-modern classicism has lost much of its appeal among his professional peers, it remains a perfect match for these two institutions.

Graves, though, has not been unaffected by our more Dionysian times. Both the MIA and Children's Theater additions evoke the contemporary desire for "super-sized" objects, offering passersby a spectacle not through unusual form or unconventional materials, but through almost overwhelming scale. While Graves has used piers and pilasters, rotundas and recesses to reduce the additions' apparent size, their tall and nearly blank walls and their location so close to the road make them seem overpowering on their narrow sites, resulting in the neighborhood's opposition to the new museum wing in particular.

The Graves additions have little of the lightheartedness of his product designs or freshness of some of his own earlier build-

ings, which may have as much to do with the client and the context as it does with the architect. Still, if Nietzsche is right that we will soon cycle back to an Apollonian sensibility – evident in the rightward tilt of American politics – then we will need to re-examine what that means, getting past our taste for super sizing to a more humble and less hubristic sense of what Apollo represented.

GLASS ACT

Such modesty seems more in evidence in the Minneapolis Public Library, designed by Cesar Pelli & Associates, with the Architectural Alliance. Selected through a very public process, the architects have designed the new library with its context very much in mind. The building's concrete structure, with mushroom-shaped columns that recall those of the nearby multi-story industrial facilities, reflects the role of the library as a warehouse of books. Pelli's designers also decided to clad the entire building in glass, with "fritted" patterns on its surface depicting the snow, trees, water, and prairie that surround the city and symbolizing the emerging role of the library in providing access to digital information in the form of patterns on the glass screens of computers.

With its central atrium, large coffee shop, and ample reading and lounge areas, the interior of the library also conveys the social role that libraries now play, providing one of the few places in an increasingly privatized city that welcomes people of all kinds and allows them to stay as long as they want during library hours.

The exterior's horizontal bands of Kasota stone and glass and its regular rows of columns on the interior speak to the order and logic that underlies the cataloging of books, giving the building an Apollonian character. However, Dionysus hovers nearby: a high, wing-like roof seems to levitate over the library's atrium and extends over the street entrance like a huge paper airplane that landed precariously on top of the building. Likewise, a glass-walled teen lounge cantilevers out over the main entry, attracting recalcitrant youth into the library and giving them a view up and down the street in return. The teenagers become both spectators of the street below and the object of the spectacle as viewed by passing pedestrians.

The Pelli-designed library pursues a degree of material innovation not evident in the Graves additions. The architects, for example, modified a fairly straightforward curtain wall system to create visual variety, altering the depth of the glass within the mullions to suggest that the panels slide past each other. The designers have also used the frit on the glass to disguise the

1.2. Left. Minneapolis Central Library.

1.3. Right. The new Guthrie Theater is under construction along the banks of the Mississippi River in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

different functions within, sometimes using solid walls behind the glass to provide needed privacy or to reduce the amount of heat gain on the interior. This has resulted in an elegant exterior skin to the building. However, the degree of innovation has stayed well within the limits of existing products. That had something to do both with the library's very tight budget, which precluded more exploratory solutions, and with the nature of American construction, which forces more conservative solutions on architects caught between ever-looming litigation and extraordinarily high bids for anything out of the ordinary. Apollonian restraint has become a fact of life for many American architects.

THE NEW NOUVEL

European architects, meanwhile, seem somewhat more immune to those pressures. Jean Nouvel's design, in association with the Architectural Alliance, for the new Guthrie Theater has ended up with a fairly conventional enclosure. The three-theater complex, stacked in a tight, vertical composition, has dark-blue metal panels on its exterior, reminiscent of the low-cost cladding used on grain elevators and industrial buildings. But with a closer look, the building has a Dionysian exuberance rarely seen in recent American architecture. At night, for instance, the light-gray images of scenes from the Guthrie stage, silk-screened onto the blue panels, emerge from the darkness like ghosts from performances past. In one sense, the use of the sides of a building to "advertise" what goes on inside has a long precedent, evident in the billboard-sized signs painted or displayed on the adjacent mill buildings. In another sense, though, the ephemeral and yet permanent images on the face of the theaters evoke the effect of electronic media on our perception of drama; most of us see actors not as live people performing on stage, but rather as flickering images projected on a movie screen.

Another uncanny quality of Nouvel's design lies in its organization, with functions like the scene shop, typically buried in the bowels of theaters, located on top of the parking garage across the street and connected to the backs of the two main theaters via skyways. When Nouvel came up with this unexpected and cost-effective solution, the Guthrie Theater didn't even own the air rights over the garage yet-to-be-built across the street. But by thinking outside the box and even beyond the site, Nouvel has managed to stack three theaters efficiently into a compact tower without sacrificing the needs of backstage functions.

By far the most Dionysian feature of the new theater is its lobby: a steel-framed, glass-and-metal-clad structure that cantilevers far out above the road and park along the Mississippi River, like some enormous river barge that got lodged in the building after a tremendous flood. This might seem like an extravagant as well as an expensive gesture, but it is just such dramatic features that attract attention and patronage to the modern theater.

Nouvel's design process also had Dionysian moments. His first idea for cladding the theater involved the use of steel pilings found along the barge docks that line parts of the adjacent Mississippi. When that proved too difficult, the architects looked at modifying existing metal panel systems with custom profiles to create large corrugations, but those solutions also proved too costly. In the end, they went with a standard, flat-panel metal-cladding system and looked to silk-screening, a conventional technology used in an unconventional way, to create the uncanny images on the theater's façade.

Nouvel's design meets the client's needs for a functioning theater complex, but Nouvel has also given them high drama in a building that takes as many calculated risks as what occurs on the Guthrie stage. As happened with the Ralph Rapson-designed original building for the Guthrie, Nouvel's project will once again put this leading repertory theater in the international lights. By pushing the envelope of what architecture can be and what contractors can do, Nouvel stands in sync with our current Dionysian phase, where,

for better or worse, pushing boundaries gets our attention – at least for the moment.

PER CHANCE

Of all the new Minneapolis projects, the Walker Art Center most consciously pursued daring architectural design, consistent with its reputation as a supporter of avant-garde art. Herzog & de Meuron, with HGA, has pursued in their design for an addition to the Walker, an idea rarely explored in architecture: that of randomness or chance. While that idea has long been a feature of 20th Century art, it hardly ever finds its way into architecture because of the cost and care that it takes to put up even the simplest buildings. But in an age fascinated by the extraordinary and exceptional, exploring the tension between the deliberateness of architecture and the randomness of the forces that act upon it, this design seems ideally suited to these times.

The idea of chance occurs at many scales in the Walker addition. It drives the addition's plan, for example, with its new rectangular galleries set askew like paper strewn across a table. The irregular spaces between the seemingly randomly placed galleries create dramatic and unexpected vistas, akin to moving along an irregular medieval street. Herzog & de Meuron's designers have also explored the idea of chance in the addition's massing and elevations. The main block of the addition, containing the Walker's new theater as well as entertainment and dining areas, looks like a Japanese lantern, folded, cut, and sliced by a pair of scissors and then set, lighter than air, on its base, allowing the corners to cantilever over the street below. The cuts and dents in the box have a random quality to them, although the end result, from some directions, looks like an angry face staring out at the car-clogged streets.

The cladding of the addition also sets this project apart. While Nouvel's Guthrie Theater ended up with a silk-screened but otherwise standard metal-clad façade, the skin of the Walker addition defies all convention. This comes from the freedom inherent in rain-screen walls, where the inner layer keeps out the elements, giving the outer rain screen a great deal of freedom to be almost anything as long as it deflects precipitation. Herzog & de Meuron have explored that idea more than almost any other architects, going so far as to use rock gabions, employed along sloping roadsides, as the rain screen for the Dominus Winery in California. For the Walker addition, the firm explored the childhood game of making paper dolls by folding, cutting, and then unfolding them to get a repetitive pattern. Except here, the designers made the folds and cuts randomly, producing unexpected patterns.

With that idea, the architects began to explore different and often unconventional materials. They looked at metal shingles, wood shingles, slump glass, and stretched fabric, the latter becoming the skin of choice until they saw full-scale mock-ups and decided that they could not get the material taut enough. Relatively late in the design, they returned to looking at metal, arriving at the use of square perforated-aluminum "pillows" as the building's rain screen. The double layers of perforations create moray patterns that bring the building to life as you move past it, while also disguising anything behind the second scrim, since the eye tends not to see past two perforated surfaces. Behind the apparent randomness of these crinkled perforated panels is an order: the four edges of the panels are all the same, so that they can be installed in any direction and align along their seam. However, a computer program randomly oriented each panel in various directions so that, despite a highly controlled design and construction process, the end result retains the idea of chance.

Throughout all of this, the Walker Art Center proved to be an ideal client, giving the architects time to explore and accepting, with some exceptions, the recommendations of the architects. As a result of that trust and fearlessness, the Walker addition not only meets the clients' needs, but also innovates formally and materially in ways that will generate a great deal of interest and attention internationally.

1.4. Left. The Walker Art Center Campus.

1.5. Right. The back facade of the Walker Art Center addition by Herzog & de Meuron.

This is what Dionysus offers to all who will take the risk.

THE EPHEMERAL SPECTACLE

From the Apollonian calmness of Michael Graves' additions to the Dionysian exuberance of Jean Nouvel's theater and Herzog & de Meuron's museum, to the hybrid quality of Cesar Pelli's library in between, these four buildings represent the range of architectural production today. Nouvel and Herzog & de Meuron have ridden the wave of interest in the sublime right now, while Pelli and especially Graves have found themselves less the center of attention with the waning of their more rational or classical sensibilities. However, given the speed with which modern culture cycles back and forth, that may not last long. With the next economic downturn or political backlash, we may find ourselves, once again, seeking the Apollonian qualities of restraint, order, and stability in our architecture.

It's also the case that different clients want and need different sensibilities. The Graves Apollonian additions seem as fitting for the city's main art museum as does Herzog & de Meuron's Dionysian addition to the city's avant-garde art center. And given the increasingly bureaucratized culture of construction, in which codes and regulations, community reviews, and peer pressure push buildings toward greater uniformity, it's amazing that any of these four projects made it to completion. Even star architects sometimes face heroic struggles against this homogenizing force in our culture, made all that more difficult because of the visibility of their failures.

Yet, architects, regardless of their sensibility, become famous when their ideas transcend the issues of function, budget and schedule to become a reflection of our culture, embodying who we are, where we have been, and what we aspire to be. And if they stay the course, pursuing these ideas regardless of whether or not the media, the public, or even their clients pay attention, the culture will eventually cycle around to rediscover them. On that, even the most unapologetic Apollonian and delirious Dionysian can pin their hopes.

IMAGE CREDITS

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1.5. Thomas Fisher, University of Minnesota, 2005.

fair and unbalanced

Kristin Tillotson

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Nowhere is excess more expected – and acceptable – than at the Minnesota State Fair. Over-consumption is expected at nearly every recreational event that attracts masses of people. But the Minnesota State Fair is the only one at which it is actually considered a virtue.

The Great Minnesota Get-Together is one of the nation's largest, with more than 1.5 million people attending each year. When you Google "state fair" online, its official website is at the head of the list.

The Minnesota fair's chief rival in the size game is Texas, where the scale of everything but humility seems to be exaggerated. It's easy to picture unbridled fair excess in the state of ten-gallon hats and socialites who don full-length furs when the temperature hits 50 degrees Fahrenheit. But in Minnesota, land of laconic self-restraint, the regional character seems out of place with such a display of consumption.

Occupying 310 acres in northwest St. Paul for two weeks at summer's end, the fairgrounds are a nightmare for germ-o-phobes and Atkins devotees, an orgy for the greedy omnivore. It's a scene worthy of Caligula, dusted with Pillsbury flour and impaled on a stick. A place where, as University Minnesota art-history professor and state fair historian Karal Ann Marling wrote in her 1990 book "Blue Ribbon," we can enjoy "a hiatus from the normal rules of time and good sense."

Super-sized and overstuffed, the fair is both a feast for and an assault on the senses. Day and night, competing neon colors and screaming signs pierce your eyeballs. Advertising understatement is a foreign concept, if not an outright sin; even the giveaway yardsticks are now magenta.

More than 100,000 ears of corn are consumed each year, topped with 3,000 pounds of butter. Add to that 20,000 gallons of milk, 35 miles of foot-long hot dogs, a half-million pounds of potatoes and 338,000 mini-donuts.

If your toes haven't been stepped on and your shirt adorned with someone else's caramel-apple residue, you aren't at the Fair. The wailing of cranky, nap-deprived kids and screams from the Midway thrill-seekers clash with the coaxing chants of carnies: "c'mon, c'mon, fi dolla, ten balls." And above all, the fair puts the factory in olfactory: You haven't lived till you've experienced the fragrance fusion of lard-soaked pronto pups and the naturally produced ammonia wafting from the hog barn, which, as a friend once helpfully pointed out, have common origins anyway.

The fair has certainly become more about gluttony en masse than agriculture. The days when farmers negotiated for new tractors on Machinery Hill and square dances at the bandshell were the social event of the season have been replaced by excursions that are primarily about cramming as much into mouths and stomachs

2.1: Left. Butter it up and pass the corn on the cob!

2.2: Right. Drink yourself sick at the dairy barn. Just remember, excess is a virtue.

as possible. But our forebears tried their best to pig out. In the 1920s, Batinger's Automatic Eater featured a 150-foot-long revolving counter that rolled past seated diners filled with 85 kinds of food. Whatever you could grab, you could eat.

Through the years the fair's dress code has devolved into "not nearly enough." Here, a fashion plate is someone who can pile the most aesthetically repellent deep-fried globules onto a paper tray without losing a curd. Cole Porter could never have imagined this when he wrote "Anything Goes": A sea of insufficiently veiled flesh, slathered in zinc oxide, rolling like waves of rising dough from one food booth to the next, can make you wish the fair was in January. The St. Paul Winter Carnival always seems more tasteful, not least because people's torsos are almost always covered.

Despite the off-putting display of what my niece would call the "oversharing" of anatomical attributes, the fair can be quite a romantic place. There's a reason why most of the pheromones caroming off the walls in the cow barn are not bovine, but human, as the 4-H teens preen in their annual mating rituals. The dilapidated, antiquated Ye Olde Mill ride still draws some of the longest lines of riders waiting for the momentary darkness of the Tunnel of Love. The fair boasts possibly the world's highest concentration of people walking around with their hands dipped into the back waistband of someone else's jeans. It's because love – along with eau de manure – is in the air. In a world of increasing isolation, it's a tsunami of human contact.

The fair is also a rite of passage, often the place where town kids get their first vague clues about how reproduction happens. You never forget the horrors you encountered as a child: Peering through your fingers at a sickly-white, bulbous mass you will identify years later as the hairy testicles of the state's fattest boar. Slipping on the unfortunate aftermath of an over indulger's spin on the Tilt-a-Whirl. Being whisked past the meltdown of a local television news personality forced to gladhand one too many times. Once they're swathed in the gauze filter of nostalgia,

2.3. Below. A day at the fair immortalized in a 50 pound block of butter.

2.4. Right. Why stop at one when you can just as easily have two?

they're just more fond memories.

No matter what new abominations are introduced each year – a sandblast-your-own-jeans kiosk, the next younger brother of an N'Sync member at the grandstand – the fair will always feel old-fashioned, traditional. The quilts at the Creative Activities Building, all those Mason jars full of jelly and preserved vegetables, the prize-winning pies and produce have always been there, and they're always gonna be there, even after motorized scooters have replaced all pedestrian traffic and a Democrat is once again in the White House.

Parochial East-Coast guests find the Minnesota State Fair to be so very quaint, like being transported to a Lake Wobegon convention. Oh, how they chuckle at the sight of Princess Kay of the Milky Way's head sculpted in butter, and a portrait of Prince rendered in corn kernels and grain seeds at the crop-art display in the Horticulture Building. (The best revenge on these types, by the way, is to ditch them in the poultry barn; New Yorkers freak out when surrounded by squawking, reeking feathered creatures that aren't pigeons.)

At the fair, the sensory overload always comes first. But as you settle in to the jostling rhythm, you start to see – between the flecks of sweat and donut grease trapped in your eyelashes – the shape of the fair.

The actual layout may be squarish, but the fair itself is round. Definitely round. The Ferris wheel, the salt-water-taffy puller, the MoonWalk, merry-go-round and racing oval all reinforce that idea. But it's really more of a feeling, a sense of being embraced in a very large, very crowded womb.

There is no "they" and "us" at the fair. Once you walk through the gate, any sense of superiority to those around you will burst on first impact with an errant Sno-cone. Yes, the Minnesota State Fair is excessive, outrageous, avaricious, an awfully huge spectacle that can swallow you whole unless you eat it first. But it's a homegrown spectacle, our very own eighth wonder of the world.

Let the circle be unbroken. And pass the butter.

IMAGE CREDITS
2.1- 4. Sarah Nelson, University of Minnesota, Graduate Student, 2004.

see no evil

Julie Brand
University of Minnesota

Julie Brand is a third year Master of Architecture student in the College of Architecture and Landscape Architecture at the University of Minnesota.

"IKEA" leaps big and yellow like some spandex-wrapped action hero onto the confluence of southbound 77 and westbound 494. When they came to town, they mailed you that remarkably thick catalogue that was the talk of wedding showers from Farmington to Elk River and plastered bill boards on the roadsides: "Hello, Twin Cities".

As a sort of reply, you regard the big blue block across the parking lot, gleaming in the setting sun on an unseasonably warm and smoggy day. You drive into a parking lot that optimistic architects of the 50's could have only dreamed of: the entire building is on pilotis, with a field of parked cars below. Overhead, a dropped ceiling seems impossibly, impeccably white. Recessed lighting reflects warmly – no, lovingly – off the SUV's, while large-lettered signs direct you inside. One of them, about their return policy, promises you that IKEA will "make things right".

Inside you get a shopping list – actually, a sort of map/order form – a golf pencil and an opportunity to divest yourself of any distracting progeny at a babysitting room. Up the escalator (and, yes, this is the only way you can go) you begin to browse among the dizzying series of little worlds. You see a heartbreakingly sweet little girl's bedroom that adult women you know still yearn for. You see urbane bedrooms, with only a thin, translucent film separating you from some spectacular floor-to-ceiling view beyond. You see luminous cabinets, stainless refrigerators, paneled walls, funky lamps, tastefully decorated Christmas trees. You see low, low prices. And you see people.

There are two kinds of people at IKEA: the two-dimensional kind and the three-dimensional kind. You find the three-dimensional kind interesting. One man stretches back on a showroom bed and yawns, "The thing I hate about work is…" as his wife retrieves the baby's pacifier from the floor. Others are more circumspect, looking with the kind of deferential reserve you are used to seeing in museums. You don't know if they're dazzled by the lovely blond vision of Swedish domesticity or by the go-ahead to play with the wares. Either way, though, you have to admit that the two-dimensionals, the images of people, are more attractive than the real thing. From their posters, they invite you to come and see their homes. Their glossy faces promise that your kids will keep liking you and that you will grow old and happy with someone you love. They show you what a designer should look like. They show you how to live IKEA.

Still you can't help but notice that the parade of worlds that you are promenading through is nothing more than a gussied-up warehouse – the cheapest and most insensitive of containers for human activity – and that the little tableaux of bachelor pads, kitchenettes, and nurseries are like prison cells inside a big, blue, fortified box. You don't know if it's dark or light outside or how to get back to your car.

3.1. Opposite. Minneapolis IKEA seen from Highway 77.

3.2. Left. A room to make any little princess happy. A typical IKEA display.

3.3. Below. IKEA's synthetic employees broadcast their suggestive happiness throughout the store.

IKEA is sort of quiet. There is no piped-in music, and the workers never bother you. Even the televised employees communicate through bubbles, like in comic strips.

There's a third kind of person, also quiet, who lives in IKEA. The price tags proudly display the names, faces and nationalities of product designers, but it takes a paragraph to explain that you cannot find out where a product was manufactured until you've paid for it and picked it up in the warehouse.

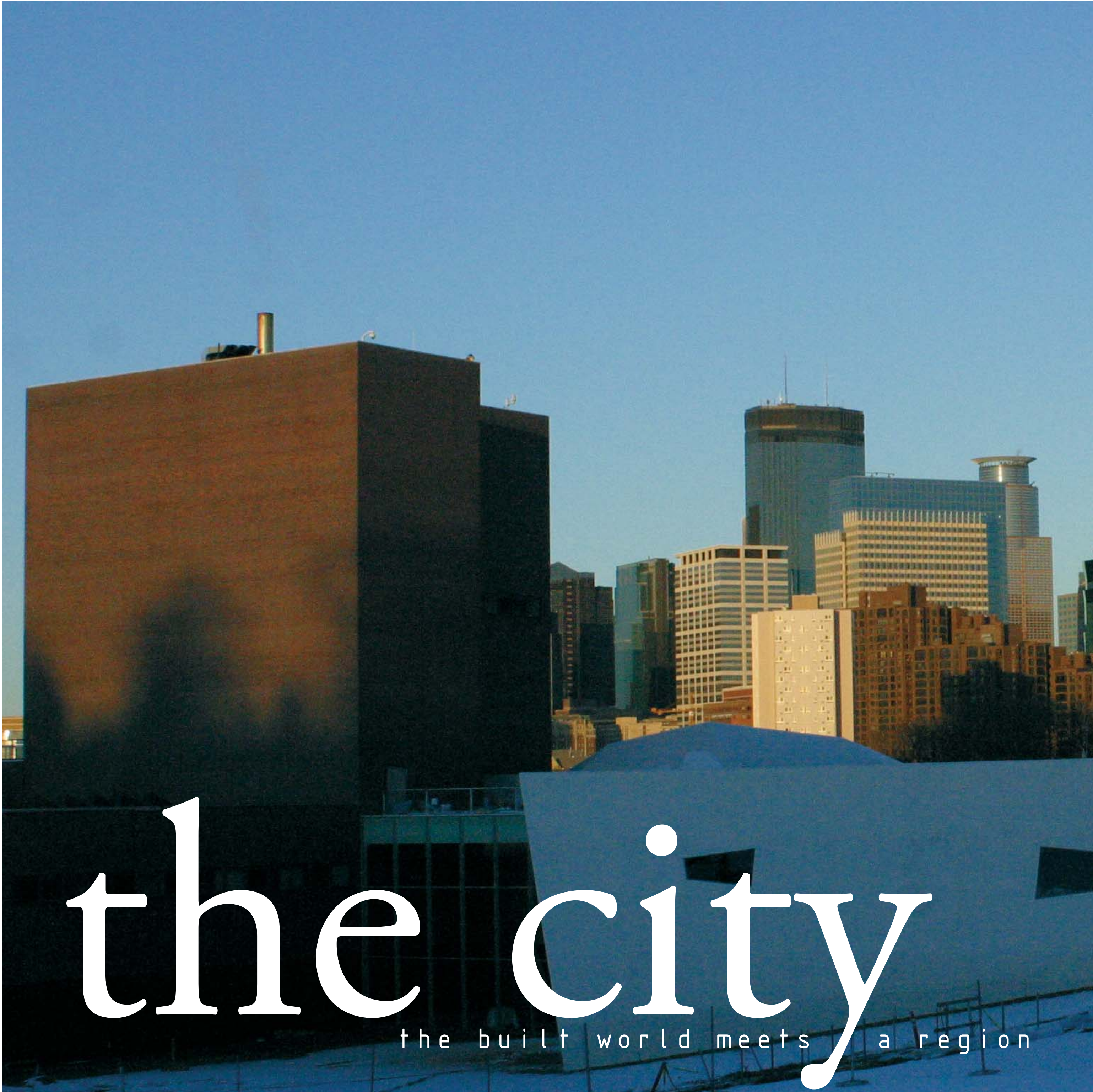
If you walked out to the edge of the parking lot you would see a series of white signs along the public sidewalk that prohibit trespass and the distribution of literature, in effect banning discussion of the third kind of person. And if you could somehow telepathically search the literature on IKEA's labor practices you would find, behind a potent PR campaign of sustainability and model labor standards, a policy of squeezing below-market prices out of subcontractors in countries where there is little organized labor and where non-governmental organizations alert IKEA to labor rights violations before they hit the press, ultimately preempting any damage to IKEA's brand image and profitability without actually ending systematic labor rights abuses. If you kept looking, you would find a documented history of suppressed rights to associate and collectively bargain, toxic workplace hazards, unpaid overtime, and forced child labor.

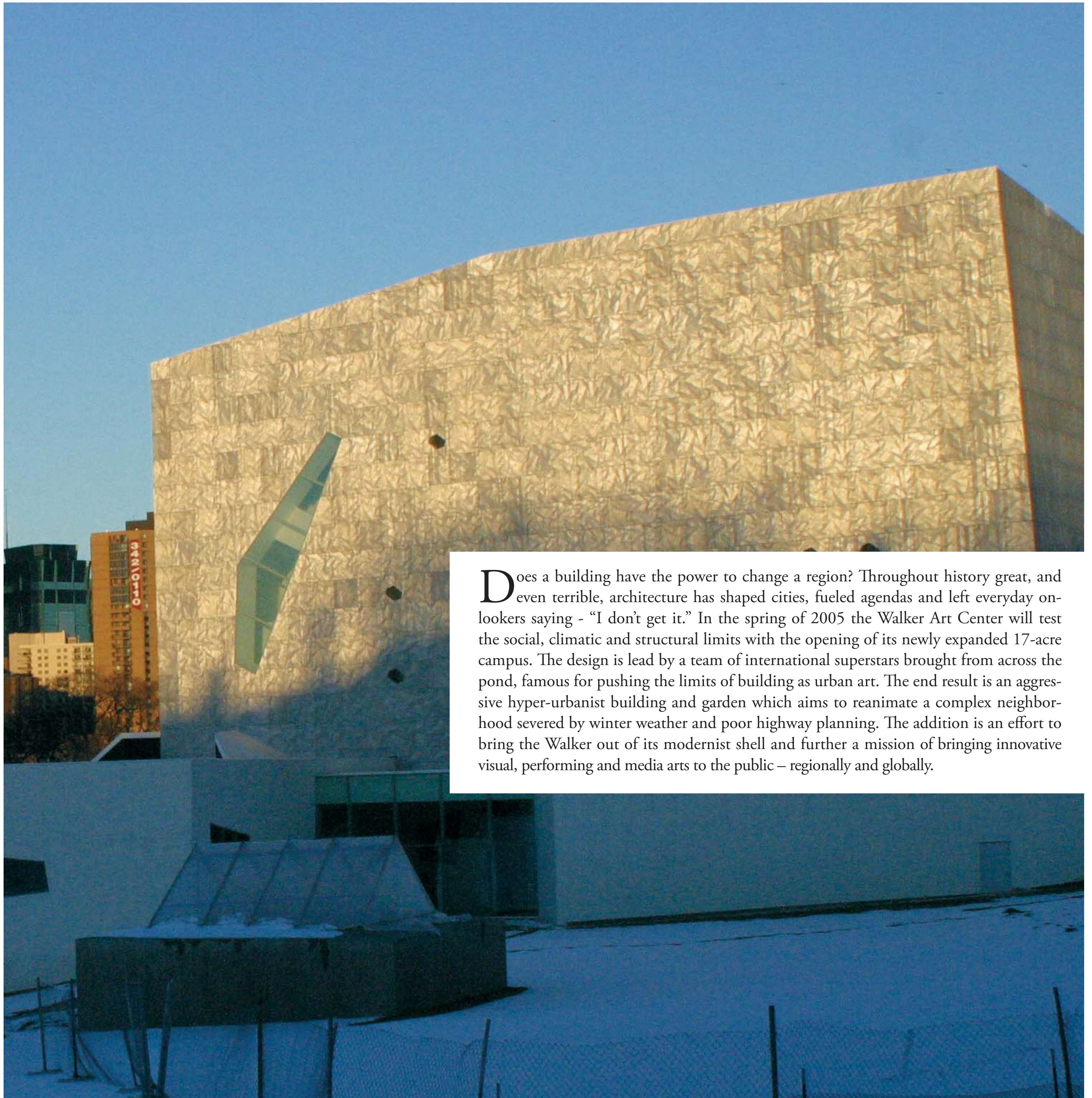
But, of course, you can't see those things.

The televised IKEA employee smiles and talks on in bubbles at you. You somehow wind a circuitous route through the marketplace, the self-serve warehouse, the checkout and out the door. Outside it's dark. You begin to trudge through the parking lot, which stretches out in all directions. A yellow-shirted employee smiles and trots over. He is the first person who has approached you, and just before he begins to speak you realize it's his job to help people find their cars. He quizzes you expertly and you wheel your cart to your car, and drive home with a small and phony artifact of progress in the trunk.

