



The museum: container or art?

examining whether the contemporary museum is a public institution, a marker of cultural identity, or simply a repository for art

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Alisa Pigram

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Alisa Pigram was awarded the Byera Hadley Travelling Scholarship in 2002.

Cover image: Anish Kapoor's sculpture *The Tall Tree and Eye*, outside Frank Gehry's Guggenheim Bilbao. Photo by Peter Salhani

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A look at the tension between art and architecture in three iconic museums: the Beyeler Foundation, Basel, Kunsthaus Bregenz, Austria, and the Guggenheim, Bilbao.

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The aim of this research was to explore the evolution of the museum as a public institution, and the tensions between art and architecture through the prism of three museums at extremes of the architectural spectrum.

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1

Introduction

The second half of the twentieth century saw a museum boom that produced a steady stream of new buildings in many cities around the world. Many museums designed by high-profile architects opened in a single year in Los Angeles, Stockholm, Bregenz, Basel and Bilbao.

“These museum buildings and designs reveal current perceptions of how art is presented in public in their architectural design, their functional planning and their relationship with cities in which they are sited. As well as this, these new museums express the artistic and creative powers of the architects who design them.” [1] The architects convey “the tension between art and architecture.”[2]

Architects are challenged to create, and design a successful building, that will itself be a work of art, yet will not upstage the art it is designed to house. The design of museums through experience, is not only an external experience, but is also the architect’s ability to harmonize, to allow the visitors a spatial experience as well as a discrete interpretation of the exhibition material.

“Since there is no ideal museum, the program defined by the collection and by the content of the administrative concept dictates the kind of compromises which must be entered between architectural, technical, material, and organizational problems. On the other hand, it can abstain from these intentions and attempt to emphasize the autonomy of its architecture.”[3]

Imperative to this study was travel to museums displaying these qualities to approach the task objectively by self-experience. While undertaking the Byera Hadley

Travelling Scholarship, I had the benefit of studying three examples of worldly museums. These examples that were investigated, were specifically chosen as they can be seen as the extremes of a broad band of architectural views.

The Guggenheim, Bilbao by Frank Gehry stands as a well publicized example of a museum which apart from being merely an exhibition site, also has become a centre for cultural promotion, with added commercial and tourist attraction. On the other end of the scale both architecturally and conceptually is Peter Zumthor’s Kunsthhaus, an “extreme manifestation of the ‘white cube’ concept.” With another example Renzo Piano’s Beyeler Foundation Museum Switzerland, a precedent “for everything that was kept out of the ‘white cube time vacuum.’”[4]

Through the further study of these museums, and others, the comparison between these cacophonies’ of architecture, the theatrical measures used in exhibition didactics can be investigated, with special observation of the building capabilities to harmonize to allow the visitors a spatial experience as well as a discrete interpretation of the exhibition material, and how this has been achieved.

[1]-[4] Art Museums in the 21st Century

Museum Studies- Foundation Beyeler, Basel Switzerland, designed by Renzo Piano

Nestled behind a busy street, as you move behind the wall, the building reveals itself.

" providing a precedent "for everything that was kept out of the 'white cube' time vacuum ..."⁵



View of Foundation Beyeler museum entry

Photo: July 2003⁶

Renzo Piano, gives an insight into his museum and the collaboration he under went with the Beyeler couple to design a museum for the art collection that had already been created. It is amazing to see the thought process that has gone into many of the refined details of the museum, which to the viewing public, go un-noticed, and create beautiful rooms in which to view the artworks.

The architect has opted for strict simplicity large lengths of white walls with openings allowing the visitor to look from one hall to the next. And light-coloured French oak floors

with a few rest benches in the same wood, placed around the gallery halls.

A third of the first floor is reserved for itinerant exhibitions to take place alongside the permanent collection, housed in the remainder of the gallery rooms. The lower ground gallery rooms, often also house temporary modern art exhibitions.