IMAGE CREDITS

3.1. *Colin Oglesbay. University of Minnesota Graduate Student, 2004*
3.2 -3 Nathan Zook. University of Minnesota Graduate Student, 2004.


the city
the built world meets a region



Does a building have the power to change a region? Throughout history great, and even terrible, architecture has shaped cities, fueled agendas and left everyday onlookers saying - "I don't get it." In the spring of 2005 the Walker Art Center will test the social, climatic and structural limits with the opening of its newly expanded 17-acre campus. The design is lead by a team of international superstars brought from across the pond, famous for pushing the limits of building as urban art. The end result is an aggressive hyper-urbanist building and garden which aims to reanimate a complex neighborhood severed by winter weather and poor highway planning. The addition is an effort to bring the Walker out of its modernist shell and further a mission of bringing innovative visual, performing and media arts to the public – regionally and globally.

timeline: a history of the walker art center

mission:

The Walker Art Center, a catalyst for the creative expression of artists and the active engagement of audiences, examines the questions that shape and inspire us as individuals, cultures, and communities.

The Walker backs up to the Lowry Hill neighborhood to the west, a turn-of-the-century residential development. To the east, the museum faces Hennepin Avenue, one of Minneapolis' busiest and widest traffic arteries, and Loring Park. The park, which was established in 1883, has an expansive rolling picturesque landscape, complete with a small pond. Masonry mansions and grand church spires frame the green space. From the Walker, through the vistas of the park, glistening super-block skyscrapers rise, marking the downtown business district.

The Walker's original Barnes Building had served the evolving neighborhood well, but was no longer fulfilling the Walker's mission. "We knew we could deliver extraordinary artistic experiences, we knew we could deliver very innovative educational experiences, and what we wanted to add to that mix was the social experiences," explains Kathy Halbreich, Director of the Walker. The real question was how to keep the existing building and open up to the multiplicity of urban identities outside.

4.1. Above. The Walker Art Center and Guthrie Theater prior to the addition. The Walker purchased the Allianz Insurance building, to the left, to create room for the new expansion.
(All images copyrighted by Herzog & de Meuron unless otherwise noted)

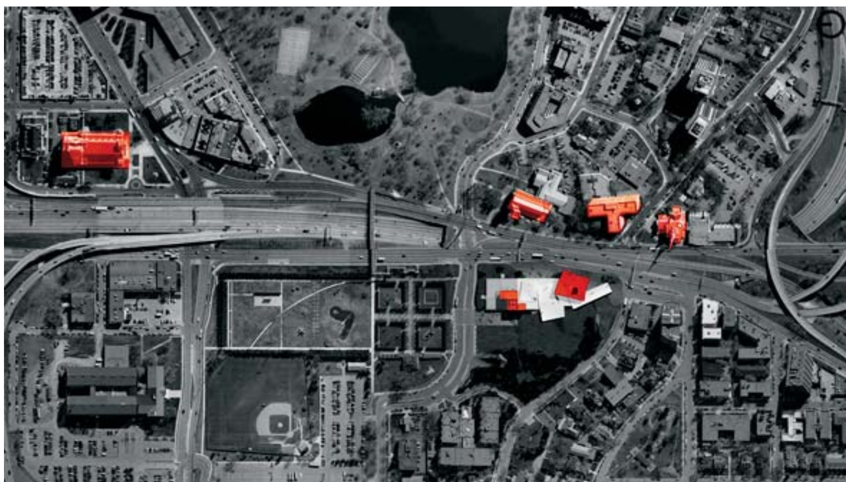
1879

Lumber Baron Thomas Barlow (T.B) Walker opens the first public gallery west of the Mississippi at his residence on Hennepin Avenue in downtown Minneapolis.

1927

The Walker Art Gallery opens in a Moorish-style building designed by Long and Thorshov of Minneapolis, on the current Walker Art Center site.

The Walker staff interviewed numerous firms, looking for the group that could transform the existing museum into a broader urban institution. They wanted a team that understood the delicate balance of urban issues and artistic mission that they required. When they met with Jacques Herzog it became clear that his firm was the one. Herzog & de Meuron wanted to restore the original building's entrance onto Hennepin Avenue. Despite the severe weather and massive roadway, they felt this would reanimate the seldom trodden sidewalk out front and restore the power of the original Barnes building. The addition presses against the sidewalk with a two-story glazed wall, animated with projections at night. Visitors enter through glass doors under a five-story tower, held off the ground in a daring cantilever covered in crinkled aluminum. The active projections and hyper surfaces will try to engage passers-by. The resulting space below, nicknamed the 'Townsquare,' is intended as an urban room for public gathering, also informal circulation space between the new galleries. The galleries are loosely arranged in plan to mimic



4.2. Far Left. Aerial View of Minneapolis. The Walker Art Center's campus sits to the southwest of downtown by Loring park. Highways and the Mississippi wind around the boundaries of the metro's center.

4.3. Left. Herzog & de Meuron placed the new addition to react to the twisting of existing iconic buildings in the neighborhood. The new building constantly draws from its urban context in efforts to enliven the neighborhood.

"This is about giving physical form to a mission that has been in place for a very long time"
– Kathy Halbreich, Walker Art Center Director

1940

Walker Art Center opens to the public with the exhibition *Ways to Art, Parallels in Art, and Trends in Contemporary Art,* signaling its new interest in modern art.

1942

Franz Marc's Die grossen blauen Pferde (The Blue Horses, 1911) is the Walker's first acquisition of modern art.

1963

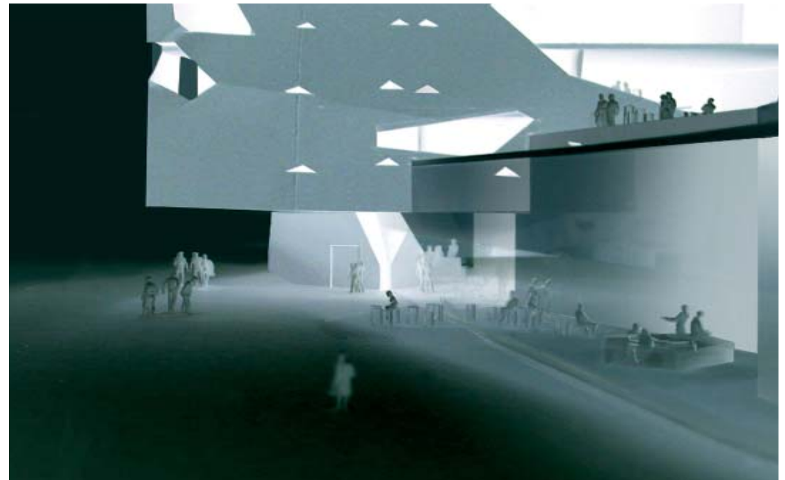
Ralph Rapson's Guthrie Theater opens adjacent to the Walker; project made possible with a lead gift from the T.B. Walker Foundation.

the skewed orientations of the neighboring buildings. Halbreich explains that "… the Walker links artistic disciplines to educational and social experiences… the new design seamlessly weaves together indoor and outdoor spaces, presentation activities, our institution and the surrounding city."

Herzog & de Meuron claim that their "…architecture fosters an intensification of the various activities with a view to the targeted urbanism of the new [Walker]. We wanted to generate a similar intensification and blend of urban energies on the street level." Visual transparency is a crucial tool used to fuse the building into the city around it, as the new design consciously pushes into the city and at other times allows the city to push back. However many locals question if the new building can lure pedestrians back onto a street covered in rush hour-levels of traffic, nine lanes deep, for most of the day. However, by orienting the building to Hennepin Avenue, the architects have turned it towards downtown, affording spectacular views through irregular windows, and protecting the western side of the campus from Hennepin's loud street noise. The building, in effect, becomes a wall for the four-acre addition to the sculpture garden by French landscape architect Michel Desvigne.

4.4. Left Below. Irregular window frame views back to the downtown skyline and Loring Park from the new Wolfgang Puck restaurant and entry to the theatre.

4.5. Right Below. A study model for the glazing of the new building, displaying the activities of the Walker Art Center to the urban neighborhoods.



1969

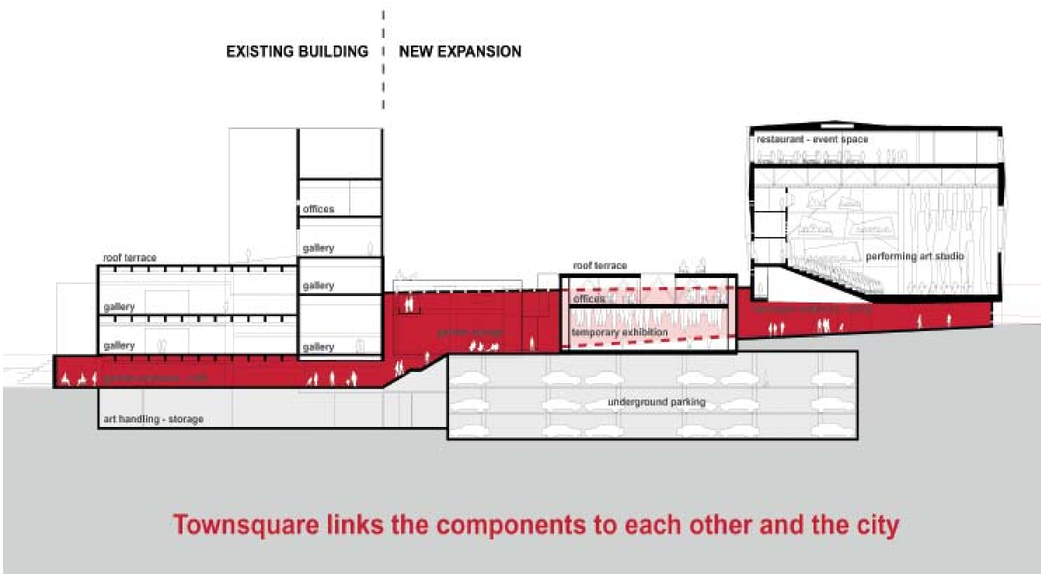
The 1927 Walker building is razed. "Museum without Walls" exhibitions and activities take place around the Twin Cities during construction of the new facility.

1970

Performing Arts Department is formed.

4.6. Below. Herzog & de Meuron designed the building to blur the boundaries between inside and outside, expressing the idea that art should be accessible to everyone . This double glazed corridor physically connects the original Barnes building to the new gallery spaces, but also visually connects the building to the city.

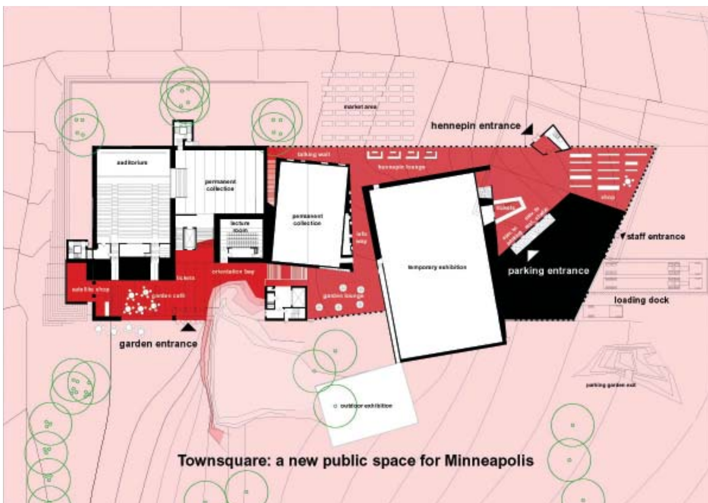
◄ 1971	1976	1984
New Walker Art Center opens designed by Edward Larrabee Barnes.	The Walker becomes a public institution; T.B. Walker Foundation establishes museum endowment.	Addition to the 1971 building opens.



4.7. Left. The building is lifted up to create a continuous public space and exhibition area on the first floor of the Walker Art Center.

4.8. Lower Left. The 'Townsquare' weaves through the galleries like a winding medieval street, bridging the old buiding to the new building and connecting the interior to the exterior.

4.9. Below. Massive two-story windows create visual connections between the 'Townsquare' and Desvinge's garden expansion.



1988

Minneapolis Sculpture Garden opens, designed by Edward Larrabee Barnes and landscape architects Quinnel and Rothschild.

2000

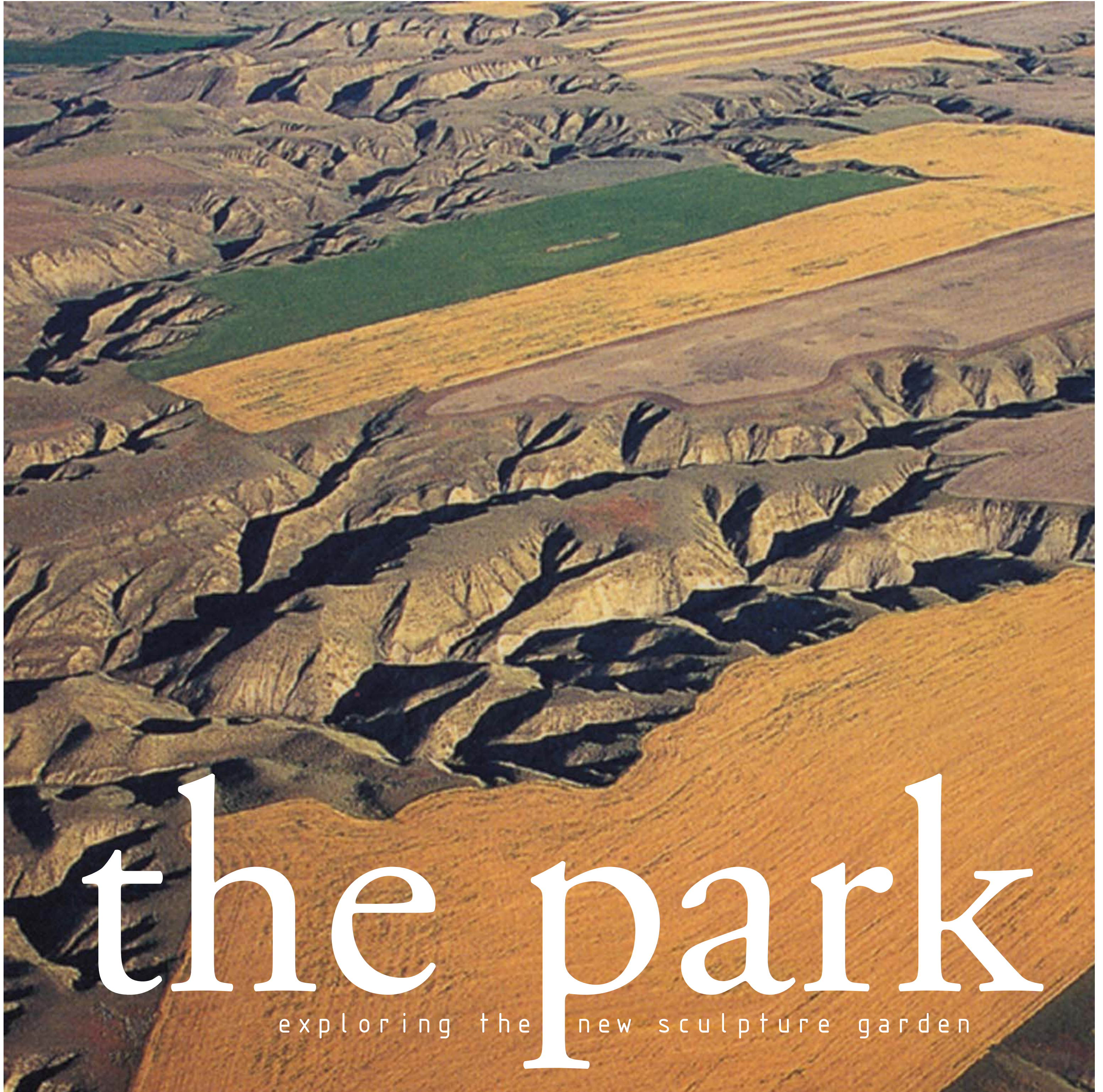
Plans for expansion released to the public.

The second façade of the building faces the garden and a quiet residential neighborhood. The new garden expansion connects to the existing 11-acre sculpture garden, forming a continuous urban park from Uptown to Downtown. The Walker campus constantly creates visual and physical connections to the ground, blurring the boundaries between interior and exterior, building and city, old and new.

The new garden and building addition work together, attempting to weave the existing complex into the city and to create a more unified experience for visitors. The outcome is a striking new Walker Art Center campus, striving to link itself to a multitude of forces and to create a distinct and candid urban landmark for Minneapolis The designers have achieved a surprisingly innovative experience, but does the design neglect the past and the community that it claims to embrace? As the first people fill its irregular halls, we will wait eagerly to see its impact. We are skeptical that the architecture can reactivate a loud nine-lane street, or that the 'town square' can spark spontaneous interest in art? How will the crinkled skin age in the city the design so consciously focuses on? But one thing is clear, the Walker got what it wanted, a spectacular high-profile building, this we have no doubt.

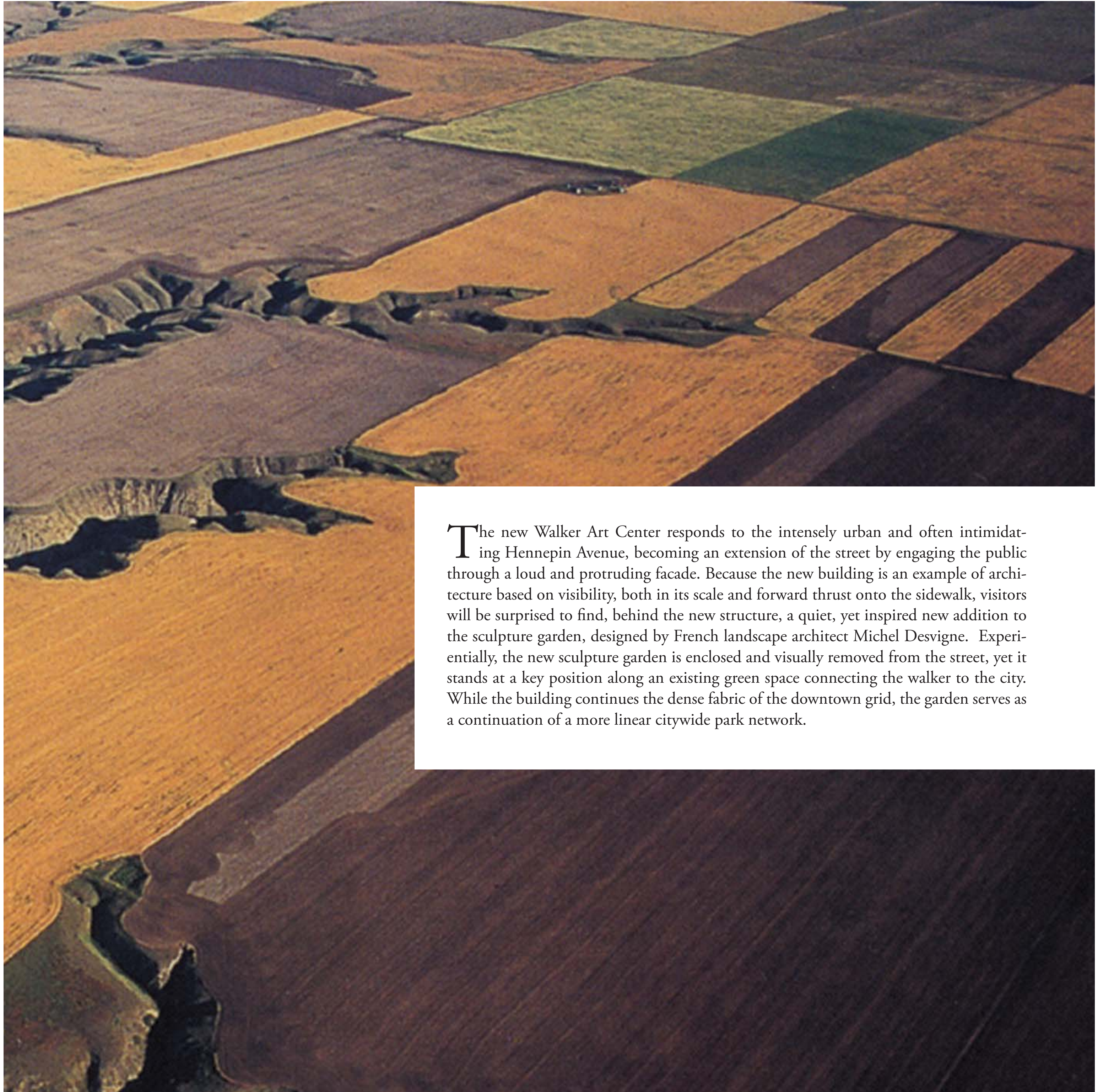
-Colin Oglesbay, University of Minnesota

4.10. Below. The master plan by Herzog & de Meuron creates a continuous park link between the Downtown and Uptown neighborhoods. The new building facade fuses with the original Barnes building to create a long vertical wall that presses against busy Hennepin Avenue.



the park

exploring the new sculpture garden



The new Walker Art Center responds to the intensely urban and often intimidating Hennepin Avenue, becoming an extension of the street by engaging the public through a loud and protruding facade. Because the new building is an example of architecture based on visibility, both in its scale and forward thrust onto the sidewalk, visitors will be surprised to find, behind the new structure, a quiet, yet inspired new addition to the sculpture garden, designed by French landscape architect Michel Desvigne. Experientially, the new sculpture garden is enclosed and visually removed from the street, yet it stands at a key position along an existing green space connecting the walker to the city. While the building continues the dense fabric of the downtown grid, the garden serves as a continuation of a more linear citywide park network.

Michel Desvigne:

Medal recipient of the French Academy of Architecture in 2000, contemporary landscape architect Michel Desvigne has won notoriety for his approach to major landscape projects throughout Europe, often alongside leading international architects, such as Rem Koolhaas, Jean Nouvel and I.M. Pei.

Desvigne studied landscape architecture at the Ecole Nationale Superieure du Paysage (1984) in Versailles where he teamed up with colleague Kristine Dalnoky, forming the firm of Desvigne & Dalnoky. The firm developed a design concept centered around the tension between natural versus constructed elements, which can be seen in a wide range of projects: large urban parks, small plazas, and infrastructure-based projects such as railway stations and viaducts, major highways and parking. Michel Desvigne has gone on to form his own firm with continued success.

The Walker Art Center will be Desvigne's first landscape project in the United States.

timeline: a history of michel desvigne

Landscape patterns reveal the collision of constructed elements and the natural environment – a 'moment' which serves as the basis for much of Desvigne's design.

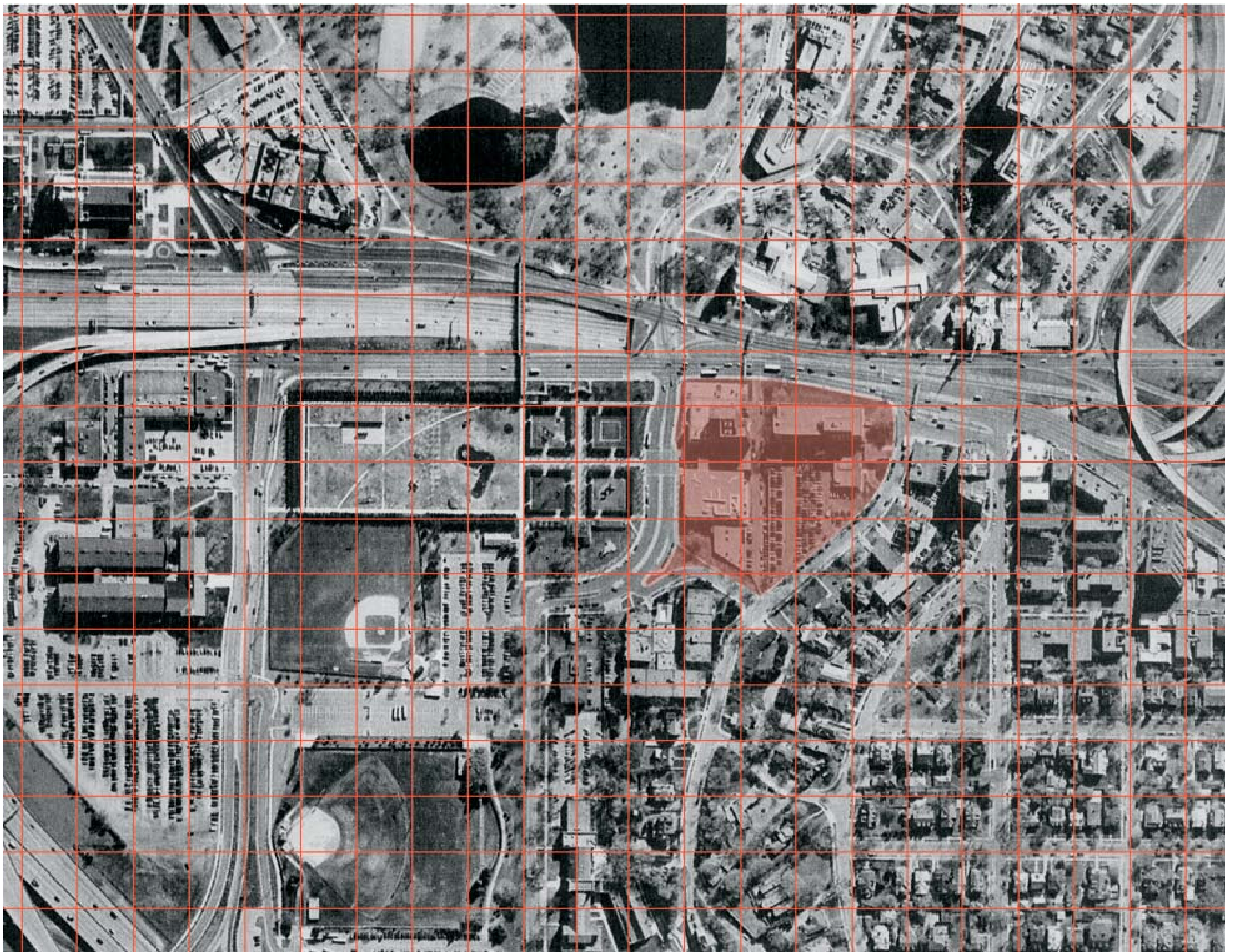
The Minneapolis park network is not a new idea. H.W.S. Cleveland, the foremost leader in the development of the extensive Minneapolis Park System in the late 1800's, conceived of a continuous park corridor connecting the varied natural resources of the city: the Mississippi River, lakes and downtown park space. Today, the Grand Rounds system forms a fifty-mile National Scenic Byway encircling downtown Minneapolis, connecting parks via green parkways and offering recreational opportunities along the way. A key feature of the Grand Rounds is the Chain of Lakes District, which sits adjacent to the Walker Art Center. Cleveland's vision of a continuous opening in the urban fabric was nearly realized, with the Walker as the missing synapse. Extending the sculpture garden to connect with the Chain of Lakes, Desvigne's plan will physically connect downtown to the Grand Rounds.

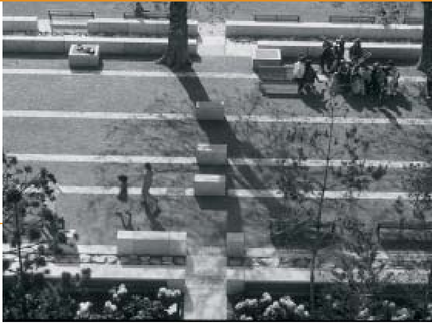
The main obstacle in achieving this connection is the Guthrie Theater, which currently stands between the existing sculpture garden and Desvigne's new addition. During the early planning stages of the Walker renovation, Herzog & de Meuron, architects of the Walker addition, called for the removal of the Guthrie Theater. The design for the addition to the sculpture garden has, from the beginning assumed the Guthrie's demolition. However, the plan to raze the theater has caused opposition from preservation groups.

5.1. Left. The Chain of Lakes, a vital component of the Minneapolis Park System's continuous green corridor, connects to downtown park space via the Walker Art Center. Indeed, the addition to the Walker Sculpture Garden will successfully bridge the gap of the open space network.
(Images from Metropolitan Design Center.
Copyright Regents of the University of Minnesota)

5.2. Opposite. The grid superimposed over the photo corresponds to the strict grid of the existing sculpture garden, seen most clearly in the garden's four-room space. The superimposed grid is Desvigne's study of the integration of geometry and city structure. The grid forms an organizational framework for the new garden. (All Images are copyrighted by Michel Desvinge unless otherwise noted.)

1984	1986	1990's
Michel Desvigne graduates from Ecole Nationale Superieure du Paysage in Versailles.	Desvigne and peer Christine Dalnoky become the first landscape architects to win the competition held by the Academie de France in Rome.	D&D develop a methodology rejecting ideology and mere aesthetics, in favor of an approach based purely on techne, or action.





◄ 1992

Caille Public Garden, Lyon, France
Desvigne & Dalnoky reinforce minimalist, geometric order in this garden, which plays off the existing compositional lines of the Etats-Unis Quarter.

1994 ►

Theols River Park, Issoudun, France
The pastoral quality of the site inspires a D&D design which mimics vegetable garden plots, maintaining a strictly planar form.

Still, with the construction of the new, larger Guthrie Theater along the Mississippi River in the historic milling district, the Walker Art Center plans to replace the obsolete Guthrie with an expanded sculpture garden. The construction of the sculpture garden will occur in two phases. Phase One will include the new garden space, minus the portion currently occupied by the Guthrie. Phase Two, slated for 2006/2007, follows the demolition of the Guthrie, connecting the existing sculpture garden with the new addition.

The current Walker sculpture garden is not an isolated, walled green space, like most museum gardens, but open to the public at all times. The addition continues this accessibility, although the result will ultimately be quite different from the existing garden. Experientially, the new garden, situated between the new building and the residential neighborhood on the hillside behind, will be much more enclosed than the original. Standing between the upper building and the quiet adjacent neighborhood, the garden will, by nature of its position, provide some transition between these incongruous experiences. Michel Desvigne has designed this important transition by responding to both the ordered grid of the existing sculpture garden and to the apparent randomness of the new building, bridging the gap left in the demolished Guthrie's place.

5.3. Below Left. The Guthrie Theater, as it stands today, is a barrier between the existing and new sculpture garden. Desvigne's design to fully connect the sculpture garden space will be realized upon the theater's demolition, the subject of a contentious conservation debate.

5.4. Below Right. The Whitney Bridge spans I-94 and provides a connection from the Walker Sculpture Garden to Loring Park in downtown. The expansion of the sculpture garden is of special significance because it continues this park corridor from urban space into residential neighborhoods and on to the Chain of Lakes.

(Images from Metropolitan Design Center. Copyright Regents of the University of Minnesota)

1994

Exhibition "The Landschap, the Landscape," held at the Singel Foundation in Antwerp features design work of Desvigne & Dalnoky

1995

A shift in focus toward public commissions, sparked by Desvigne & Dalnoky's interest in projects based on function, not aesthetics.

The new Walker Art Center sculpture garden will be Michel Desvigne's first American commission. Desvigne uses this garden to further explore a concept he has developed in past European projects: the tension between the readily visible order of geometry and the particularities of nature. This concept provides a point of departure, as Desvigne seeks to represent the regional Midwest landscape.

For Desvigne, the landscape patterns of the Midwest, as seen from the air, served as an impetus for the central design scheme. The convergence of geometrically aligned agricultural patterns and geomorphological structures such as river valleys are, in essence, a comment on the play of geometry and disorder, line and volume, reason and emotion. The central concept is manifest through the use of plant material, topography and hardscape. A grid pattern creates a strict geometry, which organizes both the tree planting and the rectilinear paths through the garden. The element of disorder comes through an organic ground-plane planting pattern that mimics the crevasses seen in the satellite imagery.

The topography of the garden is distinctly bowl-shaped. This enhancement of topography distinguishes it from the existing, virtually level sculpture garden, although such a grade change required notable engineering. Since the garden is, in essence, a roof garden on top of an underground parking lot, Desvigne had strict load restrictions on the structure

5.5. Below. Herzog & de Meuron, architects of the Walker addition, created a conceptual design scheme of the garden space in the master planning stage of the project. Once landscape architect Desvigne was selected to design the garden, many elements have been altered, yet the Sculpture Plinth with an adjacent wall division remains.

1995

TGV Mediterranean Stations in Avignon, France Major public commission. D&D integrate traditional design principles, such as double rows of plane trees, creating a soft barrier between the dominating infrastructure and countryside.

2000

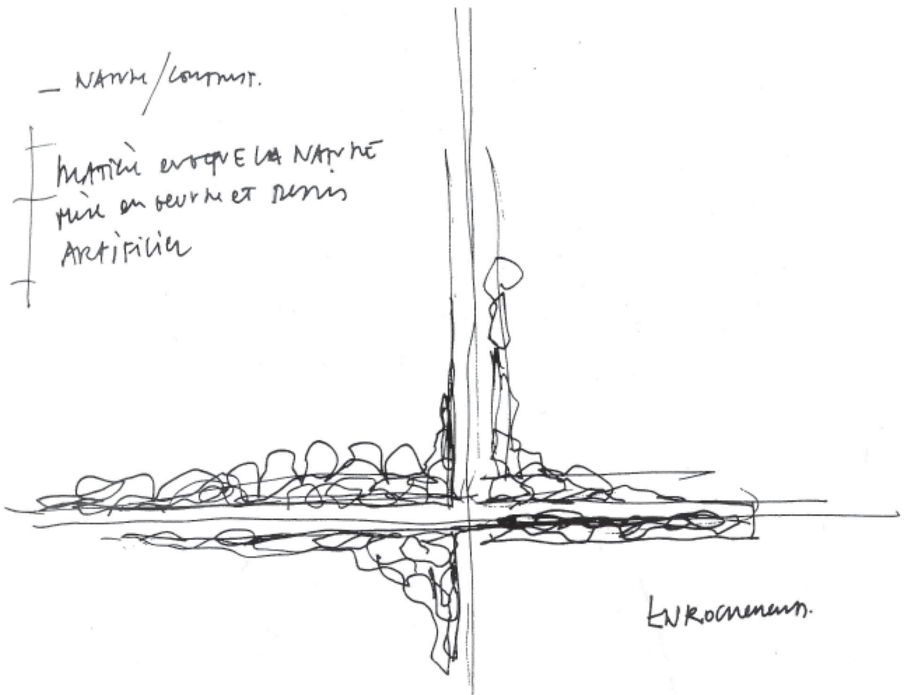
Now designing on his own, Michel Desvigne receives the Medal of the French Academy of Architecture, an especially distinct achievement for a landscape architect.

below. The importance of the Desvigne garden provides a rare instance when a landscape architect's design, forces the re-engineering of underground structural support.

In addition to distinguishing itself, the Desvigne design builds on the 1988 Barnes garden by extending the existing framework of the sculpture garden, allowing the proportions laid out in the original garden to form the basis for the organizational grid applied to the new space. Barnes' quadrant of enclosed rooms is highly traditional in style, a clear inspiration from the French baroque work of Le Nôtre. This traditional approach underlies the organizational pattern that Desvigne carries over to reinforce the ordered, human, geometrical foundation of his dual design approach to the garden. Although the imposed

5.6. Below Left. Satellite imagery of agricultural fields reveals the patterns evident in Desvigne's design of the sculpture garden. With ordered, human elements superceded by natural, organic forms. The two distinct lines formed by each element become the two line types Desvigne uses exclusively in the garden's design.

5.7. Below Right. Study drawings, such as this exploration of the edge between softscape and hardscape, reinforce the focus of Desvigne's concept: the way two distinct elements come together, even in fine detail, is a crucial consideration for a dualist design scheme.
(Copyright Herzog & de Meuron)



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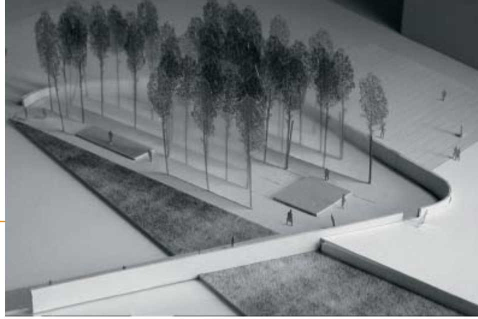
Almere Watefront, Netherlands
Desvigne wins the commission for a waterfront park. He soon introduces the idea of "pocket landscapes" to evoke the surrounding territory.



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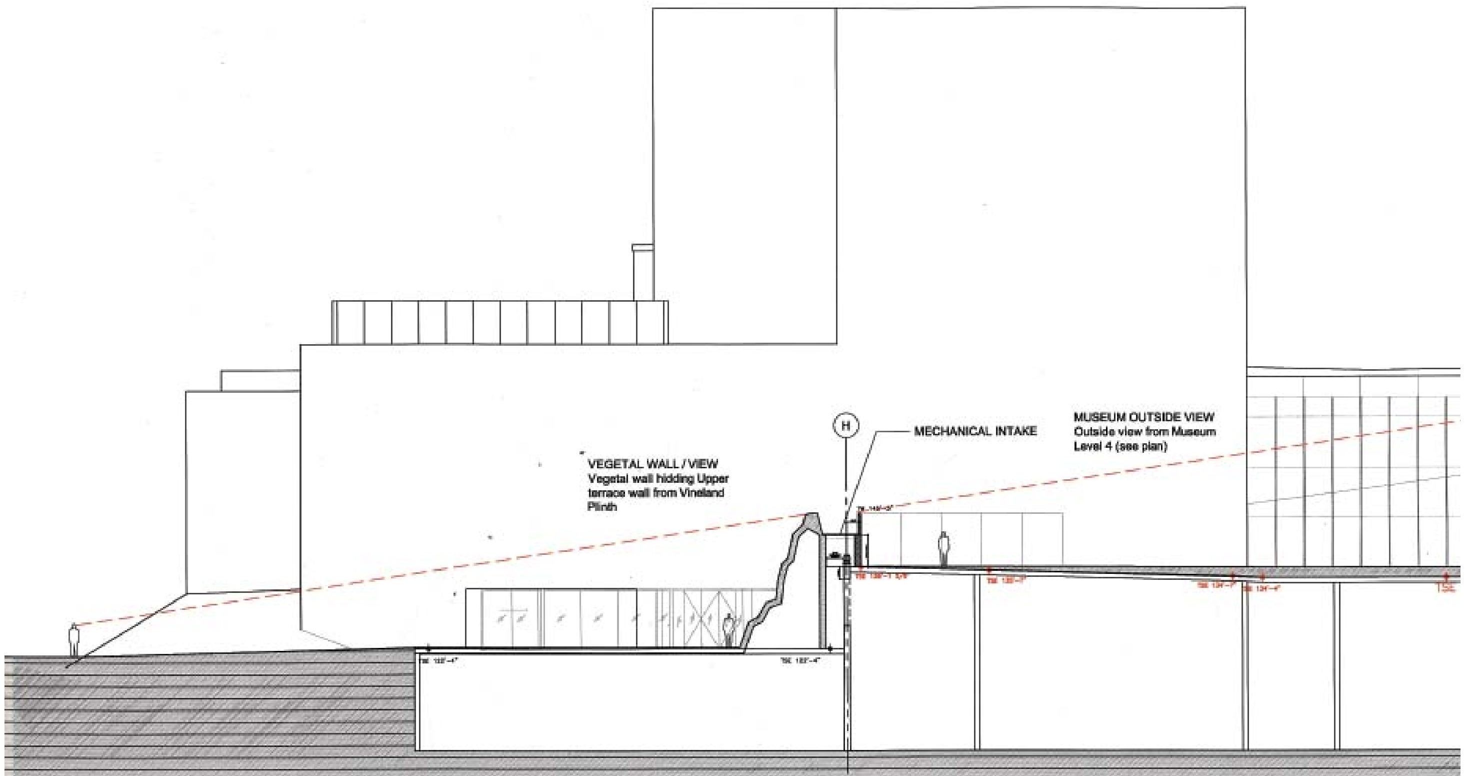
Millennium Park on Greenwich Peninsula, London
Desvigne converts the brownfield site into a biologically functioning landscape through an extensive program of tree planting.

order of the grid is perhaps the only relationship between the old and the new sculpture gardens, Desvigne takes the grid and explores the precise subdivision of its parts to arrange the pieces of the new garden: path, hardscape, tree massing and sculpture.

As the plan shows, the path is perhaps the strongest visual reference to the Barnes grid. Constructed of perforated concrete slabs of a size proportional to the overriding grid, the path takes the visitor through the irregularly shaped pattern of the ground-plane plantings via a rectilinear pathway.

5.8. Below. Desvigne drew studies of sight lines to understand the experience of standing on the Sculpture Plinth (formerly the footprint of the Guthrie Theater) and looking up toward the rear garden. The grade change is achieved through a Vegetal Wall, a living, nearly-vertical wall complete with a gabion structure of plant material.



2002

Michel Desvigne submits a design proposal to the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis for the expansion of the sculpture garden.

2003

Garonne Riverfront Masterplan, Bordeaux, France
Desvigne begins 334-acre project to integrate riverfront development within the Bordeaux urban fabric, projected to be finished in 2034.

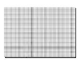
HENNEPIN AV.
VINELAND PL.
BRYANT AV.
GROVELAND AV.

2003

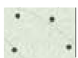
Walker Art Center selects Michel Desvigne for the expansion of the sculpture garden. Desvigne completes design development, with HGA of Minneapolis implementing the project.

2004

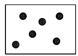
Parc de Saone, Lyon, France
Desvigne returns to Lyon to design a park on the east bank of Saone River, heavily influenced by the natural water gardens of the site.



SURFACE TREATMENT
Waterjetted pattern



EXISTING TREES

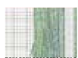


BIRCH TREE COPSE
Loading dock screening

TALL ORNAMENTAL GRASSES

IRRIGATED LAWN

Existing building



Vegetal wall

Aquatic and semi-aquatic plants

Desvigne uses just two plants in his design: birch trees and ornamental grasses, to reinforce the concept of natural versus constructed landscapes. The trees reiterate the organizing grid structure of the garden, and at their tightest, the trees stand a mere five feet apart. Airy as birch foliage may be, such clustering will provide a dense canopy.

The structural and sculptural nature of the birch trees, planted en masse, creates a sense of endlessness. Though the trees will appear similar to a monoculture, the stand will contain river birch (Betula nigra), Heritage river birch (Betula nigra 'Heritage') and aspen (Populus tremuloides). The density of the clusters of birch and aspen trees will be a striking part of the view from within the Walker Art Center, since Desvigne purposefully uses the dense plantings to obscure the pattern of the garden when seen from the building.

Desvigne terms the ground-plane plantings 'meadows', and uses a simple palette of two plant types: cultured grasses (turf grass) and tall ornamental grasses, in this case, little bluestem (schizachyrium scoparium), a prairie species native to the western part of the state, which is indicative of Desvigne's desire to tie design to region. The irregular line formed between cultured and ornamental grasses contrast with the strongly vertical and rigid birch trees, reinforcing the motif of order versus disorder.

Desvigne introduces pools enclosed by a grid-based rectilinear path. Along with their surrounding vegetation, the pools represent organized displays of nature amidst the seemingly random pattern of ground-plane plantings. As a result, the pools become a series of moments along the path that are unforeseen and foster a sense of discovery.

The Desvigne addition to the sculpture garden sits adjacent to the loud, hyper-urban façade of the new Walker building and the open, formal existing sculpture garden, yet the new garden provides its own experience: quiet, sheltered, sunken and densely shaded. It is the alternate experience to the Hennepin Avenue entry to the new Walker. In contrast to the visual loudness of the addition, the garden isn't immediately legible; dense tree massing open up to reveal displayed sculpture, or rectilinear paths lead the visitor through a swath of ornamental grasses to an enclosed pool. The garden requires exploration.

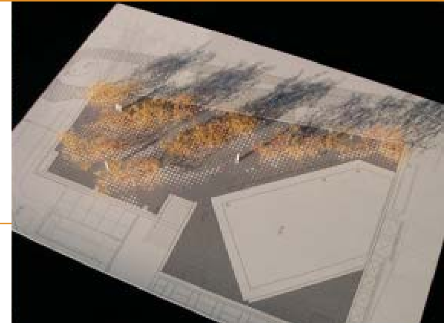
While it is true that within the urban realm, the garden completes a continuous green corridor which links the Chain of Lakes to downtown, experientially, the new garden space may feel less like a connecting piece of a greater network and more like a hidden gem. No doubt the garden will be a special place – Desvigne has designed a space that is elegant, unexpected and strongly linked to the character of this region. However, the

2004

Construction begins on Phase I of the Walker Art Center's expansion of the sculpture garden, alongside the finishing construction of the new Walker building.

2004

Noguchi Garden, Tokyo, Japan
Desvigne's international notoriety is evident with the commission of the "rethinking and reconstruction" of the ancient Noguchi Garden on the grounds of Keio University in Tokyo.



5.9. Left. Little bluestem (Schizachyrium scoparium) is the ornamental grass used in the groundplane planting pattern. The sections of little bluestem and cultivated grass form a patchwork that mimic the crevasses seen in the satellite imagery, the origin of the garden's concept. (Copyright Dan Shaw)

5.10. Below. The simple elegance of the birch tree is repeated throughout the garden, forming a dense stand in which to get lost and explore. The image below showing the repeated sculptural form of the white trunks and complete canopy evokes this sense of endless forest.

2 0 0 5

In spring, the Walker Art Center reopens, to be followed by Phase I of Desvigne's sculpture garden expansion.

2 0 0 6

The Guthrie Theater is set to be demolished following approval by the city, leaving an unobstructed path between the existing and new sculpture garden. The Walker Sculpture Garden expansion will follow.

garden's placement as a sunken room behind a massive, attention-demanding structure inherently weakens its impact on the Hennepin Avenue pedestrian, and the public at large. For the garden to fulfill its role as a missing link in a park network, it ought to be perceived as public as the existing sculpture garden. The use of a vegetal wall to separate Desvigne's garden from the current sculpture garden, a design decision suggested first by Herzog & de Meuron and then detailed by Desvigne, will lend the new space a degree of exclusivity. Regardless, the sense of discovery evoked in the Desvigne garden is also felt in the approach. You'll see birch tree canopies behind the museum, wander behind the vegetal wall and happen upon a wonderful, enclosed, intimate space.

-Kerri Eckardt, University of Minnesota

5.11. Below Left. The model of the new garden space shows the grid form (the path) cutting through the dense masses of birch tree plantings. Large forest clearings are usually adjacent to the building and will be taken up by terraces, the Sculpture Plinth and sculptural elements.

5.12. Below Right. The model reveals the spatial character of the garden that has replaced the Guthrie Theater. The Sculpture Plinth, a terrace platform next to the Walker north entrance featuring sculpture pieces, will serve as a transitional space as one walks from the existing sculpture garden to the Desvigne expansion.

the build

IIn July of 2004, t/here sat down with the Walker Art Center's Kathy Halbreich, Richard Flood, and Howard Oransky to discuss both the intentions and the technologies of their new $67.5 million addition. They expressed a desire to avoid traditional museum strategies where the architecture becomes a temple to art. The Walker staff wanted to avoid introspective, meditative qualities of museums, in favor of more active, engaging spaces where people could talk or even argue about the artwork. Kathy Halbreich, Director of the Walker, explained that the new building should be a point of convergence for all people and ideas, while radiating outward a body of ideas throughout the world.

ing

the making of a museum

herzog & de meuron :

The four partners: Jacques Herzog, Pierre de Meuron, Harry Gruger and Cristine Binswagner have been exploring the relationship between materiality and contemporary art for nearly a quarter of a century. In 1978 Herzog & de Meuron opened their firm in Basel, Switzerland. Since that time it has grown to the voluntary maximum of four partners and 187 employees. The firm's work ranges from single family homes to warehouses to art museums. Their projects vary radically in form and material palettes. Many of Herzog & de Meuron's projects explore basic materials (stone, copper, glass), utilizing them in inventive ways to create exotic exterior cladding. These explorations are not superficial attempts to create flashy buildings, these intriguing skins are intended to relate the building to its surroundings. Each commission serves as a new way for the firm to test relationships between the materials required for construction and how people experience their world. Some of their most well know projects are the Dominus Winery in Napa Valley; the Goetz Gallery in Munich and the Tate Gallery of Modern Art in London. The firm received the Pitzker Prize for architecture in 2001.

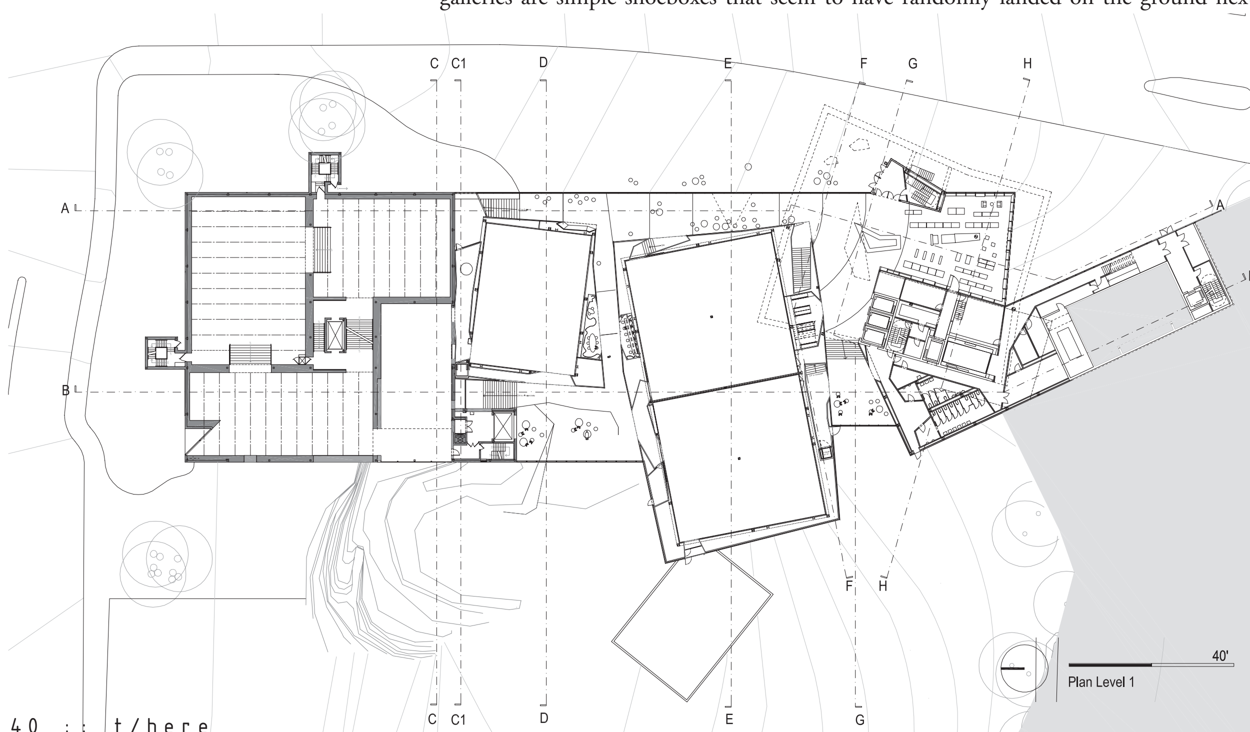
timeline of herzog & de meuron:

1979-80

Project 5, Blue House
Oberwil, Switzerland

The Walker houses roughly 9,600 works of art. However, it is distinctive as a multidisciplinary teaching institution, known for its unique ability to examine culture through dance, theater, sculpture, film, and painting. According to Richard Flood, Chief Curator, the galleries in the existing Barnes building actually work quite well, but they limit the Walker's mission of emphasizing visitor experience while developing Minnesota's artistic culture. It unfortunately provides insufficient space for most of the Walker's office and educational needs and can only display about 2% of their permanent collection in its galleries. The new galleries will keep the character of the old, while adding 120,000 square feet to the existing facility. The addition will maintain a strong focus on its multidisciplinary mission and will enhance the visitor's experience. The addition will include a new theater, several new galleries, new rooftop plazas, restaurants, gift shops, interactive lounge spaces, educational spaces for the public, and extended underground parking.

In the addition, Herzog has taken the neatly encased, vertically spiraling rectangles of the Barnes building, and allowed them to playfully spill out onto the landscape. The new galleries are simple shoeboxes that seem to have randomly landed on the ground next



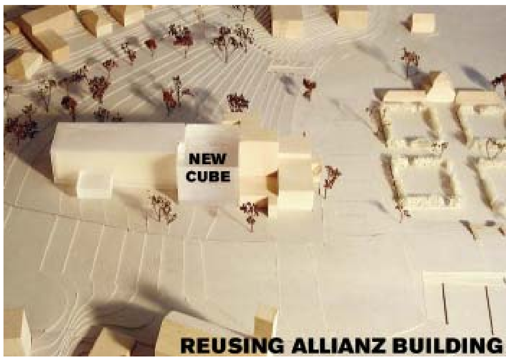
1980-81

Project 11, Renovation of the Kaserne Exhibition Gallery,
Basel, Switzerland

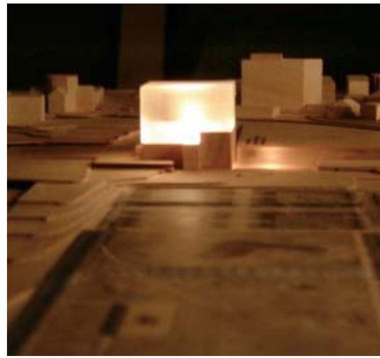
1981-82

Project 14, Frei Photographic Studio
Weil am Rhein, Germany

(Copyright of Margherita Spiluttini)

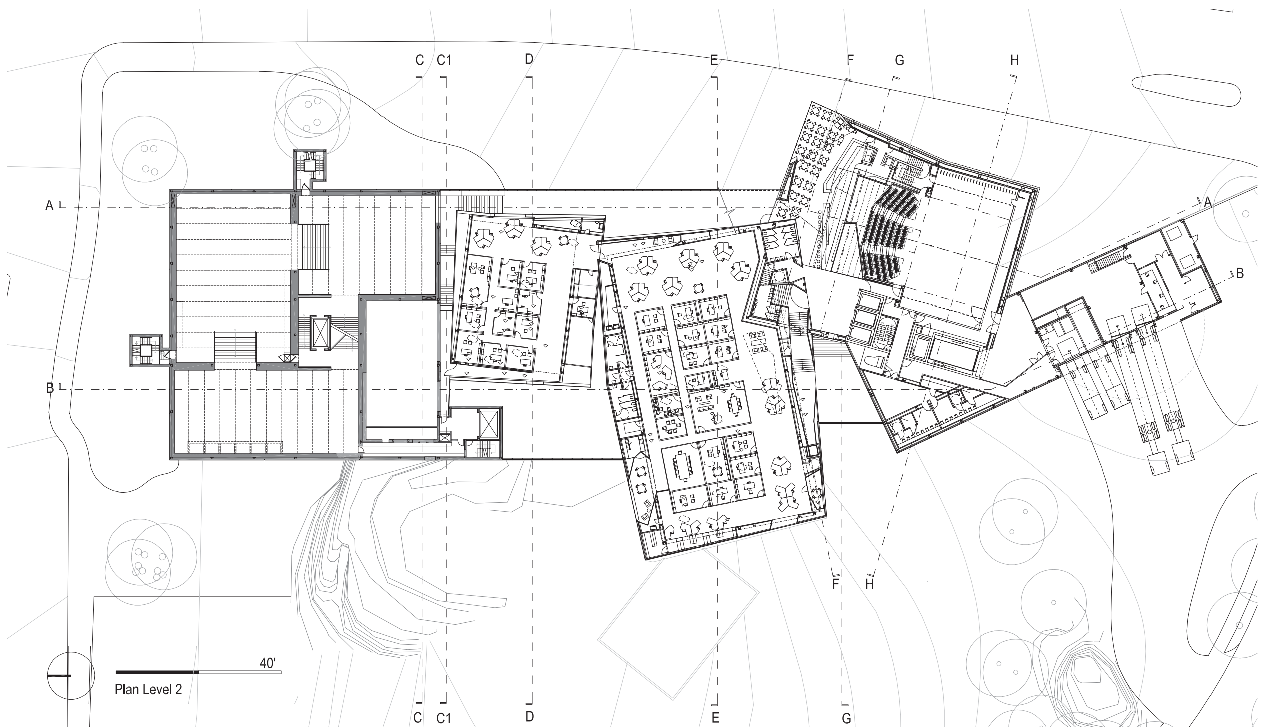


6.1. Above. An early massing model exploring the idea of reusing the existing Allianz Insurance building. (All images Copyrighted by Herzog & de Meuron unless otherwise noted)



6.2. Above. A massing model investigating a transluscent skin wrapped around the existing Barnes Building.

6.3. Above. A model rendering of the new Info Lounge that will feature an interactive media table that visitors can utilize to learn more about work exhibited at thte Walker.