"Neither discourse nor decorative or technical detail disrupt the clear serenity of the exhibition rooms.... Pictures converse without intermediary, in a sort of natural intimacy where numerous possible relationships are formed: between the works themselves, between the paintings and the landscapes framed by the bay windows, between the artists and the visitor."⁷

The Context

The museum takes up a charming site in the Berower Park, its administrative offices and restaurant housed in the 18th century Berower Villa.

"Set in a bucolic setting, this oblong building adopts the simple elegance of a garden greenhouse."⁸

⁵ Art Museums in the 21st Century

⁶ Authors Own, July 2003

⁷ New Museums, pg135

⁸ New Museums, pg130

The Circulation

All the main exhibition halls are arranged perpendicularly to the bays, with openings allowing the visitor to look from one hall to the next. A basic loop plan, allowing an orderly progression through the museum rooms.

The Material

There are two main materialistically striking features:

- The red Patagonian porphyry stone, cladding the exterior of the building.
- An immense aerial glass roof

Internally the walls are lightweight plasterboard, paint finished white and light coloured French-oak floors and rest benches.

The Lighting

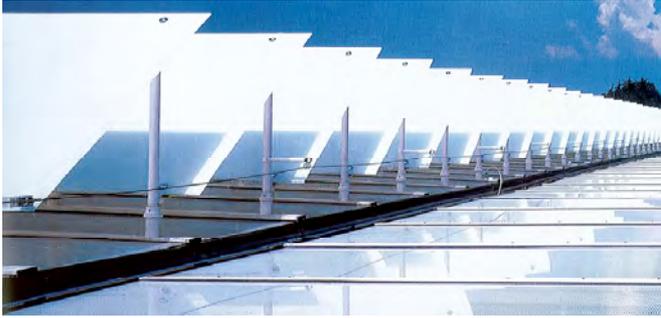
The roof glazing is covered by a shed-like structure of the angled glass panels and vertical supports. The 12mm thick glass panels are white fritted on the underside to reduce incident sunlight to 30 per cent. They are bolted with stainless steel point fittings to cast steel parts fixed to the foot and head of the vertical tubular steel support which is 60mm in diameter. This shed construction forms the uppermost and external shading component; it protects against direct sunlight, but allows the diffuse northern light to penetrate into the exhibition rooms.

Horizontal glazing has been suspended one metre below the grid. It encloses an air cavity, which houses a system for basic lighting and the sensor driven, moveable louvres that are used to adjust the incident natural light. The glazing consists of white steel frame and laminated glass panes; easily accessible for maintenance and cleaning.

The lowest layer of this roof structure is a translucent ceiling, the 'velum' that is suspended 500mm below the horizontal glazing. Into this space the zone-lighting fixtures have been installed.

The velum is made of beveled perforated metal panels that have been stove-enameled white in a rectangular pattern and covered in a white fleece to scatter the light evenly.

Light coloured, moveable, fabric blinds provide shading for the vertical glazing in the exhibition rooms and in the Winter Garden.



Angled, white enameled glass panels are the uppermost, external shading feature.

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The Detail

General dimensions of an exhibition room:

- Length: 7.0m
- Width: 11.0m
- Area: 77m²
- Wall height: 3.5m
- Ceiling height: 4.8m
- Light track height: N/A

Wall surface: plasterboard, white paint finish

Floor: The air spreads inside the 450mm deep hollow space in the double floor and is supplied through the air vents- wood latticed floor grids inlaid into the pale, French oak parquet, which runs lengthways.

Lighting: Controlled natural light, along with artificially lit spaces

Gallery panels: -

Climate control: Yes

Heating/ Cooling: Yes. The air spreads inside the 450mm deep hollow space in the double floor and is supplied through the air vents.

Horizontal glazing has been suspended one metre below the grid. It encloses an air cavity that acts as a year round thermal buffer between the nearly constant temperature in the museum and the changing external climate.

Power: Drop down working outlets. Wall power outlet

⁹ Photo: Foundation Beyeler, pg 51

Museum Studies- Kunsthaus Bregenz, Bregenz Austria, designed by Peter Zumthor

A glass box sited on the Lake Constance River, the double façade glows at night.