1982–88

Project 17, "Stone" House
Tavole, Italy

1986–87

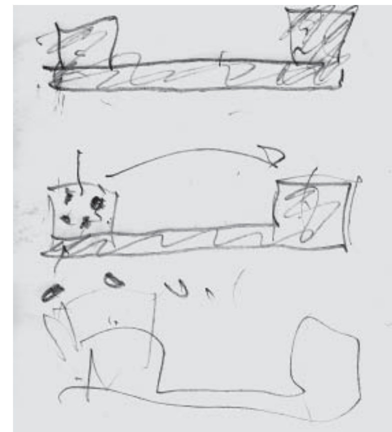
Project 38, Ricola Storage Building
Laufen, Switzerland
(Copyright of Margherita Spiluttini)

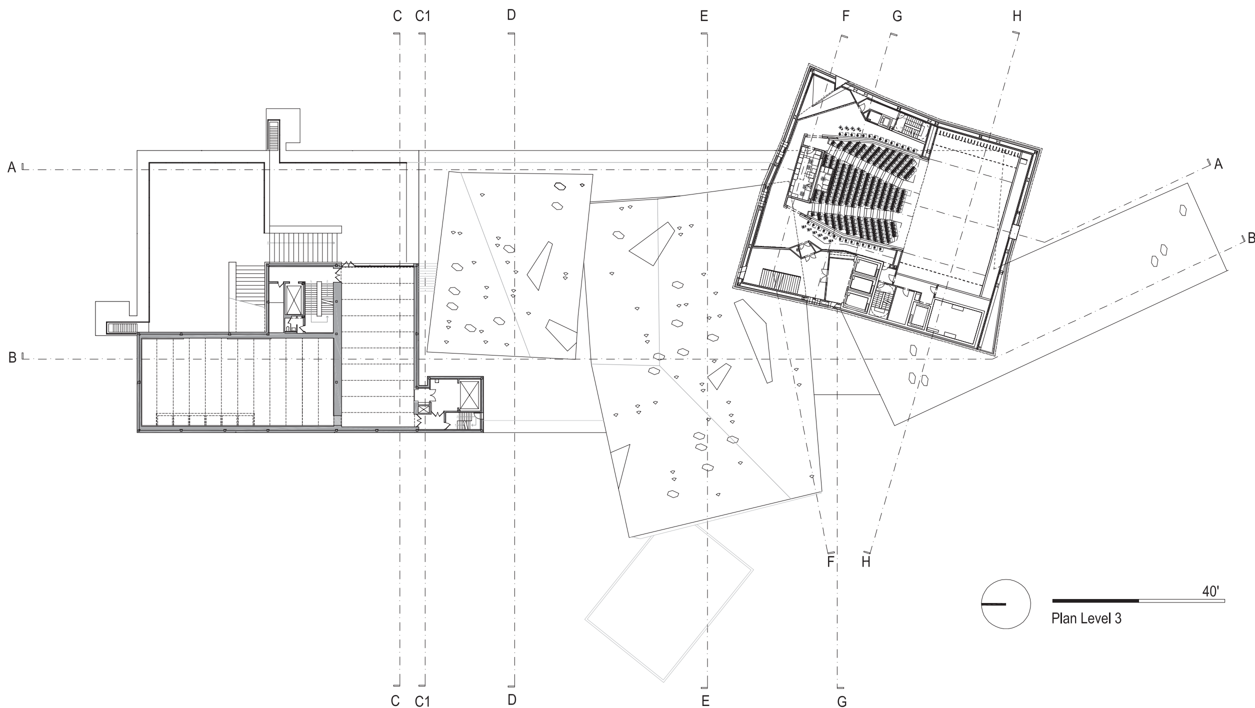
1987

Project 40, Museums Complex
Vienna, Austria

to the Barnes building. While the interior of the new gallery spaces are nearly identical to the Barnes galleries, they sit within an interior that is quite complex with spatial and material expressions. The spaces between the galleries are designed as various lounges for public interaction. The most publicly visible gallery, along Hennepin Avenue, visually sits in glass, exposing the random playfulness of the interior galleries to the exterior. This contrasts starkly with the heavy, closed exterior of the Barnes building.

Jacques Herzog explained that the design should lift a cube into the air to allow space and people to flow underneath. This formal move creates a town square through the blending of interior and exterior space. Ground level sightlines travel deep into the building as the enormous cube appears to be floating on glass. This blending of space is common



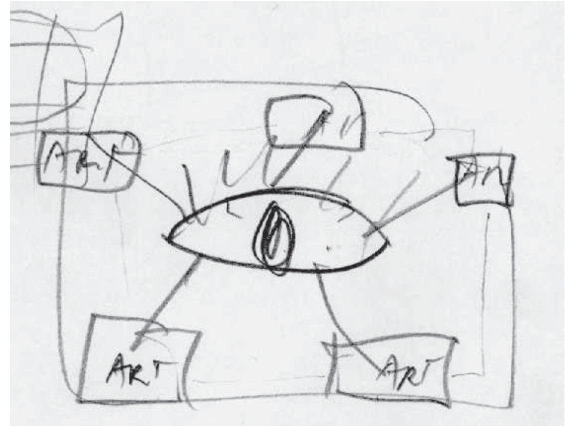


1987

Project 41, Exhibition
Neuchatel ArcheaologicalMuseum
Neuchatel, Switzerland

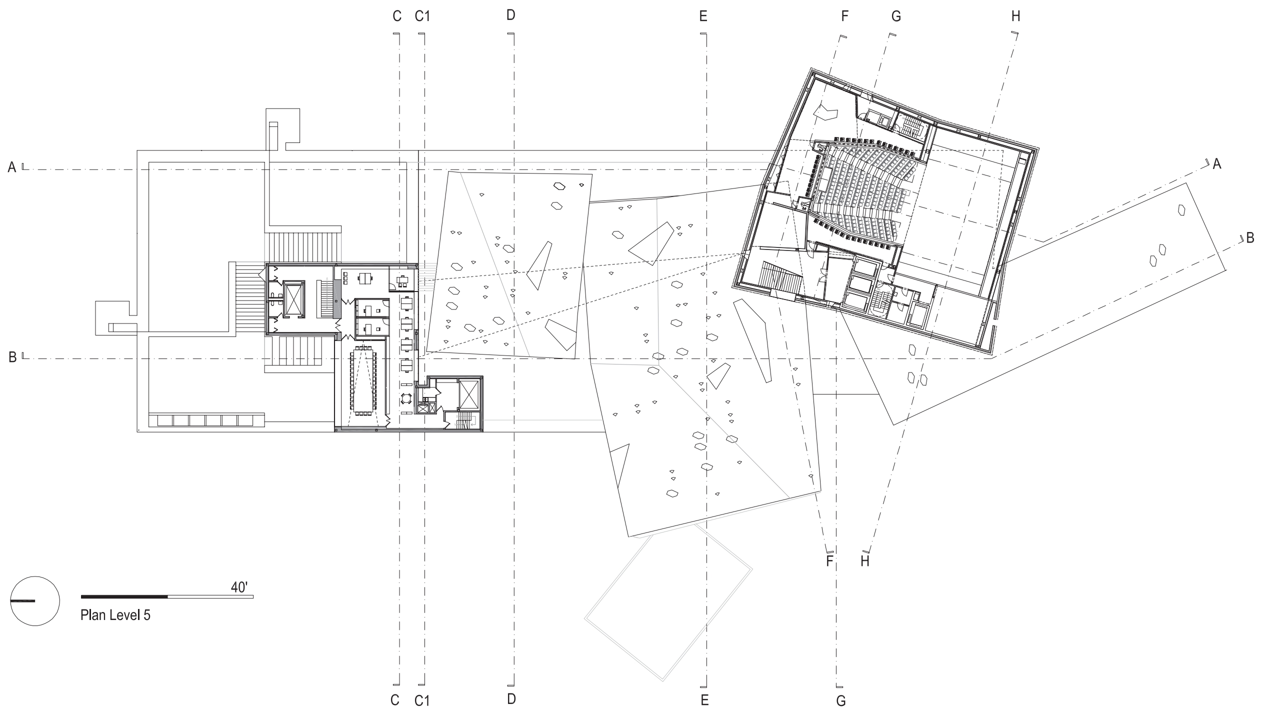
1988-95

Project 49, Signal Box
Basel
(Copyright of Margherita Spiluttini)



6.4. Left. A conceptual scetch diagramming the unstable qualities of the second tower in relationship to the existing Barnes Building.

6.5. Right. An early drawing by the architects illustrates the idea of creating spaces that overlap different experiences. Herzog & de Meuron sought to interweave pictorial, performing and installation exhibits to create freedom for visitors to create their own associations by wandering between spaces.



1989-92 ►

Project 56,Goetz Collection,
Munich, Germany
(Copyright of Margherita Spiluttini)

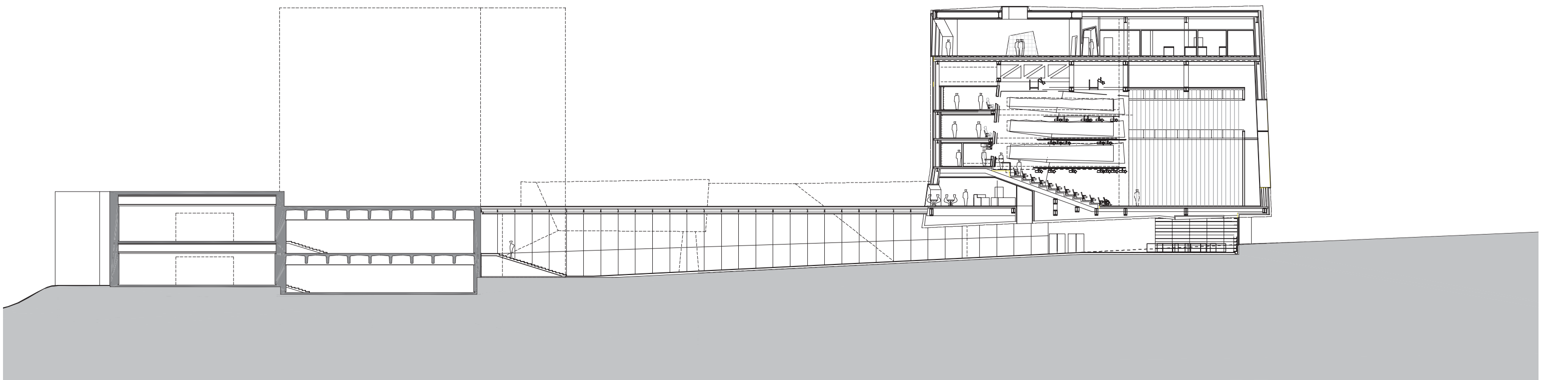
1991 ►

Project 75, Cultural/Arts Center
Blois, Farnce
(Copyright of Herzog & de Meuron)

throughout the building, where the only singular spaces to be found are in the theater or the galleries themselves. Nearly every other space is overlapping another as one moves between and through the museum.

Floating five floors of a building above ground presented an enormous engineering challenge. It required the elimination of as many ground-level, load-bearing columns as possible. The engineers at HGA (Hammel Green & Abrahamson) managed to reduce the number of columns to five, three of which are for lateral stability. Virtually all of the weight of this floating cube comes down on two supports, at the north and south sides of the building. The enormous amount of steel structuring the upper part of the building creates an extremely rigid frame that carries the gravitational forces to these two supporting points. The cube is counterbalanced on these points of support by the concrete structure in the southwest corner. During the construction process, the upper structure was built on 16 temporary supporting columns. After the main structure gained its own integrity, the temporary columns were carefully removed. John Cook, the project architect from HGA, joked that the engineers were disappointed because they had calculated that this enormous cantilever would settle about a ¼" after the temporary columns were removed. They miscalculated; it only settled 1/8". This structure, and the process of putting it up, was highly innovative.

The extremely thick exterior cladding combined with the unusual geometry of the frame provides opportunities to create a number of small and unusual pockets of space within



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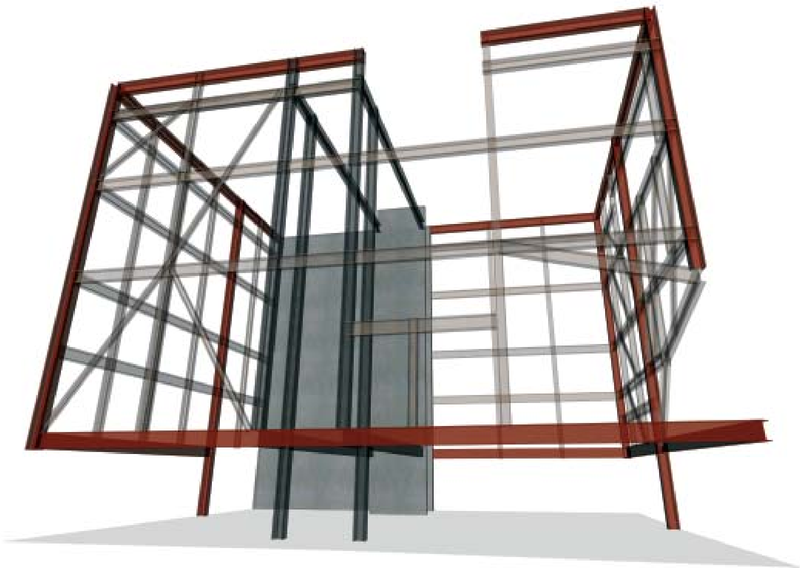
Project 81,
20th Century Museum Complex
Munich

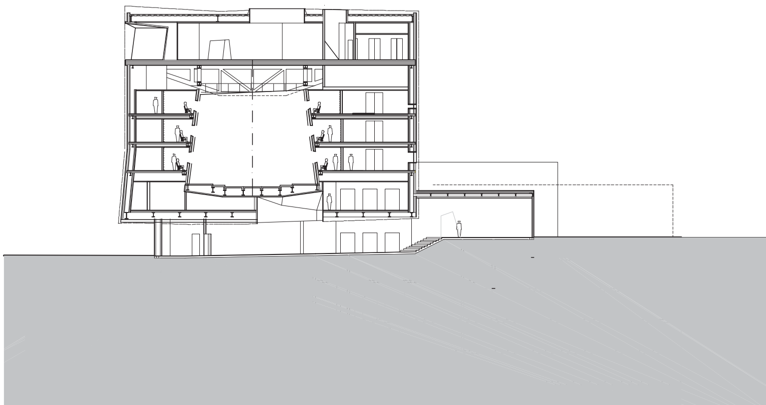
1 9 9 3

Project 90
2 Libraries for Jussieu Complex
Paris



6.6. Left. The structure of the Walker Addition took a spectacular amount of steel and engineering to suspend the cube above Hennepin Avenue. The red members are the primary structural I-beams that hold the building to the original Barnes building. The light gray beams act to make the box rigid and maintain its formal integrity.
(Image by Mike Kisch)

6.7. Below. A View along Hennepin Avenue of the massive structural members making the cantilever possible.
(Image by Cameron Wittig)



1 9 9 2 - 9 3

Project 94, Ricola Factory & Studio
Mulhouse-Brunstatte, France
(Copyright of Margherita Spiluttini)

1 9 9 3 - 9 6

Project 105
Senior Technical School Library
Eberswalde, Germany

the depth of the exterior walls. These very small spaces offer reprieve from the public nature of the town square, by providing places of personal contemplation. Artwork can be displayed very intimately within these small settings. This logic is carried into interior walls where small audio and video bays become somewhat isolated from the larger public lounge spaces.

Within the upper cube sits one of the great prides of the new addition, a small but well equipped theater. Howard Oransky, Director of Operations for the Walker Art Center, stated that this new theater is quintessential of the Walker's mission. This 385 seat space provides stage groups the same equipment and technology they might find in a 1,000 seat theatre, allowing performers to maintain a direct connection with their audience. It affords artists the ability to develop productions that could be moved to larger stages throughout the world. These amenities are consistent with the 30 year-old mission of the Walker, to emphasize audience experience and to export Minnesota's artistic culture.

6.8. Below Left. The richness of texture and material in the red velvet of La Scala in Milan was an inspiration for the fabric-inspired skin of the new theater and performance space.

6.9. Below Right. The inventive design will allow performers to present ambitious projects that are only usually accessible to large shows. The space will also create areas for digital, video and performing artists to exhibit and develop new work.

1 9 9 4 – 9 9

Project 119
Central Signal Box
Basel

1 9 9 4 – 2 0 0 0

Project 126, Tate Modern
London
(Copyright of Margherita Spiluttini)

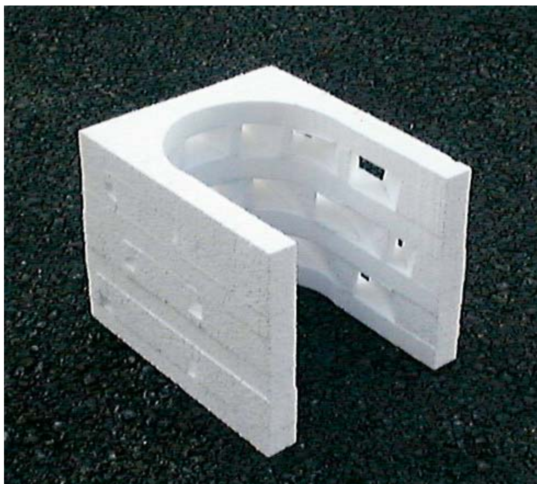
1 9 9 4 – 9 6

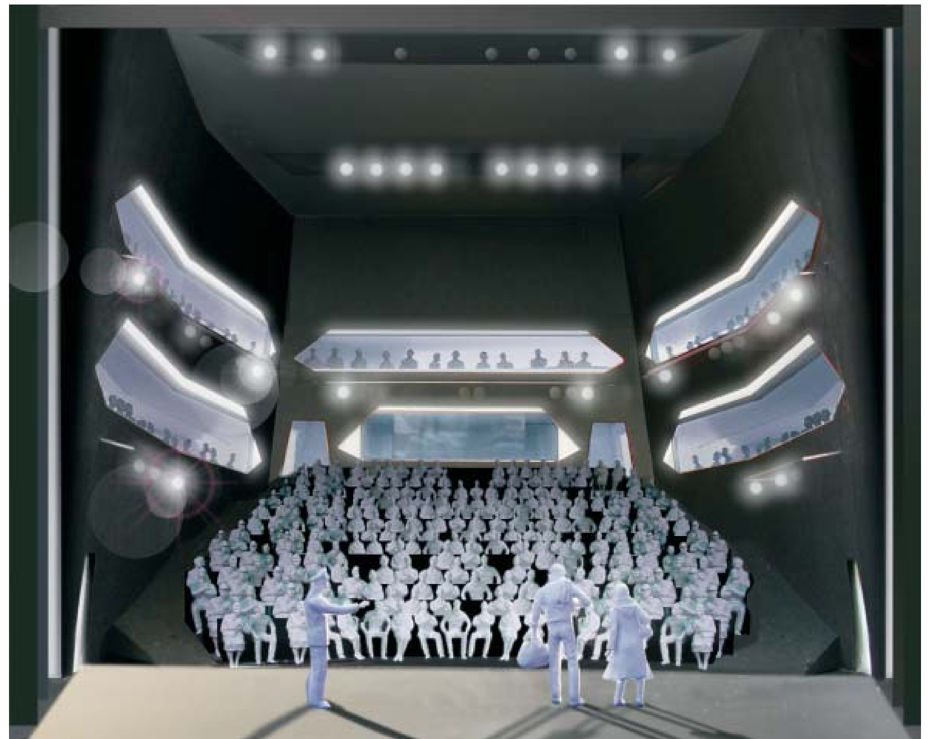
Project 131
Caricature & Cartoon Museum
Basel

6.10. Left. An architect explores the idea of presenting the activity and life of the performing arts to the public. This concpetural model wraps the skin of the Walker addition in images of La Scala.

6.11. Below Right. Visitors will be able to attend openings, works in development, and workshops with artists. This innovative theater will continue to serve the WAC's mission of bringing audio, visual and performance arts to the city.

6.12. Below Left. An early conceptual model exploring the formal language for the theater and balconies.





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Project 145 **Art Box, Museum for the Grothe Collection** **Bonn, Germany**	**Project 151** **Künstkiste Museum for Grothe Collection** **Duisburg, Germany**	**Project 155** **MoMA Expansion (project)** **NYC**

6.13. Left. This series of images illustrates the development of the steel structure from the concrete parking garage to the final steel structure, beginning in October 2003 and concluding May 2004.
(Images by Cameron Wittig)

6.14. Below. The new buildng is tied into the massive concrete wall that makes the cantilever possible. This image is taken from the future garden looking to the downtown skyline.
(Image by Cameron Wittig)

1 9 9 9 – 2 0 0 2

Project 160, Laban Dance Center
London, England
(Copyright of Margherita Spiluttini)

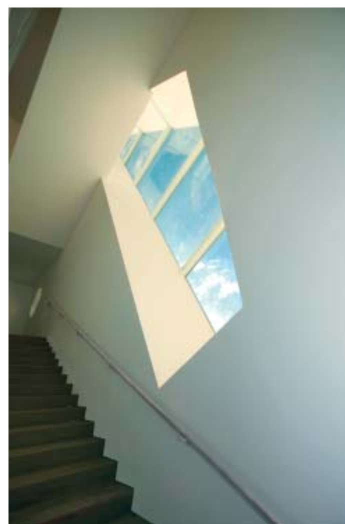
Above. The final building is a collision of glass, aluminum and stucco volumes that create an active composition of forms and texture in the bustle of the city.

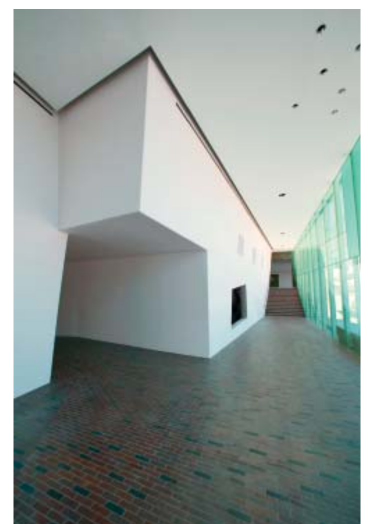
While the Walker Art Center addition is certainly about imagery, it is also about people. The façade is, in a word, spectacular, but the building takes great care to enhance the popular experience of art through meaningful acts of creation, interaction and contemplation. Extraordinarily sophisticated building technologies have presented unique spatial conditions that blend seamlessly into memorable conversations and magical theatrical experiences. The building through its material and formal expression has held that the relationship between art and people is the primary concern, thereby potentially allowing itself to be more than another iconic symbol for the city. It will undoubtedly continue to operate both across international boundaries and within the social fabric of the Twin Cities.

-William Welsh, University of Minnesota

6.15. Below Left. This photo from the stairway leading to the garden lounge is an example of the visual connections the building creates as visitors move through the space.

6.16. Below Right. The finished townsquare connecting the museum to the new addition borrows the brick that covers the walls of the Barnes Building and conceptually bends it to create the flooring. These spaces feel inspired by medieval streetscapes as they wind between galleries.
(Images by Cameron Wittig)





the skin

detail and the walker art center

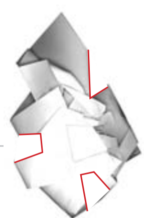
What do paper dolls, French lace, and the inexplicable attraction of moths to bright lights have to do with the Walker Art Center? All three influenced the design of the expressive surface of the new addition to the museum. This eye-catching extruded aluminum box is the latest example of Herzog & de Meuron's ongoing exploration of simple materials in new and innovative ways. Behind the unique square aluminum panels cladding the museum lies a complex, trial and error design process for the Walker's skin.

evolution of the walker's skin:

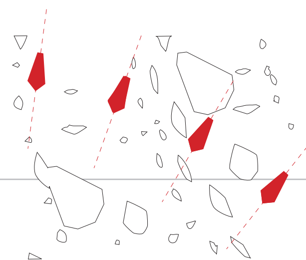
The design team explored randomness during conceptual design by scattering, crinkling and cutting paper. However the construction process demanded careful study to translate 'randomness' into complex patterns present in every layer of the final skin.

From the beginning, the design team saw the opportunity to create "an urban landmark" by developing an exterior surface that would generate interest, push the boundaries of current technology and draw national attention to the Walker as a cultural institution. The papery skin evolved out of careful experimentation with various materials. The team began with ideas of bending metals, mimicking falling water and creating surfaces that would interact with the elements. After working with copper, aluminum and plastic the design team explored randomness by crinkling paper and making cuts. Their process began much like school children folding paper to make paper dolls.

When it came time to turn the design idea of the paper cut-outs into a structural and buildable form, the architects explored stretched fabric over steel frames. The building was initially conceived as a lantern hovering over Hennepin Avenue. Stretched Teflon fabric would create a pillowed wall that could be brightly illuminated from within. To test the feasibility of the idea, a full scale mock-up of a sample wall was built. Richard Flood, the chief curator, visited Herzog & de Meuron's offices to see this mock up in the winter of 2003. He described the failure of the Teflon during an interview with t/here staff — "Oh, that was kind of a disaster. . . The lights had been set up beneath the Teflon



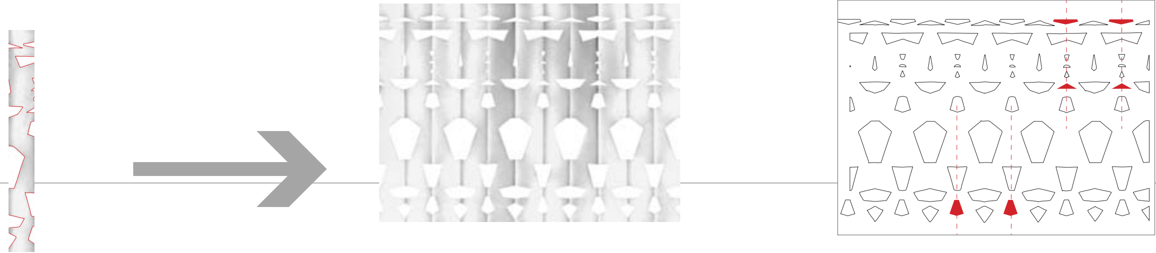
multiple folds



7.1. Below. An early rendering of the Walker showing the desire to express the exciting interior activity to the city through the irregular paper cut-like windows. The multi-colored illumination never became a reality but is reminiscent of the firm's previous work at the Laban Dance Center in England.

(All images are copyright Herzog & de Meuron unless otherwise noted)

7.2. Below. A photo of the complete aluminum skin on the Walker. The expanded anodized aluminum's crinkled appearance captures the light while a second layer of flattened aluminum mesh camoflages the structural steel grid behind. The result is a dynamic facade that changes drastically over the course of a day. Sometimes the panels appear opaque and other times they look like transparent mesh screen depending on the angle of the sun and the movement of the observer.



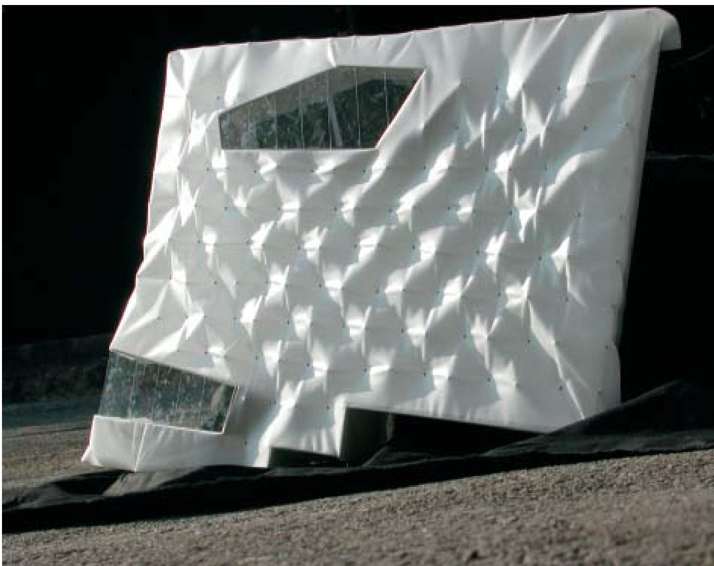
structure, which was a one-to-one in [Herzog & de Meuron's] compound overlooking the river. We went out to dinner. The point was that we would come back at midnight, they would throw on the lights, and we would go wow!. . .They threw on the lights, and this wall of insects just laid into the Teflon. There were more corpses than you could count! It was… like walking over jelly. . . like some bad sci-fi thing." With the project schedule looming, the design team decided to return to their early explorations of metals.

In the end, the team decided on a skin composed of 3'-9" square anodized-aluminum panels, each stamped with a seemingly random pattern, giving the whole building a look of uneven, crinkled paper. In actuality, the edges of each panel are identical, guaranteeing a seamless meeting between the panels. The center of each panel is stampted by four different asymmetrical patterns. Each can be arranged in four different directions; the seemingly random surface is actually composed of these 16 different combinations rotated

7.3. Left. An early model study for the pillowed skin of the fabric.

7.4. Below. Rendering of the proposed Teflon skin. This rendering suggests the ideas of implied transparency in the skin that still exist in the finished aluminum.

7.5. Right. A vellum model explores the transparency in the cladding. This iteration would have allowed light to pass through the building in limited amounts revealing the floor plates and massive structure of the building.



skin stats:

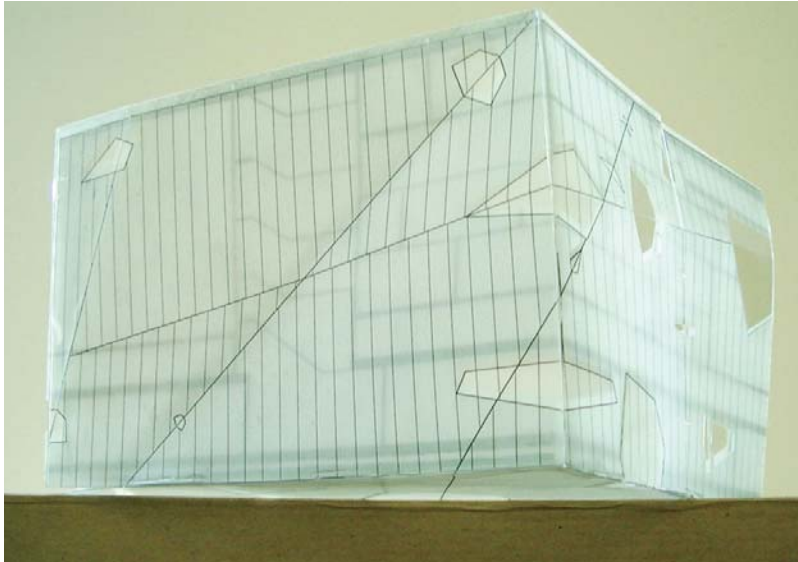
•70,000 lbs of aluminum was used in the facade.
•230,000 rivets were used to install the facade.
•2,878 expanded aluminum panels make up the facade.

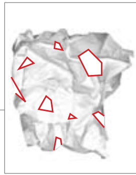
testing:

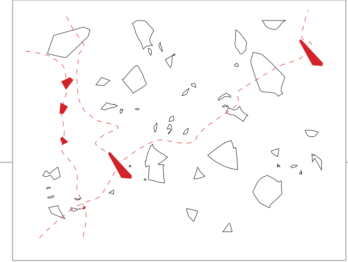
•M.A. Mortenson rigorously tested the panels, because the aluminum had never been utilized as an exterior cladding material previously.
•Panels were subjected to vibration testing and rattled every 4.8 seconds to insure they would not crack.
•Wind tests simulated gusts as violent as most tropical storms, the panels are safe, at least until the next hurricane blows into Minneapolis.

7.6. Right. A sample of the final aluminum panels and the steel structure that holds them away from the weather wall.

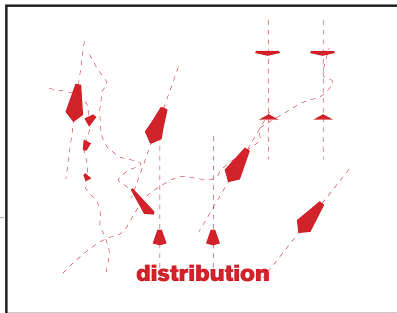
7.7. Above. Samples of metal explorations that began with hammer beaten copper and ended with crumpled aluminum.

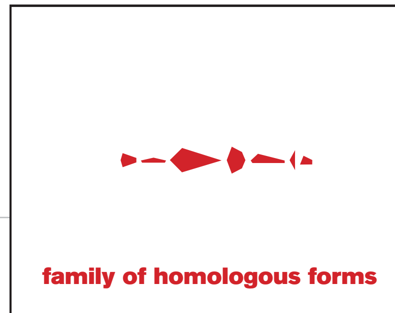






7.8. Paper cut patterns were studied to generate the structural folds and window openings of the new addition. The inspiration of these openings comes from the German folk art (*Scherenschnitte*) of paper folding enjoyed by young children.





to create a sense of randomness. The architects used an internet program to generate the seemingly random pattern for the surface, assuring a lack of repetition in the organization of the skin. The face of the panels sit about 8” away from a continuous white steel insulated panel system commonly used on industrial buildings. The insulated panel system acts to create a weather barrier for the building. The clear separation of the skin frees the exterior layers to act as an expressive membrane that creates an interesting sense of depth that changes dramatically in different lighting conditions.

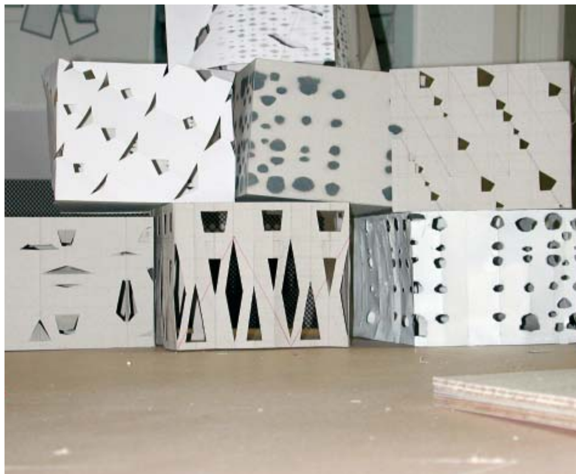
This metal surface is punctured by large irregular windows that open the building up to the views of downtown and the new sculpture garden. Herzog & de Meuron claim that the windows, “look accidental but are homologous in forms, showing a kinship in value and structure, somewhat like the shapes of a silhouette cutting.”

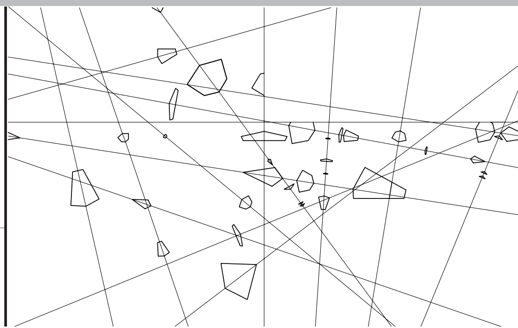
7.9. Far Left. A paper model study to find similar window forms. This is part of the developement of a language for diffent sized openings on the building facade.

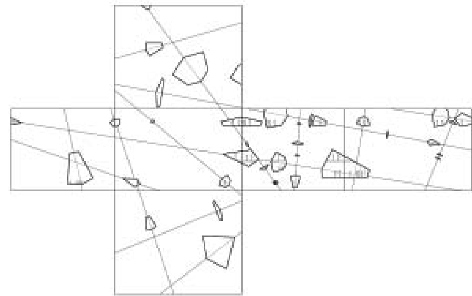
7.10. Lower Left. A few examples from the hundreds of paper studies for the windows on the Walker’s hovering cube.

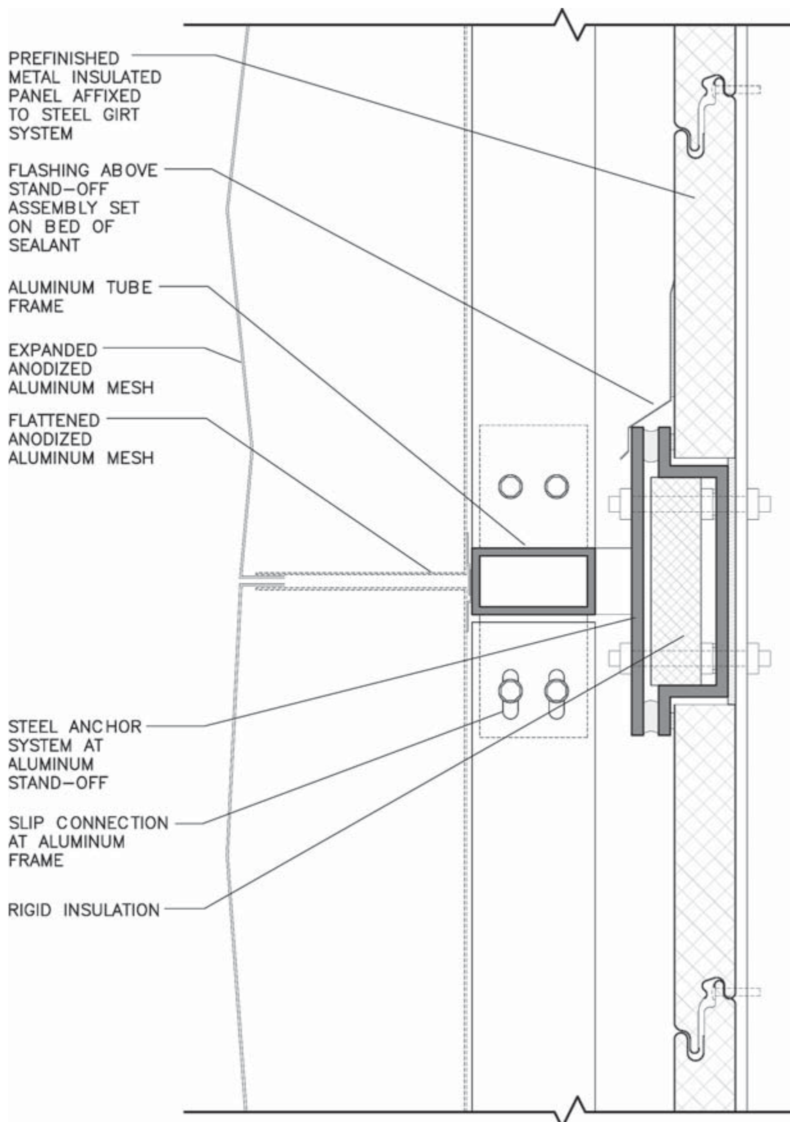
7.11. One of the small window openings outside the theater frames a view of the Hixon Witney Bridge spanning Hennepin Avenue. This bridge connects the old sculpture garden to Loring Park. Visitors to the new Walker continually oriented to the city outside by careful cuts through the thick multilayer envelope of the new building.

(Photo by Gene Pittman)









7.12. Left. A vertical detail drawing of the weather wall and exterior aluminum skin of the Walker. (Completed by a UMN student based on site observations, some inaccuracies my be present.)

7.13. Below. Samples of final stamped extruded aluminum panels prepared by the manufacturer to test the size and density of the folds and crinkles.

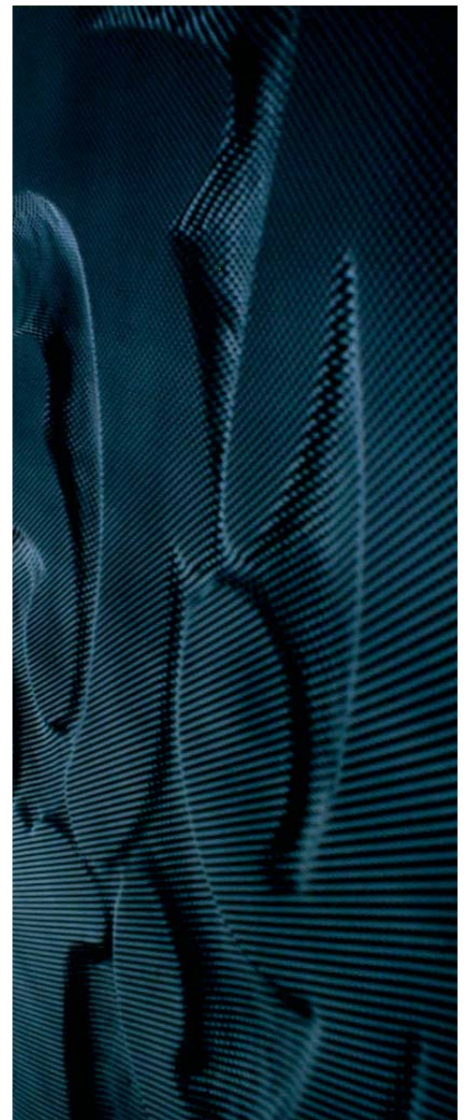
7.14. Below Right. A model for the interior of the theater shows the swirling Baroque-patterned fabric later translated into aluminum stamped panels.This pattern was also CNC cut into the galleries' sliding wooden doors and sandblasted into the concrete of the parking garage.

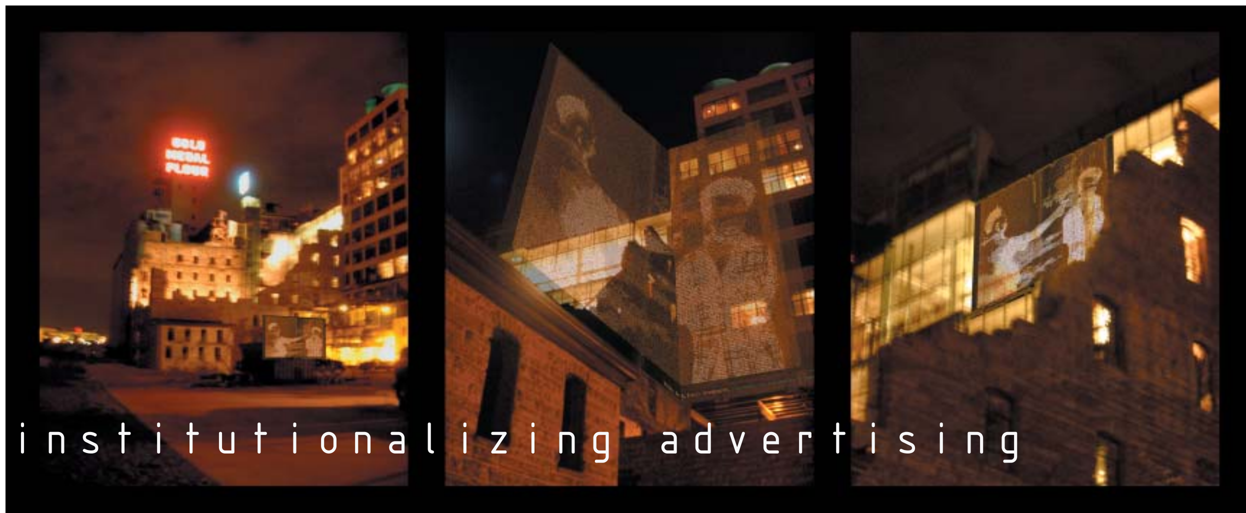
7.15-16. Below Far Right. Playful openings frame the upper boxes of the new theater mimicking the stamped aluminum brocade that lines its walls. This pattern inspired by French lace challenges the rigidness of stark museum designs that became prolific after the modern era.

(Photo by Cameron Wittig)

The attention given to the surface of the outside of the building carries through to the interior, where an aluminum skin lines the walls of the new theater. Here the random crinkle is left at the door and is replaced by new patterns, inspired by the rich fabric interior of La Scala Theatre in Milan. Lace motifs are stamped into black mesh panels that line the new experimental theater of the Walker. Similar brocade patterns are sandblasted into other parts of the building's concrete. The richness of materials and textures signals a strong departure from the white boxes that were favored by the modernists, including Barnes (architect of the original museum). While the new galleries still respect this simplicity, the circulation spaces offer subtle deviations, deformations and patterns that are scattered throughout the new addition, each with an individual story just waiting to be discovered. This richness of experience offers an excitement seldom seen in art institutions, but the Walker is not a typical museum. The patterns are initially exciting, but will they offer too much distraction from the art that plays center stage? Will the richness of the Walker become the new standard in an age of hyper-imagery, or is the Walker Art Center tomorrow's outdated European fashion import?

-Colin Oglesbay, University of Minnesota





institutionalizing advertising

The following is a selection of student work from a graduate-level studio taught by Andrzej Piotrowski at the University of Minnesota.

In today's culture, advertising pervades our lives. Advertising is acknowledged as the basis of an increasingly global culture of advocacy in which any and all positions - commercial, aesthetic, and moral - must be actively and continuously argued by any means possible. More significantly, the techniques of advocacy have achieved an unprecedented depth and complexity. The average advertisement uses multiple layers of irony and meaning to manufacture both consent and desire. In this context, the architectural community cannot be content with a debate on the propriety of adopting the banal, the kitsch, the crassly promotional. We may be better off admitting that a project like Guggenheim Bilbao serves little purpose other that to justify its own existence, while trying to understand exactly what the design of buildings and the promotion of ideas have in common.

Exploring and designing within this overlap was the goal of a graduate architectural studio led by Professor Andrzej Piotrowski at the University of Minnesota's College of Architecture and Landscape Architecture in the fall of 2003. Students engaged in a series of exercises that brought architecture and advertising into explicit comparison and conjunction, culminating in the design of an advertising institute.

The first exercise provoked a variety of questions. With the aim of discovering the logics or mechanisms responsible for their effects, advertisements were subjected to visual investigation through manipulation and distortion. A complementary study was undertaken of singularly evocative sites. Students were then asked to design a means of inserting these highly charged advertisements into the spaces they had evaluated. Were these "site-specific advertisements" intended to advertise the sites in some way? Could they be placed in the sites in a way that enhanced their original effect? Or could both the mechanisms of the advertisements and the qualities of the spaces be somehow critiqued or exposed? Of course, the self-consciousness and irony of contemporary advertising challenged these inquiries at each turn.

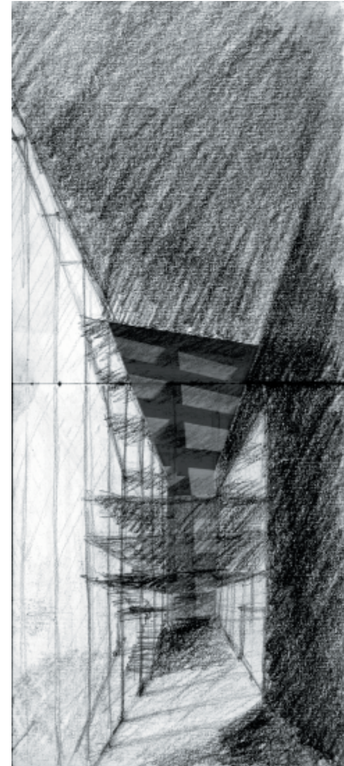
Steven Holl's addition to CALA's Ralph Rapson Hall was the next subject of analysis. The studio assessed the building and courtyards in a set of critical essays illustrated by analytical drawings. A prime example of current architectural spectacle, the addition's copper cladding, torqued-cruciform footprint, and banks of icy-blue channel glass catch the eye as blatantly as any titanium curve. However, the Holl confection works at an intermediate scale. It is the extension of a building of some bulk that continues to house the majority of the College's functions - the tail must try to wag the dog. As a result, deference to site and context are made into a conceit and the Holl building bends over backwards to address its surroundings. Additionally, the project embraces its self-referential program – a design to house designers – through gratuitous eccentricities of structure, material, and space. Students were prompted

to use their inquiries into the functioning of this public institution to frame conceptual questions anticipating their final design exercise.

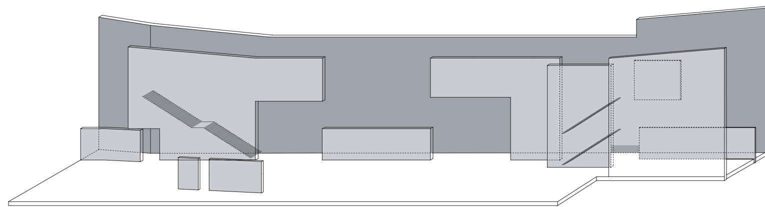
Not surprisingly, the final project of the studio folded the preliminary exercises in on themselves. The task of designing an advertising institute forced students to confront the paradoxes of bureaucratized charisma they had uncovered. The program called for a building to house an organization devoted to the study of, education in, and public exhibition of the art and science of advertising. Responses varied widely, but one common denominator was an obsession with site. There are indications of a bias in the course's approach. The initial exercise and the choice of the Holl building were both highly situational. Additionally, the first week of designing for the advertising institute was taken up with exhaustive site explorations. Perhaps site is architecture's remainder – what's left after the hype and glitz are removed.

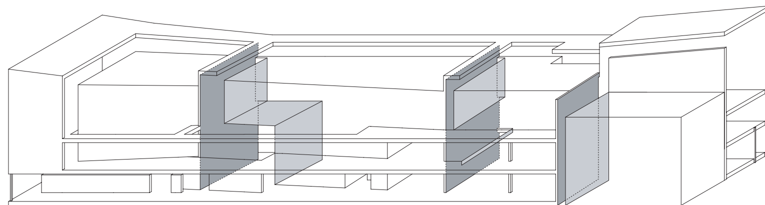
8.1. Opposite. Site-specific advertisement, Tamara Wibowo.

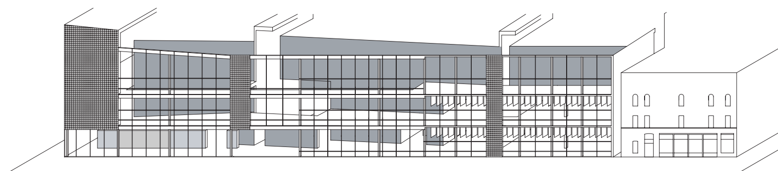
8.2. This page, top. Site-specific advertisement, James Howarth.
8.3. This page, bottom. Site-specific advertisement, Jessica Wodarz.

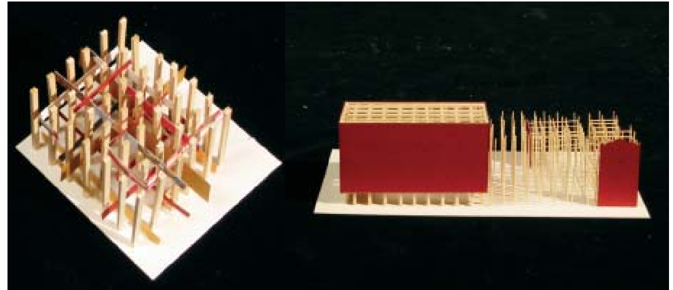


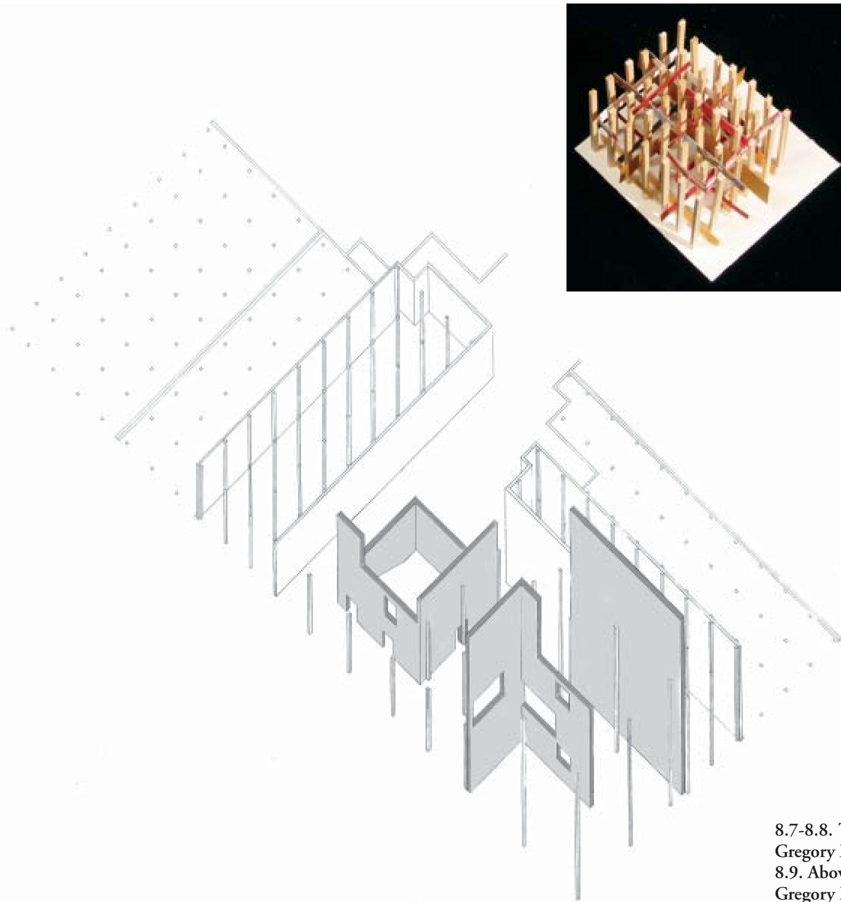
8.4-8.5. Above. Advertising Institute, exterior and interior renderings, Tamara Wibowo.
8.6. Right. Advertising Institute, axonometric drawings, Matthew Finn.



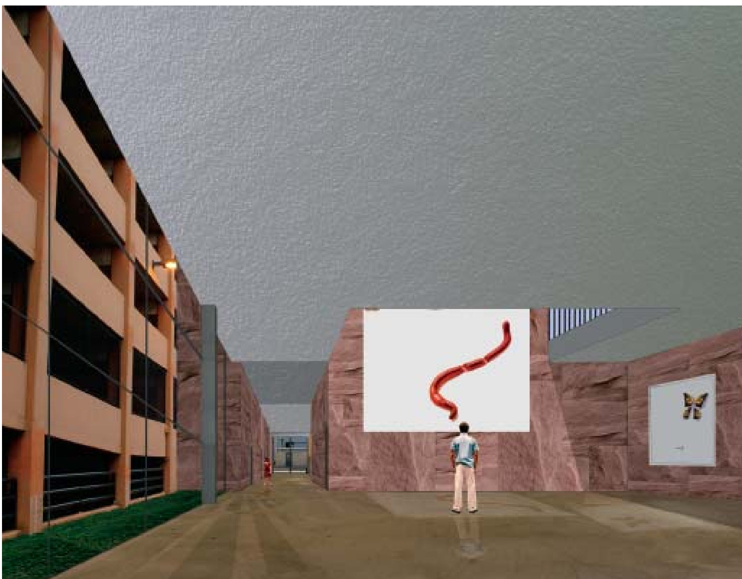


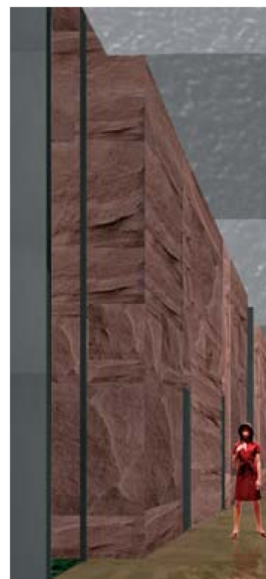




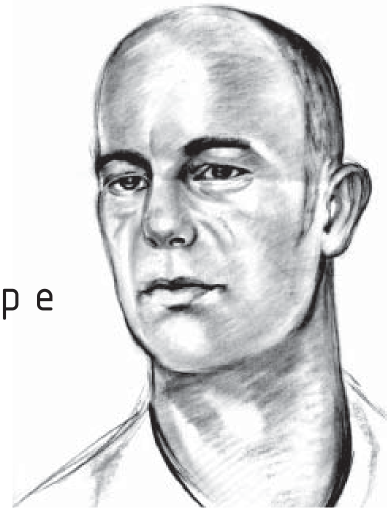


8.7-8.8. Top. Advertising Institute, conceptual models, Gregory Mell.
8.9. Above. Advertising Institute, axonometric drawing, Gregory Mell.
8.10-8.11. Below. Advertising Institute, interior renderings, Jessica Wodarz.





architects shape the new minneapolis



Jeffrey Kipnis interviews Jacques Herzog

This interview was transcribed from a lecture on February, 15th 2004. This is one lecture of a series put on by the University of Minnesota, the Weisman Art Museum and Target Coporation. Jacques Herzog was guided by Jeffrey Kipnis, Professor at the Nolton School of Architecture at The Ohio State University.

Kipnis: You have worked in London and China, all over the world. How does the work become specific in an intimate way when you come to Minnesota and your working with the Walker? How does it become specific for you, and how can it become personal for them?

Herzog: I think you raise a very important issue. I almost feel a bit ashamed because clearly we've been developing and working on quite a few projects, which have marked a kind of departure from the more anonymous buildings we've done in the very beginning. Even, lets say, the Laban is not at all an anonymous building, but its still kind of on the shed side compared to lets say the Barcelona building that we're working on, or the Walker which are almost more spectacular, or Beijing which is perhaps the largest and the most visible of all the buildings we've ever worked on. And in fact, I'm going to say those issues of difference or indifference and anonymous versus spectacular, I think that is besides the point. Some things can have a more extravagant form. It can express this highly individualistic or highly idiosyncratic, or, as being almost as normal as a square box.

K: When you come here have you drawn from some local condition, or are you working on a problem in general and this becomes an opportunity to try it out, or is there some way you try to draw on some specific energies from Minneapolis for the Walker?

H: In this case, the point of departure was the existing Barnes building. It was not something from scratch, even if we doubled the space. So it's a lot of new building, but as well as something which needs to work with the existing building, which we did in a way that we believed was the right one here. It also in some way justified the departure from the strict orthogonality of the old building to something freer. I think what is really interesting here, in my view, is the notion of the public, by Kathy [Halbreich] and Richard [Flood] who we worked with very closely all of the time. We, together, tried to develop this moment in the project. In fact, the whole series we're having here deals with these issues of the public. In the city of Minneapolis I never visited a city like this before where the public life on the streets is non-existent. There are the walkways, the covered walkways on the second floor. Ok, it's a Sunday evening, but when you arrive from the airport there is not one single person on the street. And this is due to climatic issues, but also cultural issues. It's very American. The way that all these covered and indoor places add a big tradition based on many things like the oil industry, cheap energy, the Mall as an ideal for the public. But here it was very interesting that the Walker, which is one of the most avant guard institutes in the world, is trying to deal with this problem of the public as an art museum.

I think the Tate is a good example of what works well as a public space, and is a totally different form of public space. It is totally different from what we would do.

9.2. Above. The Tate Modern in London.

Many people talk about this and it should be more public. It should be more popular, whatever. But to use the expansion of this institution to develop a new kind of public life, which is of course indoor but also outdoor, because we took the garden which is a key piece in the city for public life and made it part of the building. We even engaged Hennepin Avenue, which became massive as compared to 60 – 70 years ago when the Walker opened as an art museum. When the entrance was oriented to Hennepin Avenue, this time the street was not a highway the way it is now. despite the fact that it is a highway now we still wanted to get the building back to Hennepin Avenue facing downtown. So we tried to really use the building to put things together for public life that could be new and interesting for the Walker. I think this is the most important ingredient of making this a special or specific building. More than let's say, the architectural details that we can also talk about.