“ an extreme manifestation of the ‘white cube’ concept...”¹⁰



Kunsthaus Bregenz Museum, North view

Photo: July 2003¹¹

The Context

In the Kunsthaus project it was anticipated to place an independent as well as self-assured object among the extant buildings along the shoreline (as a row of single objects). On the other hand the architecture of the structure

itself as Kunsthaus was to have as its content theme of light- of the work with and of light.

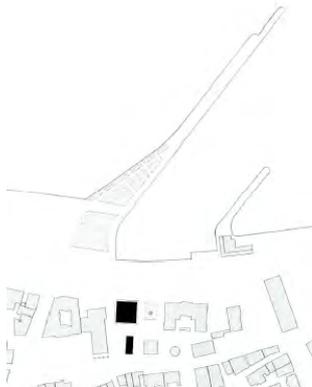
It appears as if the city had carefully worked itself toward the lake- with no closed edge.

“Peter Zumthors ‘intervention’ is as decisive as it is sensitive- the glass tower focuses this modest ‘skyline’, makes visible- above all consciously so. At the same time the placement of the lower administration- and service building at right angles creates a further city square which not only upgrades the communication between the two new buildings, but also takes up a dialogue with the street space and structurally completes the ensemble.”¹²

Because of the existing building which stands parallel to the street, the area behind it was an inner city fallow, it lacked life and lacked the critical aspects of a public square. Now by means of form planning, the area has been transformed into a quality urban area.

Site Plan, Kunsthaus Bregenz, Austria

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The Circulation

By removing the secondary museum zones such as the administration, library, shop, café and bookshop it became possible to plan the Kunsthaus as a pure, variable museum and exhibition building.

¹⁰ Art Museums in the 21st Century

¹¹ Authors Own, July, 2003

¹² Kunsthaus Museum, pg51

¹³ Kunsthaus Museum pg19

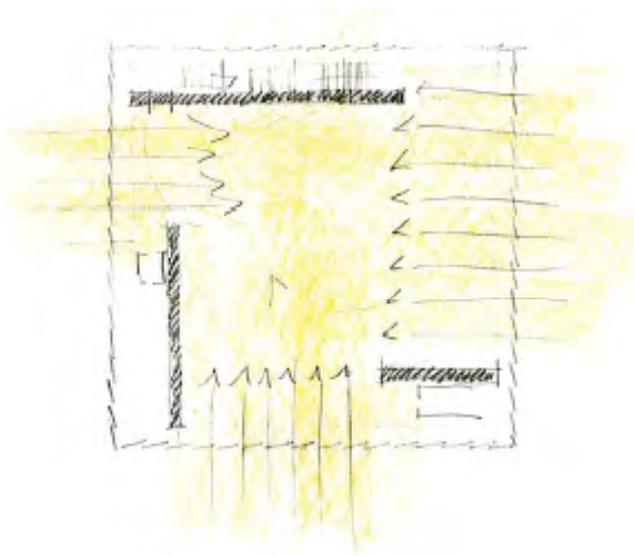
The course of walking through the building, which approximates a spiral, makes the exhibition spaces not axially but tangentially accessible.

The passenger lift, and emergency stairs are all separate from the exhibition spaces. A simple open plan, design arrangement.

The Lighting

The external shell of the gallery absorbs the changing light of the sky, and the lake, and reflects the shades and colours.

The internal gallery spaces are lit by scattered light twice filtered through a layer of space, close to natural light, with the exception of the ground floor lit with hanging lights.



Concept Sketch

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“A sea of glass panels, etched on the downside, with subtly shimmering surfaces and edges, distributes the daylight throughout the room”¹⁵

The Material

The outer skin of the building consists of finely etched glass, resting on metal consoles, held in place by large clamps. Allowing the wind to waft through the scaly structure.