K: Let's think about that for a little bit. Lots of museums have different ideas about the city. The Whitney for example, understands that its job is to protect art from the city. And so, when you're in New York you make a castle moat and then you make everyone cross a bridge. And you make the bridge so narrow that by the time you cross it your there by yourself one at a time. So [Marcel] Breuer is setting up the art as a kind of contemplative respite in the problems of the city. It's not a naturally self-evident condition that one incorporates the city and opens the art to the city.

H: I think the Whitney is a very interesting example as a comparison because you know being in New York, the Whitney is in the pedestrianized area. You know its much more about physical relationships where you go in or not, whether you bridge over this kind of little bridge, this kind of very nice arrangement if I say so. But here [Minneapolis] most of the people are on their way in the bus, or in the car. Its not about opening the museum in a way that you see into the museum and you see the art in the museum and you are attracted by that. It's more the other way around. That if you're in the museum you get glimpses of the garden, of the city in a way that the city comes into the building. It becomes part of what we call the town square. Of course it's also a big showcase. The Barnes, as well as ours, together, works in a cultural way as a sign which may attract people. You can't compare this with the sidewalks in New York, it would never work. But because it's so stretched it has to do, I would say, with movement and with perceiving this long window as something which hopefully has the effect as kind of a showcase, even if you would never really perceive or identify individual artworks.

9.3. Above. The Witney Art Museum.

K: So urbanistically it had to be a symbolic destination?

H: I remember the very first models. This kind of twin, vertical objects worked quite well from the very beginning. And we sort of tried to make the existing brick tower stronger paradoxically by holding it to something more fragile and more sculptural. So we tried to use the normal or conventional that you were also mentioning in a different way then we would have in another country.

9.4. Above. Frank Llyod Wright's Guggenheim.

K: I talked a little bit about museums that are set up differently in the city. They also staged the work in a certain way. They basically write the soundtrack. Is this a happy museum, or a sad museum? And I was thinking about Frank Lloyd Wright. You walk in to the Guggenheim and come off the street and you come in and basically land in the Pantheon and you see all of the work of art as God's in the Pantheon, and then you go up an elevator and the next thing you know you're on a parking lot. All of a sudden art is not god anymore, art is just stuff on the street and you're walking around, and the joy of seeing people across the street is just as interesting as the joy of watching the art. So it's kind of an opera to that art. How do you think your building here stages the work? Gets you in the mood for it?

H: You don't want to provoke me – when you mention Guggenheim in New York because I think it is a great building and

I like this space you described, but you can see that he must have had a very cynical relationship to art because the way those poor artworks are squeezed in those strangely shaped walls would never have worked. The best installations I have seen were those where the contemporary artists were actively commissioned to do their installations. That is interesting because it shows that many museums work in spaces which are far away from being boxes and lofts. We have had discussions with Kathy and Richard who backed away from pushing us towards this kind of ideal loft which would run onto the building. The expansion project was much more about other spaces like the Townsquare, like the Auditorium, more social spaces than just Galleries. The Galleries themselves are inspired by the current Galleries, which did not represent what I would have thought would be a good model, because of the terrazzo floor, although in fact the more I saw it the more I liked it. So we took a lot of what we found. Here and there are a lot of spaces in the Walker which is very tough for curators to use for galleries, but interesting because they provide most interesting forms and views. The views you are mentioning could be very positive.

9.5. Above. The Townsqure of the Walker Art Center.

K: I mean the difference between you and Wright is he had very little conversation with artists, whereas you dialog with artists and bring them into the work. In a certain way your work is about an art practice in architecture. How do you work with artists and how [has] it affected your thinking of these things?

H: Its true that we have, since the very beginning, since the early years, been in contact with artists, even before we worked as architects. So it was a natural relationship. It was never something that we did as you may speak with a doctor when you build a hospital. It was more something long-term, a biography. Being with artists and the city, our hometown, Basel, is about art and about architecture and it's quite an important place for art and museums. It always had artists around, and we encountered artists in the early years before they were widely known, when they did their first shows and there was a chance to be in contact with such people. And I keep saying even today I experienced artists as more interesting people then architects. They are more open. They are more, you know, more exposed to their own language then architects are, and they are more – they can't hide themselves behind programs and budget and lack of all this stuff. That was always something that fascinated me and fascinated us. It was a major thing and an interesting background for all our future collaborations.

K: Richard Flood, the Chief Curator of the Walker, was in Basel and during our eight-degree-below zero site tour of the building, he had this hat on that he had bought at Prada in Basel. I kept thinking that – it just struck me that they have made Joseph Beuys' hats into a fashion commodity– anyway you had a relationship with Joseph Beuys and it was a big influence on you, can you speak to that?

H: Yeah, we met Beuys in 1978, but not in a context of architecture, but that was a chance for us as architects to meet him. Because we were designing costumes and developing ideas for the Basel carnival and the interesting thing about that, unlike the normal way this happens, you know we did not want the group we were working for to deal with the subject of Beuys in a ironical way. It was about an artwork that the city should buy with public money, which was astonishing at that time. And there was a public work and it was accepted to buy this artwork called '*Feuerstatte 1'*. And so we said we can involve Beuys from the very beginning of this whole thing. We offered our services to go and see and help, knowing that he was dealing with old traditions and Celtic traditions at the time. That's how we got in touch with him.

K: Did his thinking on matter and materials and chemical meaning, did that affect you do you think?

H: We have been interested in that before, but of course the way that he brought it into a form and in the contemporary world was new and striking. It was totally opposed to what we were trained by Aldo Rossi, who was also a very charismatic, interesting person, being much more of the Mediterranean world interest in typology – whereas Beuys was much more as you said about chemical matter. Romanticism. It's the northern world that was physically present in his work.

We have done some things at the Walker, from ornamentation to something based on this issue of paper cutting and crumbling.

9.6. Above. Study of openings in the Walker.

K: When you say what happened with the skin of the Walker. You had to redesign it many times and why was that?

9.7. Above Entry from Hennepin Avenue of the Walker Art Center Addition.

H: In the case of the Walker, the problem was that it was too outspoken and looked as if we crumpled paper and hung it up. Well then it was too far away. It was too abstract. So there are sometimes very fine lines between something that is narrative, hatched from the rest of the design, or something which is again too generic or too conventional or too much light. All these mockups and tests being done through the team, with Christine [Binswagner] and Kathy [Halbreich] and Richard [Flood], we agreed almost spontaneously this is more interesting than that. It really progressed in such a way that we never did something behind the back of the client. It was not necessary. What I want to say is whether I liked or I didn't like it was much more in my personal gusto it was really something that you could understand. Other people who are trained in that field of course could share.

K: When you were in Basel and you were working on the skin and you had all these models, how did you know when you got there? How did you know when you got it?

H: Well, I often don't know really. And still as I said, you know by comparison. There is a point where you stop. You have to stop; and in fact there is no stop because you can always go on and go on. I think every project has an optimum potential. You know everybody has a potential. These are all given things you know. And they come together like a field, like a network of potentials— potential energy, or potential qualities.

K: Imagine how they can connect to life. How do you do that?

H: How can they connect to life? I mean whether or not in this case [The Walker], or again with Barcelona. Whether or not you lift the building and you allow public life to come in or not is a big difference. You know which, I guess it will work quite well. But on the architectural level I think it's very good to have a style of work, which is including people rather than excluding people.

K: What is the best way for them to learn of it?

H: I believe very strongly they have to wait another year. I strongly believe in architects who are in physical presence, and we've designed the Walker in a way that not only should work well for art, but also work well as a public space. It is a special, physical experience, something that comes from visiting the building. There is nothing hidden behind that kind of physical aspect of things. You can grasp this. You can look, you can touch it. Just sort of seeing what is there?

K: When you were working at the Walker one of the questions is you seem to recognize the significance of Hennepin and automobiles instead of trying to resist it, or perhaps offer alternatives. How did you feel about the structure of urban life being automotively organized?

H: Yeah, I think an answer to this is that Hennepin is kind of an interesting backdrop for this Townsquare, but from the Townsquare you also have gorgeous views on different approaches. On the other side of Hennepin Avenue you also have the views to Downtown. So there is much more than just cars.

9.8. Above Townsquare conceptual rendering.

IMAGE CREDITS

9.1. Michael C Silsby, 2005.
9.2. Herzog & de Meuron, 2004.
9.3-4 Courtesy CALA Visual Resource Collection
9.5-7. Herzog & de Meuron, 2004.

architects-of-record

Camille LeFevre

Camille LeFevre, the former editor of Architecture Minnesota, writes about architecture and design for such publications as Architectural Record, Natural Home and Midwest Home and Garden.

Within a few short years, Minneapolis will boast four new and transformed cultural institutions, each one (albeit to varying degrees) a headliner adding to the architectural cache of the city. The architecture itself will act as a marquee, a lit-up signature of the architect imported to design the building and lend his star power to the bold institution that enticed him to Minneapolis. City leaders, the media and culture aficionados, banking on the Bilbao effect times four, will happily promote the new Jean Nouvel, Herzog and de Meuron, Michael Graves and Cesar Pelli buildings.

Meanwhile, the local architectural firms working as architects-of-record on each of these projects will likely be relegated to a mention that scrolls past peoples' consciousness like a production credit on a movie screen. However, as Karen E. Steen pointed out in the October 2004 issue of Metropolis, the real story behind the design and construction of a high-profile building is far more complicated than a one-name marquee suggests, and she implicates the design media in this misconception.

"Most writing on architecture treats the profession as a realm of sole authorship, where One Big Name is heaped with praise, quoted extensively, and ultimately held responsible for whether a building succeeds or fails," she writes. "The truth, of course, is so much more complex…. The complexities arise from the very way ideas form—where they come from, what shapes them along the way, and how they are finally born."

The local architects-of-record on these high-profile projects, it turns out, are an integral and indispensable part of that process. Involved in a project from the design architect's initial concepts through the building's construction, the principals and staff of the firm that function as architect-of-record are on the ground daily, managing the project, producing the documents, signing the drawings, advising and providing input on the design, and directing the construction process. In return, they acquire technical knowledge, expertise with new materials and professional affiliations that make their partnerships with "star architects" fruitful.

"Throughout one's life, there's a time to be in the foreground and a time to be in the background. At times you can learn more and contribute more by being less visible," says Jeff Scherer, FAIA, principal, Meyer, Scherer & Rockcastle, Ltd., Minneapolis, reflecting on his firm's partnership with Frank Gehry, FAIA, on the Weisman Art Museum. "Working with Gehry did several things for our firm. One, as the architect-of-record, we demonstrated that we had more capabilities than people presumed. It legitimized us as a firm that can do serious architecture and support work that isn't our own, which communicates to people that we're about the idea, not our own ego."

"Secondly, we raised our credibility with

10.1. Left. View of the new Guthrie Theater from across the Mississippi.

10.2. Right. Interior rendering of the addition to the Minneapolis Institute of Arts.

the University of Minnesota. When it came time for Regis Art Center to be designed and built, that legitimacy carried forward into that project. Last, on the national level, Frank was one of my five nominators for AIA fellowship. I don't think he would have done that if he hadn't been pleased with the way we supported his efforts on the Weisman."

A long-held philosophy and "positive attitude" about collaboration drew Jean Nouvel and Cesar Pelli, FAIA, to team with Architectural Alliance, Minneapolis, on the new Guthrie Theater and Minneapolis library, respectively, says Tom DeAngelo, AIA, principal.

"We don't partner with people willy-nilly," he adds. "We entered into these partnerships because we could have a stake in and a significant impact on the architectural landscape of the Twin Cities with projects that will have a legacy for years to come. We knew our staff would enjoy these projects, learn from them and feel good about contributing to the community."

Experience gained by Architectural Alliance during the collaborations includes research on and the exploration of new materials, particularly with regards to the Guthrie (a daunting task often without remuneration, but which yields new knowledge and sparks innovation). The Minneapolis firm is also enhancing its management skills in orchestrating the completion of two significant, complex projects. And the firm is demonstrating leadership as "translator, mediator, enabler," DeAngelo says, which isn't a glamorous role, but sometimes a necessary one.

The firm, for instance, insulates the design architect from disputes and worries that occur among the stakeholders throughout the community, which allows the design architect to focus on design issues. "We're the buffer on occasion," DeAngelo explains. "I spend a lot of time explaining the ideas behind the design and calming people down. Other times, I'm the person who conveys confidence in the architect's ability to do a good design and get things done and on budget." The negative aspect of this role occurs when "people see us as the firm that's trying to carry someone else's water all the time. The danger is when people outside of the process don't understand the complexity of the design contributions we're making to a project someone else is authoring."

Working as architect-of-record has other tradeoffs, according to John Cook, AIA, project architect, Hammel, Green &Abrahamson, Inc., Minneapolis, who is leading the team working with Herzog and de Meuron on the Walker Art Center's addition. "It's hard to make money on anything that requires the kind of detail and attention that this project does," he explains. "These projects aren't cash cows. It's a big commitment and the dollars are always tight." But the tradeoffs, he continues, are "a high-profile project for a great organization and a tremendous opportunity."

HGA has worked with the Walker for more than 20 years on various building projects. The Herzog and de Meuron addition, however, has provided the excitement of experimenting with new materials or assembling ordinary materials in new ways. "This process tells me that it's okay to take some risks," Cook says. "But I have to do a lot of work to make sure those risks are calculated and managed. It's a huge learning experience." An additional benefit to working on the Walker

10.3. Right. View of the new Walker Art Center from the corner of Vineland Place and Hennepin Avenue.

is collaborating with teams of engineers, subcontractors and construction workers all "putting their best knowledge and wisdom forward to make this building a success," Cook adds.

In the next two years, as the Walker Art Center, Guthrie Theater, Minneapolis library and Children's Theater Company open their new doors, the profile of Minneapolis's architectural community and urban environment will reach another level of cultural discourse and attention. "When cultural organizations pick 'star' architects for their projects, it helps make Minneapolis more of an international city," Cook says.

"It raises the bar for design," he adds. "And I love the idea of adding diversity to the local architectural scene." The Minnesota architectural community will also benefit from these projects by witnessing how their materials wear and weather over time, and how the forms and spaces defining these projects will function as the organizations housed within them evolve.
"I'm optimistic," DeAngelo says. "These projects are provocative in their own ways and successful additions to the urban landscape. There's a source of pride already in the architectural community. And for us, there's a source of pride in the lasting value of the projects we're involved with."

IMAGE CREDITS

10.1. Copyright Ateliers Jean Nouvel, 2004.
10.2. Copyright Michael Graves & Associates, 2004.
10.3. Image by Colin Oglesbay, University of Minnesota Graduate Student, 2005.

a local architect's perspective

Thomas Meyer, AIA

Thomas Meyer, AIA, is a principal of the Minneapolis-based firm Meyer, Scherer & Rockcastle, Ltd. The firm was the Architect of Record for the Weisman Art Museum, designed by Frank Gehry, and was a finalist for the Minneapolis Central Library and Children's Theatre Company projects.

The Walker Art Center, the Guthrie Theater, the Minneapolis Institute of Arts (MIA), the Children's Theatre Company (CTC), and the Minneapolis Public Library all have major building projects, designed by prominent out-of-town architects, currently under construction. How does a Minneapolis architect, whose firm would otherwise be a serious contender for these plum projects, feel about the most important cultural projects in his city going to "star" architects? It is, of course, always disappointing to be considered and not chosen. The practice of architecture is an emotional business. Local architects have proprietary feelings about the major institutions in their own community and feel a kinship with their mission of building and facilitating the cultural life of that community. That being said, are there benefits to hiring a star?

These architects have a body of work acclaimed by influential critics, a recognizable look or brand to their work, and a charismatic, leading personality. They are considered to be at the upper tier of a rather narrow, singular standard of architectural excellence that holds, as the ultimate measure, influential innovation to move the vocabulary of architecture in new directions as the ultimate measure. There are numerous other standards by which architects are evaluated, but renown based on these standards is what makes the stars the prime contenders.

The essential question becomes how sophisticated each institution is in defining its particular aspirations and how many risks it is willing to take by challenging the standards of its peer institutions, or core constituents and patrons. Hiring a star could actually be perceived as the safe and conventional strategy, and I believe that not enough consideration is given to fundamental questions before engaging in an architectural search:

- Will the status of a particular architect advance the institutional mission?

- What are the institution's values relative to international, national and regional culture?

- Is the essence of architectural meaning and distinction for an institution local, and if so can this essence be developed locally?

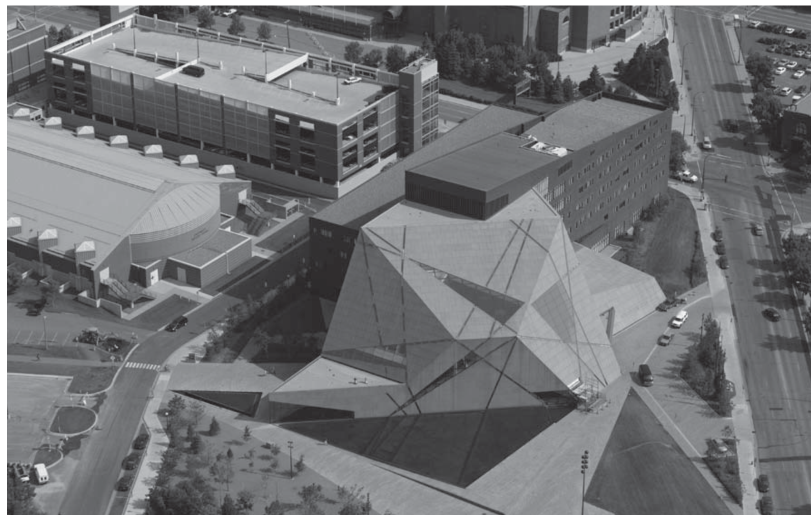
- What are the benefits of attempting to build a regional culture with regional people? Do a region and an institution mark their own secondary status by looking elsewhere for their most important cultural inspiration?

- Is the risk of perhaps getting second-rate work from an international architect better than getting first-rate work from a regional architect?

- Does the process have any relevance to the objectives of the project, or is it only the product?

11.1. Preceding page. Rendering of the future Guthrie Theater in Minneapolis, Minnesota by Jean Nouvel.

11.2. Right. Aerial view of the McNamara Alumni Center at the University of Minnesota.



• Is it a good thing to have the same handful of architects shape the cultural scene of every major city in the world? Should the trend of architecture and the arts toward a globally universal definition be resisted?

In the end, the choice made by clients and their patrons sometimes leads to important architecture and sometimes does not.

The University of Minnesota East Bank Campus presents an interesting comparison. The Weisman Art Museum and the University Alumni Gateway Center are two projects whose size, program and mission are within the reach of local firms. Both, however, were designed by nationally prominent architects. The Weisman Art Museum is the campus gateway on the west side. Frank Gehry was a relatively new face on the national architectural scene—and a provocative one—when he was commissioned by the University to design the Weisman. His design uses startlingly bold forms and, as a result, the University and the city have a building that is remarkable in its context and one that has become known as an important early work of perhaps the world's most acclaimed architect. On the other end of the East Bank, another selection panel with high aspirations but with less architectural savvy sought an architect to embody the spirit of the University and the State of Minnesota for the Alumni Center. They passed over several local firms uniquely suited for that challenge and selected the Arizona architect Antoine Predock. The result is a bold form like the Weisman but without the contextual and formal refinements to make it a great work of architecture. In the case of the Weisman, the odds are slim that a local firm could have done as well. In the case of the Alumni Center, the odds that a local firm would have done better are very high.

Among the prominent cultural buildings currently under construction and designed by stars, it would be hardest to make a convincing case for a local architect for the Walker Art Center expansion. The Walker's mission is to deliver world culture locally. And it wants a building to be a work of art of international standing. It would be a radical break, and one that probably would not advance its mission, to stand against the universalization of art and architecture.

The Guthrie Theater, on the other hand, is a distinctively regional institution. The logic to hire an out-of-town star is weaker here because of two significant factors: the Guthrie's own architectural legacy and its chosen site in the historic birthplace of the city. The creation story of the Guthrie is epic: leading local citizens and the town's best architect having the self-confidence and spunk to take on the challenge of creating a theater company and a theater building of national significance. Ralph Rapson's distinctive design for the Guthrie became a major part of the Guthrie's identity and, in its original form, was both highly distinctive and a great venue. When selecting an architect for the new building, a strong case could have been made to build on the theater's own great civic legacy by nurturing our own local talent. But the late 1950's spirit of self-reliance and perhaps self-confidence has dimmed over forty years. Whatever the abstract merits of the newly completed building, the story of its making is forgettable An international star architect, who probably would never have dreamed of even visiting the heartland of Minneapolis, certainly is capable of designing a great building for the Guthrie in the city's most historic district. It would have been even better and much more meaningful to have a great design produced by a great local architect.

In the case of the Minneapolis Central Library, there was no compelling reason not to hire a local architect. A library by its very nature is fundamentally a local and populist institution serving the broad community. The Library Board had no aspirations (like Seattle did for example)

11.3. The Weisman Art Museum on the University of Minnesota campus.

of making a bold statement. An inclusive community design process is common for library design and, as with the University's Alumni Center, the city and Library aspired to create a building that would represent local culture. Yet Pelli's reputation and Pelli himself make for a formidable competitor, and it probably seemed both more exciting and safer to work with a famous architect than with a familiar one.

As with the library, a strong case could have been made for the hiring of a local architect to design the Minneapolis Institute of Arts and Children's Theatre Company expansions. Michael Graves is twenty years past being thought of as an influential innovator, and, perhaps these institutions are not really in the market for cutting edge design. Having Michael Graves' familiar name associated with the project no doubt gives it cachet with the public. And, the fact that a key patron is Target Corporation, certainly influenced the choice. The MIA's history of hiring what has turned out to be second tier designs from nationally prominent architects of the time (McKim, Mead and White in 1912 and Kenzo Tange in 1973) may be destined to continue. Think of the unique distinction and wonderfully rich compound we would enjoy today if the MIA and CTC had chosen William Purcell in 1912, Ralph Rapson in 1973 and Vince James in 2004.

There is no right answer to the question of whether the community and its institutions build better architecture and better culture with local talent or non-local stars. The best outcome stems from a thoughtful and informed process that asks fundamental questions about who we are as a cultural community and what we want to become. That process should start with an open mind and the willingness to take calculated risks. It should not presume that the bigger and more important the project, the bigger star the architect must be. The tensions between local particularities and universal culture are fundamental for a city like ours to engage in. We should neither be enthralled with the stars so as to look only elsewhere for our ideas, nor so afraid of being provincial as to miss developing our own distinctions.

IMAGE CREDITS

11.1. Copyright Ateliers Jean Nouvel, 2004.
11.2. Courtesy of the University of Minnesota Archives.
11.3. Colin Oglesbay, University of Minnesota, Graduate Student. 2005.

toward a critical realism?

herzog & de meuron and the architecture of spectacle

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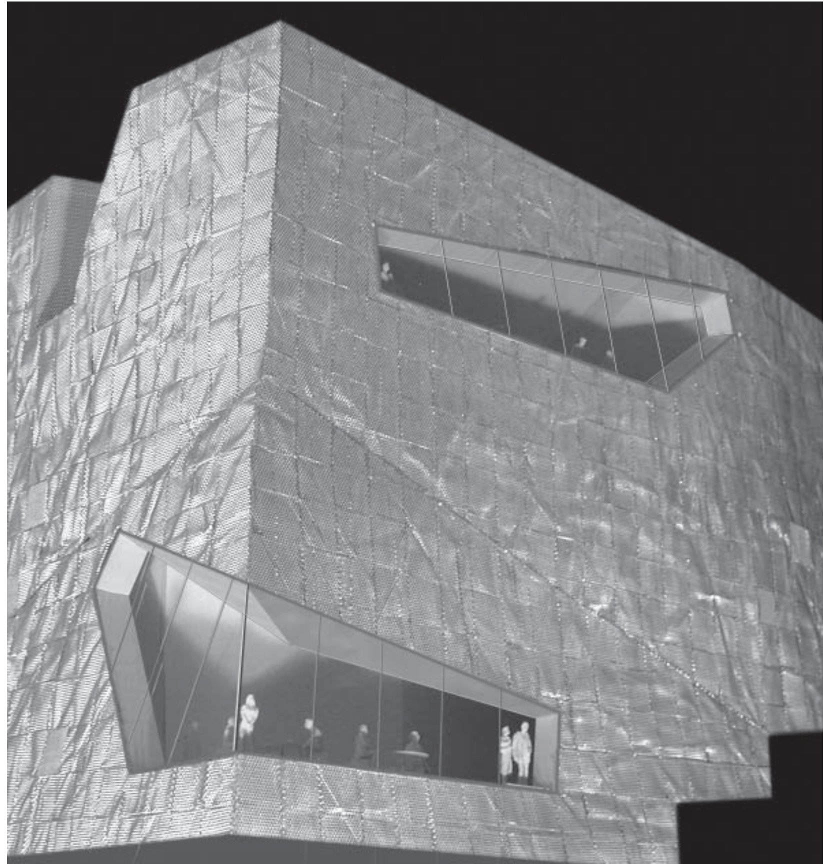
Guy Debord, in *The Society of Spectacle* (1967) states that the "capitalist production system has unified space, breaking down the boundaries between one society and the next." In Debord's view, this unification is also a process of "trivialization". In his words:

"Just as the accumulation of commodities mass-produced for the abstract space of the market inevitably shattered all regional and legal barriers, as well as all those corporative restrictions that served in the Middle Ages to preserve the quality of craft production, so too it was bound to dissipate the independence and quality of places. The power to homogenize is the heavy artillery that has battered down all Chinese walls."[1]

Even if one neither fully subscribes to Debord's cultural pessimism, nor to his Marxist optimism, one has to acknowledge that his analysis is as trenchant today as it was almost forty years ago. For example, we can readily apply his statement on trivialization to a phenomenon which we can consider the very epitome of globalized architecture today, namely the IKEA-box.[2] These blue boxes have been invading the industrialized world since the early 1970's. They spread their content over the globe and fill our homes with the pampering atmosphere of the European postwar welfare states. They battered down the Chinese Wall – in 1998 the first box opened in Beijing – and more are planned for the near future. They infiltrated the Iron Curtain – IKEA has been omnipresent in Eastern Europe since the early 1990s. The IKEA-boxes are the true monuments to the prevailing economy of just-in-time. Their managers waste no time in transferring goods, and they waste no space in storing them. The objects are produced out of sight of the consumers, in remote countries where labor is cheap. The consumers can experience and "mimic" the act of physical labor by assembling the furniture themselves – and thus help save even more transport costs. The clean, blue boxes smoothly blend the spaces of storage, display and consumption. Hermetically sealed toward the surrounding – the only way to find the entrance is to follow the stream of people who are not yet aching under the burden of boxes – they embrace the consumers with innumerable pieces of furniture they can assemble themselves, or, as Debord would have put it, with an image of the lost "unity of life".[3]

It is astonishing that the phenomenon of IKEA is never compared to another contemporary phenomenon, namely star architecture. Aren't there striking parallels between the way IKEA recreates the "unity of life" by furnishing our homes and the way star architects recreate this unity by furnishing the public sphere with their signature buildings? Are star architects just agents in what Debord called the spectacle which only "plans to develop itself"?[4] Are recent signature buildings such as Prada Tokyo by Herzog & de Meuron, the Seattle Library by Rem Koolhaas, or Daniel Libeskind's Imperial War Museum North

12.1. Right. Rendering of the aluminum clad addition to the new Walker Art Center in Minneapolis, Minnesota.



in Manchester just a mere refinement of the raw substance of globalization, custom made for clients with rich consumers, for city authorities longing for more tourists, and for museum trustees eager to be distinguished by good taste? Will Herzog & de Meuron be avant-garde, ahead of the rest of us, or are they a step behind when their Walker Art Center Expansion opens this spring 2005 in Minneapolis, ten months after the first IKEA-box opened in nearby Bloomington? Is there a fundamental, or just a gradual difference between their "signature building"[5] and IKEA's long awaited "signature royal blue building"?[6]

I will try to give some answers to these questions by looking closely at the development of Herzog & de Meuron. In fact, their architecture offers itself particularly well to questions about the current architecture of spectacle. More than their colleagues, they focus on the creation of a phenomenon which can be defined as "architectural images". For Debord the image is at the core of the late capitalist condition of spectacle since it embodies alienation, or detachment from reality. A red flag to critical theory, from Guy Debord to Walter Benjamin, from Daniel Boorstin to Karl Marx and all the way back to Plato, for whom the image was just a "shadow" of reality, the image has been criticized because it presumably simplifies, masks and manipulates truth.[7] To Debord, "the unity of the world" has "split up into reality on the one hand and image on the other".[8] In his view, "the spectacle is capital accumulated to the point where it becomes image."[9] If images are exactly what globalized capital wants, is the architecture of Herzog & de Meuron in the service of globalization? Or does it articulate and visualize this logic and thus offer an alternative to the society of spectacle?
I will not pretend to be neutral. Ever since I curated the exhibition *Herzog & de Meuron: Archaeology of the Mind* at the Canadian Centre of Architecture in Montreal, 2002, I am extremely enthusiastic about their work. However, I am not their spokesman. And I am interested in their work's internal contradictions. I *wish* that their architecture were against the logic of spectacle. However, I doubt that architecture can be against globalization at all. Furthermore, as an academic affiliated to an institution, I am myself in the position to profit from the international exchange of information, goods, and people in the realm of globalized economy. I even grew up with IKEA: the first box outside Scandinavia opened in our neighbor-village, Spreitenbach, Switzerland, near Zurich, in 1973. My copy of *The Society of Spectacle*, the beautiful 1995 edition designed by Bruce Mau, stands in a white "Billy" book-shelf, which was manufactured in Rumania in the early 1990s.