Kunsthau Bregenz, Level 2, exhibition hall

Photo: July 2003¹⁶

¹⁴ Kunsthau Museum pg11

¹⁵ Kunsthau Museum pg14

¹⁶ Authors Own, July, 2003

The Detail

General dimensions of an exhibition room:

- Length: 20.0m
- Width: 20.0m
- Area: 40m²
- Wall height: 4.0m
- Ceiling height: 4.0m
- Light track height: artificially lit by ceiling panels

Wall surface: polished concrete

Floor: grey terrazzo

Lighting: Scattered light twice filtered through a layer of space, close to natural light, with the exception of the ground floor lit with hanging lights

Gallery panels: N/A

Climate control: Yes

Heating/ Cooling: Yes. Supporting concrete walls function as both heater and cooler by means of an integrated system of pipes and a constant water temperature. As well, a second system of pipes, renew the air in the rooms.

Power: Drop down working outlets. Wall power outlet

Museum Studies- Guggenheim Museum, Bilbao Spain, deigned by Frank Gehry

Sited on the river, and intertwined with an existing freeway, the Guggenheim Museum has brought life back to the industrial parts of Bilbao.

“ Gehry’s gigantic ‘temple of muses’, conceived like a giant open-air sculpture, offers ever surprising vistas and room formations that set the stage for the play of natural light making the ‘promenade architecturale’ into an event”¹⁷



Guggenheim Museum external titanium shells sculpturally interwoven.

Photo: July 2003¹⁸

Gehry has an amazing mind, the thought process and the ingenious behind the Guggenheim, Bilbao, I do not believe, will ever be really appreciated. He boldly states it is a work of art, and yet he did work very closely and collaborate with Richard Serra, to design a space for his artwork, ‘the snake.’ How much was the artist informed and swayed by the architect then, when creating the artwork ‘the snake’. As both the building and the artwork were being ‘built’ simultaneously, the artwork appears as an installation in the museum but is it really what you would describe as an installation, or part of the exhibition space itself? A container within the container.

In the article *A Temporary Trend? Architecture at centre Stage in the Modern Art Museum*, the author describes the interior spaces as closely responding to the demands of the exhibition program. From first hand experience, only one of the rooms, houses a permanent collection, and the other display rooms are for temporary exhibitions, and a continual rotation of the art museum’s in house collection. So to describe all rooms as responding to the demands of the exhibition program would be false, as this is a large variable for any architect in museum design.

“The titanium cladding, which heightens the monumentality and sculptural quality of the design, making the building appear as one single element, hewn into a discrete cultural artifact or work of art...Equally although the museum’s envelope may seem instinctive or fanciful, it is in fact closely bound up with the spatial requirements of the display programme.”¹⁹

¹⁷ Beyeler Foundation Museum, pg121

¹⁸ Authors Own, July, 2003

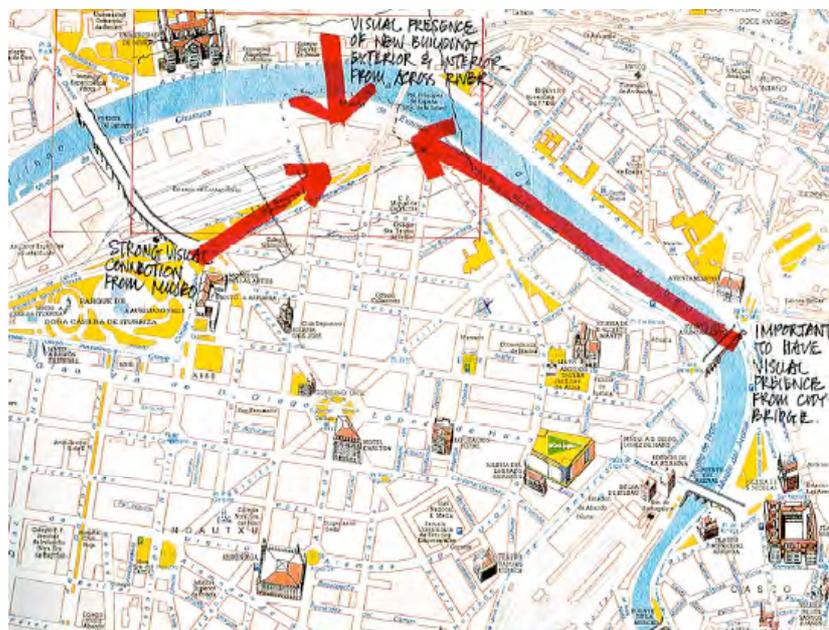
¹⁹ Architectural Design, Art + Architecture pg53

The Context

The building stands imposingly in the centre of Bilbao's cultural triangle, creating a dialogue between the city and the river.

The site, which was not the original location, takes up an abandoned industrial section of the city and has the advantage of the Nervion River which has become quite an outstanding feature, that of which the original site lacked.

From the opposite bank and from the bridges, "the museum's striking outline reconciles the industrial landscape with the city; its outlandish appearance succeeds in appeasing the landscape, providing a good transition between the river and the urban houses,"²⁰ even incorporating the bridge that crosses the site.



Map of Bilbao, with Gehry's handwritten notes, July 7, 1991.

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The Circulation

A centrifugal floor plan around the central heart being the atrium, controlling both horizontal and vertical circulation within the edifice as the two pass through elevated structures. A

central core, with surrounding vessels at all angles.

The Lighting

The light penetrates through a complex design of openings around the upper volumes encompassing the large atrium open to the sky and river.

The Material

Sheathed in stone, metal, wispy titanium panels and glass.

²⁰ New Museums pg154

²¹ Guggenheim Museum Bilbao pg23



View from the riverbank, the large freestanding canopy for the central atrium breakout space, and a man made lake.

Photo: July 2003²²

The Detail

General dimensions of an exhibition room:

- Length: Varies
- Width: Varies
- Area: Unknown
- Wall height: Varies
- Ceiling height: 4.2m
- Light track height: artificially light by ceiling panels

Wall surface: plasterboard, white paint finish

Floor: stone tiles beige in colour

Lighting: Only through the main atrium/core space of the museum

Climate control: Yes

Heating/ Cooling: Yes. The gallery walls fall short by 150mm from the exhibition room ceilings, in which the climate control of cooling/heating is dispersed accordingly into the space.

Power: Drop down working outlets. Wall power outlets

Museum Studies- Art & About



Hyde Park, Central Avenue, transformed into an exhibition space

Photo: October 2004²³

The recent Art & About photographic exhibition in Hyde Park, Sydney for the first time drew my attention last year (2004). Continuing my interest in the many methods containing of art for the publics' perusal, "The elegant main

avenue of Hyde Park, with its arching trees, makes for an inspiring natural gallery. Placing art in this iconic setting encourages passers-by to linger that little bit longer."²⁴ As a large-scale photographic exhibition displayed along the central walkway of the northern end of Hyde Park an open-air gallery is created against the leafy backdrop of the Park.



Large photographic works displayed in Hyde Park, sway in the evening wind. The trees cast moving shadows across the works, a different depiction occurring for every viewer.

Photo: October 2004²⁵

Photo: October 2004²⁶



²³ Authors own, October 2004

²⁴ City of Sydney, Art & About, pg12

²⁵ Authors own, October 2004

²⁶ Authors own, October 2004

Art or Architecture

- **can architecture be called art?**
 - **The tension between art and architecture**

Two artistic passions, of many cultures around the world, have continually been compared to one another, art and architecture. By definition art can be described as “ the production or expression of what is beautiful, appealing or of more ordinary significance.”²⁷ And then the term architecture “ the art or science of building, including plan, design, construction and decorative treatments.”²⁸ One word in turn describes the other. So are art and architecture essentially of the same essence, where different methods are employed as means of expression?

Ancient structures such as the pyramids of Egypt and the Stonehenge construction in England are often described in modern times as great works of art. But are they not pieces of architecture? Are, art and architecture one and the same thing, if it is argued that art cannot be called architecture because it has no functionality? Art too does have function and that is to convey current perceptions of objects/ and events through different means of expression.