12.2. Far Left. Herzog & de Meuron's Ricola Storage Building Baselstrasse located in Laufen, Switzerland built in 1987.

12.3. Left. Herzog & de Meuron's Stone House located in Tavole, Italy built in 1985-88.

CRITICAL REALISM

Jacques Herzog and Pierre de Meuron studied architecture at ETH Zürich from 1971 to 1975. Since they probably took the train frequently from their native Basel to Zurich as students, they certainly saw the blue box of IKEA near the tracks. And they certainly witnessed the general trend to destroy older structures during the building boom in Europe in the 1970s. No doubt they sympathized with the buildings that disappeared, which had to give way to new structures such as IKEA, or, much more spectacular, the old cast-iron market-halls from the 19th century, the *Halles de Paris,* which had to give way to the new Centre Georges Pompidou in 1976. Deeply marked by Aldo Rossi, who was their teacher at ETH during his short stay in Zürich, they developed a skeptical attitude towards modernism as such. Postmodernism, to them, was not an alternative. On the contrary: when the term was introduced into architectural discourse by Charles Jenck's book *The Language of Post-Modern Architecture* (1977) they were just about to open their own office in Basel. Their aim was not historicity ---namely the idea that architecture is a constructive critique of earlier architecture--- but rather real history, real time. They focused not on the history of architecture, but rather on the history and typology of actual sites. Their method became one of unearthing, of discovering, of dealing with strata and sedimentation. In fact, their very first publication, still as students, is an archeological reading of a site for a project in Basel in 1974.[10] Their earliest projects, in the late 1970's and early 1980's, such as Stone House in Tavole, or their Storage Hall for Ricola Laufen, were all very site specific – a term not used for architecture, but for sculpture and installation art.

To deal with the specificity of a site – its history, shape, and atmosphere – remains a crucial aspect for their architecture. Each of their projects seems to be custom made, a singular solution for a specific "problem." This is not to be confounded with what Kenneth Frampton called "critical regionalism" in 1983, taking up a term coined by Alex Tzonis and Liliane Lefaivre in 1981.[11] In stressing terms such as the "context" and the "climate," in opposing "visual" versus "tactile" and "tectonic" versus "representational," Frampton aimed at counterbalancing the "relentless onslaught of global modernization."[12] But the examples he chooses – Jorn Utzon and Alvar Aalto – are far from what interested Herzog & de Meuron at that time. If I were to crudely simplify and polemically exaggerate the argument of Frampton, I would state that his idea of critical regionalism is closer to the lifestyle which was eventually popularized by IKEA in the 1980's and 1990's than to what Herzog & de Meuron were looking for. Rather, I would like to label their attitude "critical realism".

Of course, Jacques Herzog incessantly talks about the region in which they live, namely the city of Basel. Their office is still based there with branch offices in San Francisco, London, and Munich. On one hand, Basel is a conservative, charming, well-to-do, rather small town, where one meets people one knows in the streets every day and where much of public life is in the hands of a couple of influential families – the so-called "dough." On the other hand, Basel stands at the crossroads of the German and French cultural spheres, mediating between the North and the South. It houses international fairs and some of the world's leading chemical and pharmaceutical corporations. The river Rhine divides the city. On one side, there is the medieval cathedral, the core of the city, the university, the old houses of the "dough," and the residential areas. On the other side, in so-called Klein-Basel, here there are factories, the workers' houses, and the soccer stadium. The members of the "dough" do not show their riches by building huge mansions or buying fancy cars. Rather, they collect art, they encourage music, and they sponsor sports.

I am mentioning this socio-economic

12.4. Right. Joseph Paxton's Crystal Palace was constructed for the Great Exhibition of 1851 in London, England.

context because I believe that the architectural practice of Herzog & de Meuron is deeply, perhaps unconsciously, rooted in the peculiar dialectics between social spheres, between those who produce wealth and those who possess it. Not that they, as architects, would offer cheap social housing in order to "balance" the commissions by wealthy clients, such as the pharmaceutical industry, or art collectors throughout the world. Nor that they would write or talk about social issues, or engage politically. Like all of today's star architects, they feel at home in the sophisticated world of Prada, among the representatives of Big Business or with Chinese real estate tycoons. But I would like to follow the hypothesis that the dialectics between the social strata, the issue of human labor and the place of the individual in society are among the issues that inform their work precisely because these forces are invisible and intangible today.

These issues had a name from the mid 19th to the mid 20th century: Realism. Today, however, as the social strata seem to have blurred and physical labor has become immaterial and invisible, there is no name and no concept for this phenomenon. My hypothesis is that the architectural practice of Herzog & de Meuron deals with these issues; that they, without explicitly reflecting it, produce specific spaces and atmospheres for something, which eludes the current theoretical discourse.

SPACES OF SPECTACLE

Most critics have remarked that in Herzog & de Meuron's projects the façades seem to be completely detached from the interior. There is no such thing as a spatial continuity in the sense of modernist categories such as "transparency." This is the most fundamental difference, which separates their work from what we can consider the very archetype of spectacular architecture, namely Joseph Paxton's Crystal Palace, built for the Great Exhibition in London, 1851. In his ground breaking book *The Commodity Culture of Victorian England*, the American literary historian Thomas Richards states that the Great Exhibition of 1851 established a specifically capitalist system of representation that is commonly referred to as a "spectacle." [13] In the Crystal Palace all the different realms of real life were represented under one roof in a wealth of consumer goods. The products had no price tags nor were visitors allowed to touch them – they were aesthetically distanced. The sixteen million visitors who streamed past them could take all the more pleasure in estimating their value. They could relish their value in just the same way that they would soon be expected to delight in art for its own sake. Paxton's "palace" created a space that turned consumer objects into works of art, thereby marking the beginning of what Jean Baudrillard called a "phenomenology of consumption."[14] Bright daylight, muted by lengths of canvas, flooded into the interior and bathed the exhibits in an all-embracing atmosphere of sweet promise. The architecture became the setting for a material-spiritual equilibrium of consumers, viewers, and exhibits, from raw materials to consumer products in their most sophisticated form, the work of art. The conceit was that everything visitors could see was in principle available to everyone. As Richards says, the Crystal Palace was factory, museum, market, station, and theater in one. The iron framework and the glass façade of the Crystal Palace functioned together as a casket for the riches piled high inside it and reflected the variety of its surroundings.[15] This space was perfect and could not in any sense be improved upon. As people said at the time, it could only ever be repeated as an endless sequence of Crystal Palaces.[16]

And this prophecy was fulfilled. The spectacle proved to be long-lived indeed. Debord opens his book with the observation that "the whole life of those societies in which the modern conditions of production prevail presents itself as an

12.5. Left. The Blur Building was designed by Diller + Scofidio as a media pavilion for the Swiss Expo 2002. The structure stands over Lake Neuchatel in Yverdon-les-Bains, Switzerland.

immense accumulation of spectacle." The economic shift from production to distribution and information that took place during the twentieth century has not fundamentally changed the power of the spectacle, only its mechanisms. Most architecture still stands in the shadow of the Crystal Palace. Shopping malls all over the globe, politically representative architecture such as Norman Foster's addition to the Reichstagsgebäude in Berlin, libraries such as Dominique Perrault's Bibliothèque de France promise that, merely by establishing eye contact with what is available, ordinary people will have a share in consumption, politics, or knowledge. As much as ever, they operate as a game of concealing and revealing, illusion and dis-illusion, transparency and opacity. Architecture is thus still dominated by a fundamentally naturalistic approach; by its articulation of such elements as gravity, sunlight, and materials, it seeks to evoke that same natural world that it has ousted. From Paxton who let some trees of Hyde Park stand in his palace to Mies whose Farnsworth House frames "nature" like an image, from Le Corbusier's Pavillion de l'Esprit Nouveau whose roof is giving way to a tree, to Rem Koolhaas' artificial forest in his Kunsthal Rotterdam, this strange balance is visible. The style, the shapes, and the materials may have changed, but a basic economy of meaning, which one can define as "naturalistic" or "naturistic" is still prevailing.

The space of spectacle allows maximum continuity and flexibility. In the hands of Mies the headquarters of Bacardi Rum can become a museum. In the hands of Koolhaas and Bruce Mau the Rotterdam Kunsthal translates into a movie script and a chapter of *S, M, L, XL*. In the hands of Diller + Scofidio, water turns into a cloud, which turns into a landmark, which turns into white noise. On the other hand, the projects by Herzog & de Meuron resist such translations and multiplications. They come up with tangible alternatives. This may be a reason for their popularity, which is surprising to many. Their architecture does not function as a stage set for an aging praxis of representation but operates rather as though the buildings themselves were characters in an unfinished play. But none of their projects could ever be described, like the Crystal Palace, as palace, station, and museum in one. The titles of their buildings make this clear: Blue House, Wooden House, House for an Art Collector, House for a Veterinary Surgeon, House in Leymen, and so on.

BUILT IMAGES

Of course it would be naive to say that Herzog & de Meuron can resist the gravitational field of spectacle. I would argue that architecture can not completely escape Crystal Palace's capitalist logic of representation and produce an "anti-spectacular space." The boom of "atmospheric" projects such as Blur Building by Diller + Scofidio**,** Prada New York by Rem Koolhaas or Prada Tokyo by Herzog & de Meuron are symptomatic of the competition for the best "post-spectacular" space – and this is exactly what globalized clients are asking for. Nevertheless, I would make distinctions. I would interpret projects such as those by Koolhaas or Diller + Scofidio a "constructive critique" of spectacle, one that aims at improving its object of critique while retaining its basic set of values by updating a traditional system of representation which, since the times of the Great Exhibition, has lost some of its appeal. In fact, Prada New York and especially Blur Building are extremely photogenic, more so than any project by Herzog & de Meuron. Blur mediates so well that the project was awarded even before it was actually built. I thus see Koolhaas and Diller + Scofidio as legitimate offspring of Crystal Palace.

Herzog & de Meuron on the other hand aim – at least from my perspective – at an alternative to the dominant spatiality. Their agenda recalls Henri Lefebvre's critique of "abstract space" in his book *The Production of Space* (1974). The book is an attack against mechanistic ideologies. It is against modernism and postmodernism, structuralism and post structuralism, against Sartre and Foucault and Derrida. The sheer amount of negation in his book – and its internal contradictions – recalls Herzog & de Meuron's own strategy of

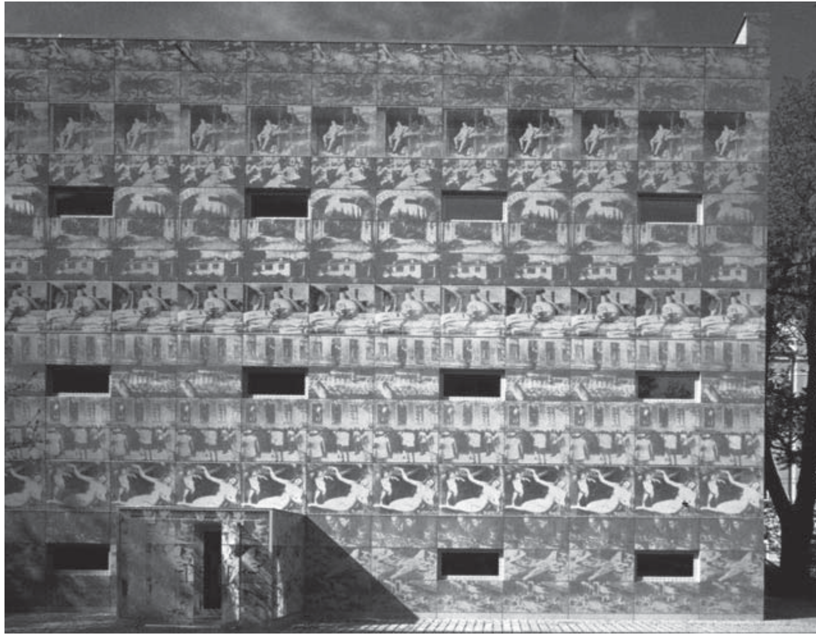
12.6. Right. Herzog & de Meuron's Eberswalde Technical School Library in Eberswalde, Germany, constructed between 1997 and 1999.

constant opposition. And Lefebvre's idea of a "unitary theory," where physical, mental, and social spaces merge, applies readily to the architectural practice of Herzog & de Meuron. Lefebvre's unitary theory deals with the crucial question of monumental space, which offers "each member of a society an image of that membership, an image of his or her social visage." For Lefebvre, modernist architecture has failed to produce monumental spaces such as cathedrals where visitors "become aware of their own footsteps," or a Greek theatre, where "space, music, choruses, masks... converge with language and actors." "How could the contradiction between building and monument be overcome?" he asks. To him, one of the reasons for the failure of contemporary architecture is the fact that most (modernist) facades disappear in the "abstracted" space where "everything can be viewed from every aspect."

The building which comes closest to what Lefebvre was writing about is the Eberswalde Library (1999). Eberswalde cannot be viewed from every aspect. But seen from certain angles it offers certain people an "image of their social visage." In Eberwalde, Herzog & de Meuron have overcome the contradiction between building and monument. At the interface between the individual building and the urban space they condense the abstract space into the mysterious substance, which knits together the physical, the mental, and the social space. Another word for substance is "image" – what Henri Bergson describes in his book *Matter and Memory* as something "half-way between thing and representation." For Herzog & de Meuron the world is not empty but already full of images.

The façade of Eberswalde Libary is thus not a screen onto which images are projected through the medium of abstract space, but rather a dam, which is soaked by the flood of images that the phenomena of the world, our observation, our memory, and our imagination are constantly producing. Unlike Aldo Rossi, for example, this dam, or sieve, is not a neutral contemporary frame for images from the past, but it is informed and transformed by and through the very materiality of the images. It transforms the images, as well. This might explain Herzog and DeMueron's popularity, since many people are immediately affected by their architecture. It also explains their preference for storage halls, museums, libraries, wineries or simple attics – spaces that are already soaked with imagery and thus absorb further images more easily.

In the built images of Eberswalde, where, as in all Eastern Germany, the air is thick with Western iconoclasm and repressed historical memory, the private and the public, the past and the future merge. The project imitates the East German tradition of prefabricated concrete buildings frequently decorated with images. It also refers to the complicated visual memory of East and West Germany. The architects had asked Thomas Ruff to select the motifs for the façade. He took them from his archive of newspaper images. The central image, the photograph of Bernauer Strasse, is related to the traumatic separation of Germany in Berlin. As the Wall was erected in 1961, some inhabitants fled to the west over the façade of their homes. For the collective memory of West Germans, this picture is an icon. But when Ruff submitted it to the local authorities, they, having grown up in the East, did not recognize it and wondered why he was interested in people escaping from a burning building. When they learned about the meaning of the image they asked that a more triumphant image be added, which depicts the reunification of Germany after the opening of the Wall in November 1989.



12.7. Left. Close up of the silk screened facade of the Eberswalde Technical School Library.

Until today, the division and reunification of Germany is a repressed collective memory. There is no public monument to represent this recent history. Eberswalde proposes a solution. In amalgamating the building with images it produces a new spatiality. It recalls Lefebvre's definition of monumental space as something that is not simple but highly complex. In his words: "Not text, but texture." It disrupts the historicity and the self-referentiality of modernist and postmodernist architecture and is open to historical space.

In my view, Eberswalde Library is the most important project by Herzog & de Meuron to date. It marks a decisive moment. On the ground of former Eastern Europe it stands in a context which is – per se – anti-spectacular. Whether it will be possible to transfer this logic to other ground without being subject to repetition – and thus falling back into the shadow of Crystal Palace – remains to be seen.

NOTES

[1] *Guy Debord, The Society of Spectacle,*

transl. by Donald Nicholson-Smith, New York, Zone Books, 1994, 120.
[2] *I am grateful to José Louis Mateo for his ideas about IKEA and globalization.*
[3] *Debord, 1994, 12.*
[4] *Debord, 1994, 16.*
[5] *John Wood, senior vice president of Mortenson, the collaborative partner of Herzog & de Meuron for he Walker Art Center Expansion, in: Walker Art Center, "Press release", no. 99, 29.6.2001.*
[6] *Allison Kaplan, "I want my IKEA", in: Pioneer Press, December 28, 2003.*
[7] *See my essay „"Built images: performing the city", in: Ilka & Andreas Ruby, Philip Ursprung, Images, A Picture Book of Architecture, Munich, Prestel, 2004, 4-11.*
[8] *Debord, 1994, 13.*
[9] *Debord, 1994, 24.*
[10] *Jürg A. Herzog, Pierre de Meuron, "Architektonische Elemente der Stadtentwicklung Basels", in: Basler Stadtbuch, Basel, Helbing & Lichtenhahn, 1974, 102-142.*
[11] *See Kenneth Frampton, „Towards a Critical Regionalism: Six Points for an Architecture of Resistance," in: The Anti-Aesthetic, ed. Hal Foster, Port Townsend, Washington, Bay Press, 1983, 16-30.*
[12] *Frampton, 1983, 30.*
[13] *Thomas Richards, The Commodity Culture of Victorian England: Advertising and Spectacle, 1851–1914, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1990, 58.*
[14] *Jean Baudrillard, The System of Objects, trans. James Benedict, London, Verso, 1996 and The Consumer Society: Myths and Structures, n.t., London, Sage, 1998.*
[15] *Richards, 30.*
[16] *"The land will be everywhere adorned with crystal palaces." Horace Greeley in The Economist (10 May 1851), 5; cited by Richards, 29.*

IMAGE CREDITS

12.1. Colin Oglesbay, University of Minnesota Graduate Student, 2005.
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on spectacle

christian and roman origins of spectacle

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Understood on its own terms, the spectacle proclaims the predominance of appearances and asserts that all human life, which is to say all social life, is mere appearance.

-Guy Debord[1]

He that has the strength, let him arise and withdraw into himself, foregoing all that is known by the eyes, turning away for ever from the material beauty that once made his joy.

-Plotinus, Ennead 1.6.8[2]

What's wrong with spectacle?

The unease in recent discourse is not a new phenomenon. The word itself is originally Latin: *spectacula* are things that are seen, particularly things that are seen in public. The implications for architecture should be fairly obvious, and, one might think, inoffensive enough. But already Vitruvius, in the earliest architectural treatise we have, takes offense at some of the possibilities of visual representation. And already for Plato, the seen in itself is problematic. As Illich has pointed out, "the polemical status of the image is a distinguishing characteristic of Western history;"[3] and to Plato's fundamental questioning of the whole realm of the visible we shall return. But what form does the polemic take in architecture? What's wrong with spectacle?

In its native Rome, the Latin term's primary sense is specialized, and implicates specific social, and architectural, settings. The Christian polemicist Tertullian, toward the end of the second century CE, enumerates four kinds of *spectacula*, all species of games, or *ludi*. *Ludi* proper take place in the circus. *Scænicas*, stage plays, are played in the theatre. Competitions, *agones*, are fought in the stadium; and *muneres*, the gladiatorial shows, in the amphitheatre. Tertullian wants his Christian audience to stay out of all these places, and to avert their eyes from public shows and performances of all kinds. Considering the role that Christians usually played – opposite the lions – in the amphitheatre, we may be prepared for Tertullian's negativity, but not necessarily for his reasoning. The cruelty of the amphitheatre is reprehensible, to be sure; idleness holds sway at the stadium, impurity at the theatre, and in the circus, "madness of its own right rules."[4]

But what most decisively puts all of these *spectacula* off limits for Christians is their idolatry. Fully a third of Tertullian's *De spectaculis* is devoted to demonstrating "that everything pertaining to the public shows [*spectaculorum*] is idolatry pure and simple ….[5]

Tertullian thoroughly and consistently shows what modernity has entirely forgotten and what second-century Romans were apparently already beginning to forget: what we categorize as "entertainment" historically belonged explicitly to the realm of the sacred. Over and over he traces the divine origins of the institu-

13.1. Right. Detail of 'In Casa Pseudourbana di Pompei Piano Inferiore, porzione della parete lunga d'una gran staza, by Anietto Lamberti, 1796.

tions, their rules and paraphernalia, and the sacrality of their settings, particularly the Circus Maximus. Over and over, we recall that the games we witness in the *Æneid*, the *Odyssey*, and the *Iliad* are invariably funeral games, sanctifying the transition from mortality to immortality of a hero. Tertullian expects his audience to agree that these origins, the attendant sacrifices, and their very names contaminate all games, and the other species of *spectacula* as well. [6]

If by the height of the Empire the sacred content of spectacle could become a matter of form only – thus the necessity of Tertullian's reminder – it was also true that all aspects of public life had a spectacular dimension, that spectacle took place not only in buildings called theatres but, originally and most importantly, in the streets and other public spaces of the city. "For you will live as it were in a theatre in which the spectators are the whole world," Mæcenas told Octavian, the future Augustus.[7]

The theatre was, from the beginning, the theatre of the world. Indeed, the *scenæ frons*, the permanent scenic backdrop of the Roman stage, conflating temple, palace, city gate and city street, could serve as any of these settings. So, apparently, could the temporary *skênographia*, the word the Greeks invented to describe the painting on the stage building. But the theatre, a Greek invention in the first place, originally took place in the agora, the centre of town. The competitive performances, under the tutelage of Dionysos ("Young God" in his most archaic and chthonic aspect, characterized by ambiguity and metamorphosis), were among the most important of civic rituals, and attendance was a religious duty.[8] Still in the early fourth century CE Lactantius, "the Christian Cicero," remembers this context clearly, discussing *spectatio* as the human witnessing of divine artifice: his word directly translates the Greek *theôria*, which gives both theatre and theory their names.[9] Spectation and theory are thus alike rooted in "sacral communion," as Gadamer puts it. *Theôria* is an obligatory witnessing, and "the theoros [the spectator at the theatre] is a spectator in the proper sense of the word, since he participates in the solemn act through his presence at it …."[10]

This is very far from our current distinction between participatory and spectator sports, let alone the "*mere* representation" that Debord identifies with spectacle.[11] But the deep embedment of spectacle in the sacred structure of the classical world makes the urgency of Tertullian's message very clear: it is not just a few tainted pleasures, but the world itself, that his audience of martyrs-in-training must reject. "What greater pleasure is there," he asks, "than disdain for pleasure, than contempt for the whole world …?"[12]

Among pagan attitudes to the world, particularly the Platonic traditions, likewise except humanity from everything else, but instead of outright rejection propose a participation to which visuality is key.

13.2. Ignatius martyrdom by lions in the Coliseum, 2nd cent. ad by Anticoh fom menologium of Basil 2nd.

Thus Cicero gives vision pride of place in his enumeration of "the gifts bestowed by the gods on men. First, she [*natura*] has raised them from the ground to stand tall and upright, so that they might be able to behold the sky and so gain a knowledge of the gods. For men are sprung from the earth not as its inhabitors and denizens, but to be as it were the spectators [*spectatores*] of things supernal and heavenly, in the contemplation [*spectaculum*] whereof no other species of animal participates."[13]

Vitruvius works Cicero's distinction regarding humanity directly into his account of the origin of architecture (and, not incidentally, of language and civilization), keeping the emphasis on vision: "Therefore, along with men's first coming together because of the discovery of fire, deliberation and a life in common were born. And many came together in one place, having from nature the gift beyond other animals of walking not prone but erect, looking on the world and the magnificence of the stars, and working easily with their hands and fingers whatever they wanted. They began in that first assembly to make shelters …."[14]

And with regard to the constituents of architecture, there is clearly something *seen* about the *species* of *dispositio*, the "kinds of arrangement (which in Greek are called *ideæ*):[15] the *icnographia*, *orthographia*, and *scenographia*, whether these are visualized mentally or drawn on paper as plan, elevation, and something else, something less straightforward.

And here the problems with what is seen come out on the architect's table. For Palladio's patron Daniele Barbaro, the possibility that Vitruvius considered the *scenographia* of the theatre fundamental to architecture was unthinkable: this must be a scribal error for *sciagraphia*, "shadow drawing," a way of referring to the section.[16] On Barbaro's side is Vitruvius's own diatribe against the theatrical wall paintings of his time, the *grotteschi* of the Renaissance, that are now categorized as the Third Style. The ambiguities and metamorphoses possible in theatrical representation are only deceptions to the practical Roman architect: "We now have fresco paintings of monstrosities, rather than truthful representations of definite things. For instance, reeds are put in the place of columns, fluted appendages with curly leaves and volutes, instead of pediments, candelabra supporting representations of shrines, and on top of their pediments numerous tender stalks and volutes growing up from the roots and having human figures senselessly seated upon them; sometimes stalks having only half-length human figures, some with human heads, others with the heads of animals. Such things do not exist and cannot exist and never have existed. …Yet when people see these frauds, they find no fault with them but on the contrary are delighted, and do not care whether any of them can exist or not. … The fact is that pictures which are unlike reality ought not to be approved …."[17]

Idea is, of course, an eminently Platonic word. Vitruvius's citations of Plato focus, understandably, on geometry; but it is worth noting his use, in the Preface to Book 9, of the same problem – the doubling of the square – that Plato uses to distinguish between the reality of "the square as such" and the lesser reality of "the image of it which they draw."[18] Plato is here setting up the problematic nature of the visible as versus the intelligible, which he will illustrate with the famous parable of the cave: "This image, then, dear Glaucon, we must apply as a whole to all that has been said, likening the region revealed through sight to the habitation of the prison …."[19]

To rely on the visible is to remain imprisoned. The image is not the reality. On this distinction Vitruvius's fundamentalist condemnation of grotesque painting sounds little different from Tertullian's of theatre: "The Author of truth loves no falsehood; all that is feigned is adultery in His sight. The man who counterfeits voice, sex or age, who makes a show of false love and hate, false sighs and tears, He will not approve, for He condemns all hypocrisy."[20]

But if “picture-thinking” (*eikasían*) is at the bottom of Plato’s hierarchy of “affections concerning the soul,” it may still participate, proportionately, in “truth and reality.”[21] The prisoner may be freed, even forcibly, however much pain this causes him, and his progress will resemble that of the original humans Vitruvius will inherit: “And at first he would most easily discern the shadows and, after that, the likenesses or reflections in water of men and other things, and later, the things themselves, and from these he would go on to contemplate the appearances in the heavens and heaven itself ....”[22]

If, as Karsten Harries has put it, “a good Platonist can admire sensuous beauty only with a slightly bad conscience.”[23] an architect, whose work is (with any luck) sensible, may be forgiven for wishing to stress the “slightly.” However the highest good is understood – one scarcely dare say visualized – fundamentalism, whether Platonist, Christian, or Marxist, seldom plays into the architect’s hand. What’s wrong with spectacle? Whether we pull ourselves apart or derive our energy from the tension, ambivalence toward *spectacula* – toward what is seen – already attends our discipline before we begin to draw.

NOTES

1. *The Society of the Spectacle, tr. D. Nicholson-Smith (New York, 1995), §10 (p. 14).*
2. *Quoted in Karsten Harries, The Meaning of Modern Art (Evanston, 1968), p. 5.*
3. *Ivan Illich, “Guarding the eye in the age of show,” RES 28 (Autumn 1995), 47-61, 47.*
4. *Tertullian, De spectaculis 16, tr. T. R. Glover (Cambridge, Mass., 1931/1953), p. 271: further quotations are from this translation.*
5. *De spectaculis 4 (p. 243), adapted.*
6. *De spectaculis 16 (p. 271).*
7. *Dio Cassius 52.34.2, in Richard C. Beacham, Spectacle Entertainments of Early Imperial Rome (New Haven, 1999), p. ix. On the “theatre of the world” tradition, particularly in the Renaissance but including the background in antiquity, see Richard Bernheimer, “Theatrum Mundi,” Art Bulletin 38 (1956), 225-247; Frances A. Yates, Theatre of the World (London, 1969).*
8. *From the vast literature, one might start with Margarete Bieber, The History of the Greek and Roman Theater (2e Princeton, 1961); R. E. Wycherley, How the Greeks Built Cities (2e New York, 1962); and Ruth Padel, “Making Space Speak,” in John J. Winkler and Froma Zeitlin, eds., Nothing to Do with Dionysos? (Princeton, 1990).*
9. *Lactantius: Lewis and Short, A Latin Dictionary, s.v. spectatio.*
10. *Hans-Georg Gadamer, Truth and Method (2e New York, 1989), p. 124.*
11. *Debord, The Society of the Spectacle, §1 (p. 12).*
12. *De spectaculis 29 (p. 295).*
13. *Cicero, De natura deorum 2.56.140, tr. H. Rackham (Cambridge, Mass., 1933), pp. 257, 259.*
14. *Vitruvius 2.1.2. My version makes use of the translations of Morgan and Granger. Vitruvius’s verb is aspicio, which Varro derives as a compound from spectare (De lingua Latina 6.82). Vitruvius declares his reliance on Cicero, Varro, and Lucretius in the Preface to Book 9. On his use of Cicero, see I. K. McEwen, Vitruvius: Writing the Body of Architecture (Cambridge, Mass., 2003), pp. 142 ff et passim.*
15. *Vitruvius 1.2.2, tr. F. Granger (London, 1931), p. 25.*
16. *See Alberto Pérez-Gómez and Louise Pelletier, Architectural Representation and the Perspective Hinge (Cambridge, Mass., 1997), pp. 45 ff.*
17. *Vitruvius 7.5.3-4, tr. M. H. Morgan (Cambridge, Mass., 1914/New York, 1960), pp. 211-212.*
18. *Plato, Republic 6, 510D-E, tr. P. Shorey (Cambridge, Mass., 1935), p. 113.*
19. *Republic 6, 511E (p. 117).*
20. *De spectaculis 23 (p. 287).*
21. *Republic 6, loc. cit.*
22. *Republic 6, 516A (p. 124).*
23. *Harries, The Meaning of Modern Art, p. 5.*

IMAGE CREDITS

13.1. Image from ‘Gli Ornati delle Parti ed i Pavimenti dell Stanze dell’ Antica Pompei’, Napoli, Dalla Stamperia Regale, MDCCXCVI.
13.2. www.bible-history.com.

sustaining spectacle?

landscape as nature /infrastructure/ art

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In May 1664 Louis XIV, the King of France, staged the fete 'Pleasures of the Enchanted Isle' in the garden of Versailles over the course of six days (Fig 14.1). In 1668, the 'Grand Divertissement Royale,' even more spectacular, included performances of 'Les Fêtes de l'Amour' and 'Bacchus' by Molière and Lully.[i] In 1674 the sensual divertissement were presented, again in six days, from July into August. Spectacle ruled in a visual feast of overwhelming proportion, and sometimes, intricate detail. As Kathryn Hoffman has chronicled, the giant garden was transformed into theaters of unreal proportions, fantastic ritual and extreme consumption.[ii] In the Grotto of Thetis, illuminated stages recast the order of natural light, and amidst the bosquets, human sounds drowned the music of wind. At nightfall masked revelers made a carnaval in the geometry of the garden All the while, behind the stage sets and in the cover of the trees, scores of scenographic workers pulled at ropes, ran and jumped among scaffolds while the fontainier choreographed the waterworks to the play of lights and music.

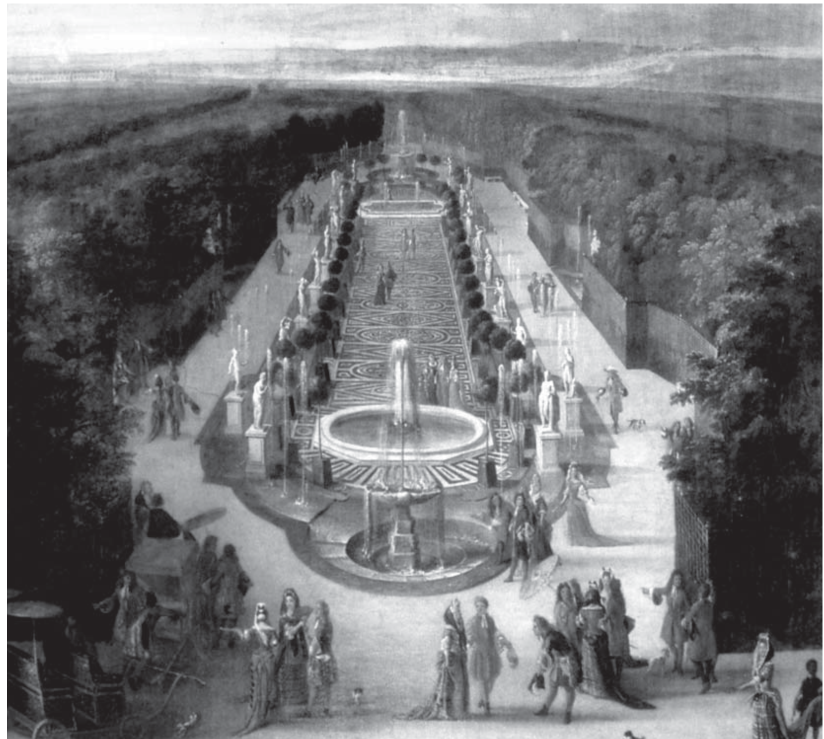
In the film Vatel, Gerard Depardieu plays the chief scenographer and superintendent of these spectacles, first at Vaux-le-Vicomte (where the film was shot) and later at Chantilly. Francois Vatel is a wizard who creates tableaus that combine animals, actors, musicians, water, fire and food in a surfeit of the senses. Desperate in the agony at the loss of life sustained by the ever-enlarging demands that his surreal productions place on the available, primitive technologies, he kills himself.

Written by Tom Stoppard, Vatel exposes the corruption of the senses inherent in the experience of spectacle. It is an oft-referenced truism that landscape portrays power. As Vatel realizes that subjugation, not delight, has become the purpose of his works, he questions the authenticity of his role in the spectacle. In a leap into the late twentieth century, as if he could see his acts in historical context through Stoppard's eyes, he realizes that he has perverted his own world and that of those around him through his artful importations.[iii]

Even without these special fetes, the gardens of Versailles, Vaux and Chantilly were, in themselves, spectacular (Fig 14.2). In western culture, the historical record of landscape – both as the setting of spectacle and as spectacle itself – begins to suggest the measures of its sustainability. The sustainability of landscape can be measured by degree of importation. Art, ecological function (as the measure of nature), and infrastructure are aligned hierarchically in a web. How they balance in a system defines our sense of place and what values we hold structure our measurement. Time, especially in its seasonal cycles and, of course, in its longitudinal dimension, measures durability. Every landscape can thus be seen as a composite of relative sustainability.

Until the present time, the scale and media

14.1. Versailles, in the gigantic garden designed by Andre LeNotre, courtiers in the allee between the bosquet of the Trois Fontaines and the bosquet of the Arc de Triomph, on the principal north-south cross axis of the Neptune Basin, in a painting by Jean Baptiste Martin, c. 1688-1700.



of landscape as the artistic setting of nature and infrastructure have also provided a particular alchemistic mix of media by which spectacle can be induced. Landscape has been both a simulacrum of 'the world' and a place of particularities, where darkness and light create a nuanced setting for the play of the mind on juxtaposition and reconciliation. Its potencies as a medium are complex. In the past, before virtual media reset the limits, landscape provided the phenomenal milieu that suggested the boundaries of experience. Intimately connected to pleasure and the hyper-real, spectacle appropriated the media of nature, of landscape, to invoke the presence, but pleasurable safe distance, of death, the ultimate perimeter.

By the mid-18th century in England, Edmund Burke had codified this awe-full (as opposed to awesome) sensation as a new definition of the sublime. In landscape design, the excesses of baroque absolutism yielded way to a natural and Whiggish sublimity. The pursuit of aesthetic novelty and otherness was available now to a new elite who could afford the services of landscape designers or could travel. It took on subtle forms of the spectacular in the smoothed landscape of England. This new spectacle of national identity was played out at Stowe, owned by the Whig Viscount Cobham and his heirs, and celebrated by its frequent visitor, Alexander Pope. The landscape of Stowe was designed, planted, watered and built as homage to the worthiness of England, and was built on the wealth of British Empire. Tourists plied the seas in search of new experiences in their world to measure against the familiar spectacles of home, and of nature as they knew it. Some returned to see the riches of the world at Stowe, in the fabled countryside. But, as the 18th century closed, the measure of English spectacle became its capital, London and the midlands "shock cities" of the industrial revolution.[iv]

The democratization of spectacle in the West had begun, and its manifestations were urban. In an urban logistical frame, novelty could be manufactured and distributed on a mass scale. As technology surged in the market and workplace, time and space melted for the wealthy as they shackled the poor. Meanwhile, the middle class navigated an increasingly mobile space between. For them, a succession of eye-popping world's fairs in Europe and the United States showcased hypermodernity. These nineteenth century fairs represented the foundation of a popular culture of bourgeois entertainment in which technology had reframed human relationships with nature. The raw powers of nature were seen as sublime foils, subservient to human ends. In the ultimate importations of spectacle, these great 19th century technology expositions were, almost without exception, set in parks. In Leo Marx's phrase, the spectacle of the "machine in the garden" juxtaposed the wonders of technology against nature. In the wake of Mary Shelley's and Dr. Frankenstein's monster, this was nothing if not entertaining.

14.2. Far Left. Versailles, aerial view of the extension of the east-west axis beyond the Apollo Fountain, into the park.

14.3. Left. Crystal Palace, Regents Park, London, palms have arrived from the subtropical zone next to an oak tree from the park, glass structure designed by Joseph Paxton.

14.4. Right. Bois de Boulogne, Paris, designed from a 17th century hunting park in 1857 by the engineer, J. C. A. Alphand, the park's lakes are completely artificial.

14.5. Far Right. Transportation Building, World's Columbian Exposition, Chicago, designed by Louis Sullivan, with its Golden Door opened to the public, to see the model of the Bethlehem Hammer that had forged the axle of the Ferris wheel, 1893.

Beginning prominently with the Crystal Palace Exhibition in London, Joseph Paxton set the bar high. As gardener and waterworks designer to the Duke of Devonshire at Chatsworth in the 1830s, Paxton had created exotic and marvelous technological enhancements on nature. Chief among these were the Emperor Fountain, a gigantic jet with associated manufactured waterfalls, and the Great Stove, a huge glass house with a clear space made possible by the ridge and furrow glazing system that he had observed in the structure of the Victoria Regia Lily. This giant-leaved tropical American water lily was so strong a woman could stand on it. Paxton had also coaxed it to bloom making him a favorite of the Queen, who knighted him. A techno-cultural icon, today he would be a kind of composite of Norman Foster, Geoffrey Jellicoe and Elton John. For the 1851 exhibition Paxton created a colossal glass pavilion high and wide enough to enclose huge oaks in Regent's Park. Visitors were awed at the global power of the British Empire under glass. The successes of this exhibition in validating the new 'democratic' socially organizing powers of public landscape spectacle were not lost on the English (Fig. 14.3).

City parks became the everyday spectacle of the nineteenth century. The early and mid-nineteenth century European city parks were either made from royal hunting parks or were more explicitly designed as abstracted grounds of the hunt. Spaces of prospect and refuge simulated the planted order of real hunting grounds, park shelters, sometimes with sanitary facilities or cafes, replaced hunting stands; and forested cover (covert) took on a scenic, natural look designed to operate on the mind with multiple sources of recreative affect that were abstractions of hunting.. Paxton, who had also designed the first truly public park at Birkenhead in 1844, continued this practice. Combined with tastemaker John Claudius Loudon's popular publicizing of gardening technique and design to the middle class, the field of landscape gardening expanded to firmly embrace the challenges of the making of new public spaces. Loudon, too, was an exponent of glass house construction, which he saw as being part of both the middle class suburban home and the park. Here, under glass, exotic plants in the dampness of England surreptitiously celebrated color, sex and warmth, while, at they same time, they could be safely viewed as science, learning, and a symbol of the potency of the empire.

In imperial Paris, as Baron Haussmann rebuilt the city, J. C. A Alphand made its park system a modern green civic necklace of bourgeois delights. By 1858 Alphand redesigned the royal hunting ground of the Bois de Boulogne as a new kind of large 'parc anglais.' The new Bois was the prototype of both the modern public park and the emerging world's fair grounds. Its new program was filled with activities, including boating on a new lake, a racetrack at Longchamps, and exotic gardens in the Bagatelle. The social charms of boulevard cafes were here set in an abstracted hunting ground where prospect and refuge framed the lives of modern men and women, would-be flaneurs. (Fig. 14.4) It was a profound exercise in the full power of landscape architecture. Landscape media – plants, earth, water, and structure – were composed to blur their original functions and play on the wonder that was effected by their new composition. Nature became infrastructure; infrastructure became art, and artful infrastructure became nature, and so on in various permutations.

The new composite program of the democratized royal parks of London and Paris (at mid-century, already the toast of Europe), became the model for American public space design. Frederick Law Olmsted, who, with architect Calvert Vaux, won the competition to design New York's Central Park in 1858, met Alphand in the new park everyday for more than a week in 1859. In his tour of Paris he saw in the emergence of a bourgeois landscape of the parks, and boulevards that linked them, a model stage set for human engagement with nature, a calming armature in the stress of the modern city. With the publication of William Robinson's *Parks, Promenades, and Gardens of Paris* (1868), Parisian parks became even more influential on design here. So much so that H. W.

S. Cleveland, who read Robinson's book, but probably never actually saw the parks, wrote effusively about the mini-great park of Buttes Chaumont in his defining book on the design of the American landscape, *Landscape Architecture As Applied to the Wants of the West* in 1873. Ten years later he would design the dispersed and connected Minneapolis Park System around the Mississippi River and the lakes so that citizens would have contact with the beauty of nature everyday.

The Paris parks made a setting for a technological tour de force that in 1889 took the enduring form of Gustave Eiffel's great tower for the Exposition Universelle set in the Champs de Mars. The Exposition was a celebration of the centennial of the Revolution, the first anniversary of which had been celebrated by 300,000 people on that very site. But it was also a statement of the national and international cultural hegemony of France, a statement of its modernity. The tower was the first spectacular structure to allow people to get a bird's eye view of a city; it enabled them to get an overall impression of the organization of the city with its connective tissue of boulevards. Much criticized in its time for its ugliness, the Eiffel Tower became the sublime capstone on the spectacle of Haussmannization. It also may have wowed visitors by seeming to defy gravity, a sensation that would to become one of the tropes of modernist form.

Four years later, in Chicago, a Beaux Arts `White City' rose in Jackson Park at the edge of the expanse of Lake Michigan. The World's Columbian Exposition celebrated the four-hundredth anniversary of Columbus's landing in the new world. The principal buildings of the fair's model civic center on the Court of Honor were constructed around a basin that held the lake. Olmsted selected the site and his firm designed the grounds, although the architects under Richard Morris Hunt and Daniel Burnham provided most of the spectacle. The buildings were shells in which one could see the collected high (and low) technology of the world at the brink of the 20th century. The white buildings of the civic center site conveyed a monumental urbanity, mostly adapted from Paris, in the context of a fully-conceived symbolic city of American empire, probably the last intentionally sublime landscape until our own time.

The landscape of the Columbian Exposition was both artistic backdrop and infrastructure across scales. The exposition was served by a multimodal transit system, including an elevated rail, which wound in a loop through the little city and gave it a system of access that spoke of modernity and function. Great recessed panels of lawn planted between the buildings and the basin of the Court of Honor recalled a staid moment at Versailles as they also created emergency storage for storm water on the exposed site. A vast lagoon of the lake separated the civic center from other zones of the city. A park at the heart of the city, the lagoon landscape, made a flood zone on the great lake terrace. Planted with native shrubs, it was less a precisely ecological statement as an economic one. There was also a subtle visual poetry, a quiet spectacle here, composed of the imported and the home-grown. The Temple of the Hoo-den peeked improbably through the shrubs on the lagoon edge, while, across the water, Louis Sullivan's Transportation Building looked like a great steamboat run aground. (Fig. 14.5)

But all of this subtlety, as well as even the monumental buildings, paled for visitors who came to the Midway simply to ride the mammoth Ferris wheel. The Ferris wheel was the breakout 20th century spectacle, the popular heir to the Eiffel Tower and the kinetic mother of all thrill rides. To be so high in the sky, defying gravity, then to descend, safely held by the technology of the wheel: this was the transcendent spectacle of the fair (Fig 14.6). These nineteenth century fairs represented the foundation of a popular culture of bourgeois entertainment in which technology reframed human relationships with nature; increasingly, the raw powers of nature were seen as sublime foils, subservient to human ends. Technological advances raised expectations of increasing rewards with the mastery of nature's vicissitudes. But this technological veil concealed the true costs of the spectacle

14.6. Left. Ferris Wheel, World's Columbian Exposition, Chicago, 1893, invented for the fair by George Washington Gale Ferris for the event, and a precursor to the 450-foot tall Millennium Wheel, London, Marks Barfield, architects

14.7. Right. Parc de la Villette, Paris, designed and built 1982-86 by the architect, Bernard Tschumi, a park-like view from the Observatory folie.

14.8. Far Right. Swiss National Expo, Yverdon-les-Bains, designed by West-8, opened 2002, to an eager audience for tableaux of Euro desire.

Today we have evolved a culture of everyday spectacle in the media in our lives. Although the idea of world's fairs continued into our time as expos, increasingly technology has sequestered entertainment in controlled environments. Although movies, television and other electronic media and personal computing in light- and climate-controlled settings are supported by large-scale infrastructure networks and remote power production, we watch in veiled settings, and increasingly, as Virginia Heffernan has noted in a recent TV review in the New York Times, privately, without being seen. It is the new spatial ensemble of prospect and refuge. If a windstorm has not brought down an old tree onto the powergrid, if you are reading this journal, you can probably also import mediated spectacle at will, multi-tasking, safe in your illusion of disconnection from nature.

Sensory leveling, increased abstraction, and the culture of privacy have reshaped the spectacular in other media. One recent outcome of this is built spectacle, dubbed the 'Bilbao Effect', after the previously untouristed town in Spain brought to celebrity by a Frank Gehry-designed museum. Perhaps the first contemporary precedent for this strategy was actually the Centre Pompidou art museum in the Beaubourg in Paris. Named after the President of France who suggested it in 1969, it was designed as a new kind of art museum that would cross the usual boundaries of art elitism. The Pompidou has been a spectacular success on most measures of cultural institutions: so successful that it has recently been reopened after a multi-year renovation. It is a tour-de-force building known for its exoskeleton of mechanical systems. Like several significant projects of the late 70's and early 80's, the avant-gardist framing of the project has precluded total embrace of the project, especially among those who regard it as destructive to its locale. Even today some visitors remain horrified by the effect of this machine in the city of light.[v] Its cultural position has been slightly revised as Richard Rogers – who, with Renzo Piano, was one of its principal architects – has recently converted to sustainable design thinking. He has said that this building demonstrates that "technology cannot be an end in itself but must aim at solving long term social and ecological problems."[vi] This point might not have been understood by Valery Giscard d'Estaing, who succeeded Georges Pompidou and who opposed the completion of the Beaubourg museum, in large part because of the related plan to take down old markets of Les Halles.

Giscard, nevertheless, had his own ideas for grand projects, many of which would be completed on the watch of his successor, socialist Francois Mitterrand. In the mid-1980's the focus of the grand project was job creation.[vii] One of the projects inherited from Giscard, la Villette, lay in a working neighborhood of the city on the site of an old slaughterhouse complex. In his competition-winning design, Bernard Tschumi declared that this park of the 21st century would be set out as a discontinuous building, a space of culture, not nature. He adopted Le Corbusier's method of autonomous building design to give the park a character appropriate to the open text of our time. Tschumi deconstructed the landscape into independent layers to be represented as points (buildings), lines (circulation) and surfaces (vegetation and water). In the landscape, when all the layers are put together, the structures, trees, paths, grass panels and water have (autonomously) composed themselves into a space that is actually quite recognizable, not so much as any kind of building at all, but a park (Fig. 14.7).

In many ways, la Villette has shown one direction for landscape architects who have found themselves in charge of reclaiming industrial landscapes. From Parc

Citroen to Lisbon's Expo to Duisburg Nord, a stunning array of these projects have inspired a new attitude toward contaminated industrial sites or brownfields. They have become contemporary essays in the sublime. But la Villette has also laid down another kind of landscape gauntlet in terms more familiar to architects than to landscape architects. With his design Tschumi asked, 'Can the next grand landscape project capitalize on, or – better – outdo, the last?' Like Vatel, even landscape architects have become caught in this Faustian bargain, and the sustainability of spectacle is in the balance. No longer just the planted background infrastructure, some few landscapes have become foreground by enfolding architecture, media and other technologies, challenging both the concept of building as the avant-garde, 'image' part of the design and the idea of landscape as background.

Two projects represent opposite extremes of this Faustian proposition, and their differing balances of nature, infrastructure and art.

The design of the Swiss National Expo in 2002 by West-8 of Amsterdam, whose chief designer is Adriaan Geuze, most typifies the landscape-as-foreground approach. The decorative attitude of the Swiss Expo, where color was splashed across surfaces to make the site a sensual evocation of sexual 'desire', had the lurid effect of a horticultural Walletjes. The Swiss had no need to create incentive for redevelopment of the lakeshore of Yverdon-les-Bainsan; this expo was instead a Euro coming-out party. Almost all of the design was imported; few Swiss architectural stars, such as Herzog & de Meuron and Peter Zumthor, were invited. In a flip on their roles, architects Diller + Scofidfio of New York made a landscape effect to obscure their building. They created a piped infrastructure to pump a sustained cloud of water vapor around their Blur pavilion on the lake. In the foreground of this spectacular view, the funky colors of the landscape dominated the central space of the expo site. More 'scape' than 'land', these settings were designed to be pictured and seen as much as they were to be used. With these photogenic scrims, surfaces and objects, now captured in QuickTime at http://www.expo02.ch/ , we have come back to the consumptive culture of Versailles and Vaux, updated to allow our (mediated) pleasures to be captured virtually and shared across time and across the net (Fig. 14.8).

At the same time in Berlin, a series of buildings and spaces at the edge of the Tiergarten, from the Reichstag to Potsdamer Platz, have redefined the grand project in cultural and ecological terms. After the fall of the Wall, Potsdamer Platz became one of Europe's hottest grand projects. At western edge of this zone of international corporate, shopping and entertainment centers, is the corporate headquarters of Daimler Chrysler, designed by Renzo Piano. Its pale perforated façade, and a huge cor-ten Marc DiSuevero stabile are reflected in a quiet pool. This pool was designed by the sculptor, engineer, and landscape architect, Herbert Dreiseitl. The pool defines edges in a mixed use development. Its aesthetic intentions are subtle: one crosses it on a bridge to get to the new casino, as if the bridge were to mark an existential choice. The water ripples over a rough surface, catching the light and attracting pigeons as it sheets downward. Another footbridge leads to the front door of the Daimler Chrysler building, and one sees oneself reflected in context, on the journey to or from work. But the intrinsic beauty of the work, its sublime quality, if you will, is less visible than ecological. This water has fallen on the buildings and spaces of the project as run off and now office workers and gamblers, going about their activities, see it stored before it's returned to the earth. Whether they know it or not, the water is treated as a resource, not a waste product, in a landscape of infrastructure fused subliminally by art to nature (Fig. 14.9,10).

WHAT NOW?

Writing in the September 2004 New Yorker, Paul Goldberger reviewed developer Coco Brown's new architectural star subdivision in the Hamptons. Brown is

14.9. Far Left. Potsdamer Platz, Berlin, 'Galileo,' a sculpture by Mark di Suvero reflected in a stormwater sedimentation pond designed by Atelier Dreiseitl, 2000.

14.10. Left. Potsdamer Platz, Berlin, entrance across storm water pond to Daimler Benz Headquarters, designed by Renzo Piano, 2000.

running the project as a self-proclaimed "Robert Altman movie," meaning he sees himself directing a batch of architectural stars who have decided to participate in an ensemble with the hope of outshining their colleagues. Dueling for attention will be a bevy of celebrities, young and old. The cumulative effect of this cacophony has dawned on Goldberger already, even though only one house is complete. Devoid of open space planning and design, even as 'background,' he writes, "there is nothing about it that advances new ideas for community development, or any idea about community at all…it is a series of private-house lots of one to two acres… the most reactionary type of planning there is, wasteful of land and discouraging to a sense of the public realm….in some ways, the spectacular architecture undercuts a sense of community. Even the best houses are likely to clash with each other, and all of them cry out to be hidden by landscaping."[viii] In Goldberger's view landscape must be used to hide the spectacle, to use a covering of 'nature' so as not to wear out our retinas.

Goldberger's comment about the hiding function of "landscaping" suggests another problem of our priorities, so easily buffeted by spectacle. If we can afford it, we can live self-absorbed lives, largely hidden from one another behind our 'screening' and paradoxically, disconnected from the real circulations of nature. This is illusion. When we emerge from hiding, as one of my colleagues has said, we find ourselves in 'a landscape of peak demand.'[ix] Our landscape, particularly in the United States, is beginning to suggest that our private and public needs are mostly expressed in the language of immediacy. In losing connection with nature, while traveling at high speed, we have also lost connection to the measures of our limits. Meanwhile we are also "amusing ourselves to death" as Neil Postman has characterized our media culture.[x] Whether overdosed on spectacle or just overwhelmed by inequity, ignorance, or impotence, our landscapes show us to be where, and perhaps, who, we are.

Can the landscape change, or must everything change? What role would design have in change? Wherever humans live in urban or suburban settings, nature is mediated, by infrastructure and art. What will be the character our design media if we attempt to reconnect to each other and to nature? Some of us, like Vatel, agonize over the integrity of our work, sometimes powerless to reveal our position; and even when we understand it, our clients may not. But the moment is upon us. We need to try to use every project, not as a diversion, but to increase our attention span, to look beyond ourselves, to understand, and to make things connect, not (just) consume. Often background, rarely foreground, the diverse spatial media of a new landscape may, and probably must, reshape our lives in a quiet, sustaining process that redefines the dimensions of spectacle.

NOTES

[i.] *http://www.mairie-versailles.fr/textimg.php?id=209&pg=411&lg=eng*
[ii.] *Hoffman, Society of Pleasures: Interdisciplinary Readings in Pleasure and Power in the Reign of Louis XIV, New York: St. Martins Press, 1997, 32.*
[iii.] *For example, the late John Lyle, founder of the Center for Regenerative Studies, argues for the appropriateness of the ecology of Vaux-le-Vicomte to its residents and cultural adherents, suggesting that they would have few questions about the kinds of destructive effects of the garden and activities that led to its making and then animated it. In "Can Floating Seeds Make Deep Forms?" Landscape Journal, 'The Avant Garde and the Landscape,' spring 1991, vol. 10, no. 1, 37-47*
[iv.] *Thomas Bender, Toward and Urban Vision: Ideas and Institutions in Nineteenth-Century America, Lexington: University of Kentuck, 1975 probably coined the phrase shock city in relation to the milltown of Lowell, Massachusetts, almost entirely a product of convergence of the invention of the power loom, the harnessing of water power to drive multiple mills, and capitalistic appropriation of labor.*
[v.] *http://www.pps.org/gps/one?public_place_id=358*
[vi.] *Richard Rogers, from Bill Lacy, 100 Contemporary Architects: Drawings and Sketches. p190. http://www.greatbuildings.com/buildings/Centre_Pompidou.htm*
[vii.] *Mitterrand's fourteen-year rule prevailed over an often divided parliament to redefine Paris as a world cultural center. Projects included the Pyramid and the Carrousel de Louvre, the Arch at LaDefense, the Bibliotheque Nationale, the Opera, and the Parc de la Villette.*
[viii.] *Paul Goldberger, "Homes of the Stars ," New Yorker, September 13, 2004, 98.*
[ix.] *James Pettinari, Professor of Architecture, University of Oregon, in conversation, c. 2000.*
[x.] *Neil Postman, Amusing Ourselves to Death: Public Discourse in the Age of Show Business, New York, Viking, 1985.*

IMAGE CREDITS

14.1. Penelope Hobhouse, courtesy CALA VRC 199600157, 2004.
14.2. Jean-Marie Ferouse de Montclos, courtesy CALA VRC 199200391, 2004.
14.3. Courtesy CALA VRC 200300190, 2004.
14.4-6. Lance Neckar, 2004.
14.7. http://www.west8.nl/archive/projects/expo02.html , 2004.
14.8-9. Lance Neckar, 2004.

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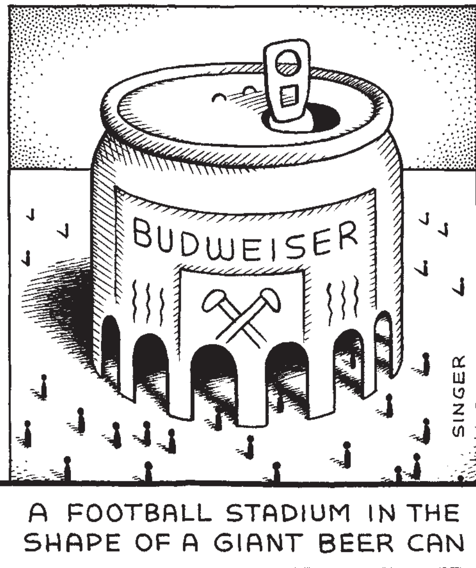

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Spectacular, Spectacular
No words in the vernacular
Can describe this great event
You'll be dumb with wonderment
(Returns are fixed at ten percent)
You must agree, that's excellent

- "Spectacular, Spectacular," ***Moulin Rouge*****, 2001**