The Great Pyramids of Egypt, Egypt 2530BC
Stonehenge, London 2000BC

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The major obvious difference is the employment of architects to design according to a brief, comparatively briefs, clients, or society may not restrict an artist, but the same could be said for architects as well. “Art and Architecture are two very distinct disciplines that work at very different levels and perform very different functions. Architects make spaces that provide a particular function: somewhere to piss, work or eat. The shape of Architecture is dictated by the shape of human beings- our scale, how far we can lift our arm and how many paces it

should take to reach a desk. Artists make work that provides a comment on society. This can be manifested in a multiple of ways: through an act, a walk, or a web-based sculpture. Art like Architecture, provides a much needed function, but it is not so direct.”³⁰

²⁷ The Macquarie Dictionary, pg 25

²⁸ The Macquarie Dictionary, pg 23

²⁹ Digital Imaging Project

So what happens, when art and architecture are fused together in one building typology the museum? No longer seen as simply a repository for art, “the museum of yesterday with its exhibition halls and storage rooms, flanked by a few administrative offices is no longer”³¹ Architects today are challenged to create, and design a successful building, that will itself be a work of art, yet will not upstage the art it is to house.

Museums started, with prehistoric paintings in caves, and Egyptian paintings in tombs, depictions, which through time have proved to be great learning tools for people. Art was able to capture time, well before any method had been physically implemented to house such pieces.

One of the first public documented displays of antiques was by the architect Bramante in the Vatican. Design is approximated to be around 1508. “The display was still in the open, but in niches in a square cloister.”³² Collections were by more affluent people of society such as princes and noblemen, and therefore were private collections, not open to the public. Housed at their homes, in rooms and small ‘cabinets of curiosities’, a select few would be fortunate enough to view each piece. Early forms of museums were privileged domains, for the educated, and the less affluent people of society were never opportune enough to gain an insight into this world. In the later years of the sixteenth century the word ‘museum’, finally appeared. In 1539 “Paolo Giovio for the first time writes of his collection at Como as his ‘Musaeum’.”³³ And at the same time buildings “began to be erected to house collections of statuary.”³⁴

However it wasn’t until the 17th century that private collectors, began to open their doors, to the public and actually advertise their private collections. It was no longer fashionable to keep such pieces hidden, it was now fashionable to receive public recognition for something they had collected, but had no part in actually producing.

Then in the 1770’s, “a separate museum building went up.”³⁵ The requirement now, to not only open the doors of collections to the public was recognized, but to also protect, and preserve the works, by means which needed to be designed into a new building itself. Now in these buildings temperature control, electronic surveillance, and special lighting are also required.

Now in the second half of the twentieth century there was a museum boom, which has produced a constant stream of new buildings in many cities. Many museums by high profile architects have opened within a single year in Los Angeles, Stockholm, Bregenz, Basel and Bilbao. “no new principles have turned up, except that the ideal of the museum as a monument in its own right has been replaced by the ideal of the museum as the perfect place to show, enjoy and study works of art (or of history or of science).”³⁶

Museum buildings, have no longer a dictated requirement to just preserve and protect art, they have become “civic emblems”³⁷ with a new priority and they debate “how art is presented in

³⁰ Form and Function

³¹ New Museums pg7

³² A History of Building Types pg111

³³ A History of Building Types pg111

³⁴ A History of Building Types pg112

³⁵ A History of Building Types pg114

³⁶ A History of Building Types pg136

³⁷ Museum Quartet, Four designs bring a new voice to the debate over what a museum should be. pg115

public in their architectural design, their functional planning and their relationship with cities in which they are sited.” Modern museums are “growing toward an important, as yet undefined new purpose, engaging a broader public and finding a new voice.”³⁸ “As well as this, these new museums express the artistic and creative powers of the architects who design them.”³⁹ The architects convey “the tension between art and architecture,”⁴⁰ continually crossing the line of traditional disciplines, and ideals.

Museums are designed to house works of art, but what or who decides that an object be called a work of art? Could it be that if an object is placed in a museum, and is of no cultural or artistic significance, a consumer would still call it a work of art, unless informed otherwise. This is described as the “museum effect”, “Turning all objects into works of art... The tendency to isolate something from its world, to offer it up for attentive looking and thus transform it ...”⁴¹ In a reading of *The Museum as a Way of Seeing* the author describes the process of finding a crab shell, quite possibly in a bin, and by isolating it from its context/ habitat, the object is seen in a different manner, and becomes an object of interest after placing it on a pedestal, “thus to transform it into art like our own.”⁴²

Through this isolation and assemblage of objects and ideas under one roof, objects which may have dissipated and degenerated out on the street, are now found being examined, analysed and critiqued upon. Although the other side of the argument says that objects when placed in a gallery lose their charge, they become portable objects or surface disengaged from the outside world. This argument may be true, the objects are disengaged however, it is this disengagement, which allows for the new context of the work to be realized and a new interpretation made. The charge is contained in the object itself, and it does not need its original context, for a new interpretation to be made. If the artist intended for the interpretation to be made in its original context, the artists would have chosen to contain it not in a museum room vessel, but that of another context.

Interpretations of art objects will not only be affected by how the object is displayed, lit and the presence of architecture, but that too of the person. Different cultures, religions, generations and genders, mean continual variables, affect the interpretation.

It is good to see that in today’s society the barriers which once existed preventing people to be able to partake in the viewing of are slowly breaking down. The hierarchy of the museum is changing, and quite literally moving back onto the streets for everyone. The context for art is changing quite dramatically.

³⁸ Museum Quartet, Four designs bring a new voice to the debate over what a museum should be. pg115

³⁹ Art Museums in the 21st Century

⁴⁰ Art Museums in the 21st Century

⁴¹ The Museum as a Way of Seeing pg26-27

⁴² The Museum as a Way of Seeing pg27

Determining a container for the contained

- ***A room for art***
- ***an architects***
- ***an artists***
- ***a collaboration***

In the designing of the Guggenheim, Bilbao, the architect Frank Gehry designed a museum, which “breaks the architectural frame,” and is “designed a sculptural artefact in its own right.”⁴³ The Guggenheim, not only contains several vessels which contain art, but the exterior container sited on the river, and intertwined with an existing freeway, is an architectural work of art itself. Some may say that “its interior spaces respond closely to the demands of the exhibition program.”⁴⁴ And yet the others question how paintings and sculpture actually fit into the bold new forms. Whether this building is successful externally, doesn’t tend to be of interest, the real debate rages on the inside of this museum.

Gehry in an interview with Kurt W. Forster discusses one particular artwork, and that is of Richard Serra’s “Snake”. An artist who works by the philosophy of “work out of your work. Don’t work out of anybody’s work.”⁴⁵

Richard Serra as an artist was commissioned to design an artwork to be permanently housed in one of the main halls of the Guggenheim. From experience when entering the vessel that contains ‘the snake’ a three giant moulded pieces of steel, arranged so, you can walk in and around, and are encouraged to call out when inside, it was disappointing to find the room containing other objects. The impact of the piece is overwhelming, but then you are distracted by other art pieces, it is only when you are inside ‘the snake’ and partaking in the experience, that the enjoyment emerges. Gehry has succeeded in creating “a neutral background”⁴⁶ for the Richard Serra snake, I feel that it is the art curator’s mistake in placing other objects around ‘the snake’ that require intimate interaction as well. The vessel designed for ‘the snake’, may be large, but I think this is how Gehry intended for this piece of art to be sited.

On the other end of the scale is the Beyeler Foundation Museum, Basel, Switzerland. This building was designed in collaboration with the client, who already had a collection of artworks. The architect Renzo Piano opted for “a reserved style ‘to serve art’ and not the other way around”⁴⁷

This museum although reserved in design, still needs the break out spaces, to sit and contemplate for a while. The artwork with amazing impact is Monet’s ‘Lilies’. A five meter artwork sited in its own room, with a large lounge opposite to sit and dream. The natural light coming in at

⁴³ Architectural Design, Art + Architecture

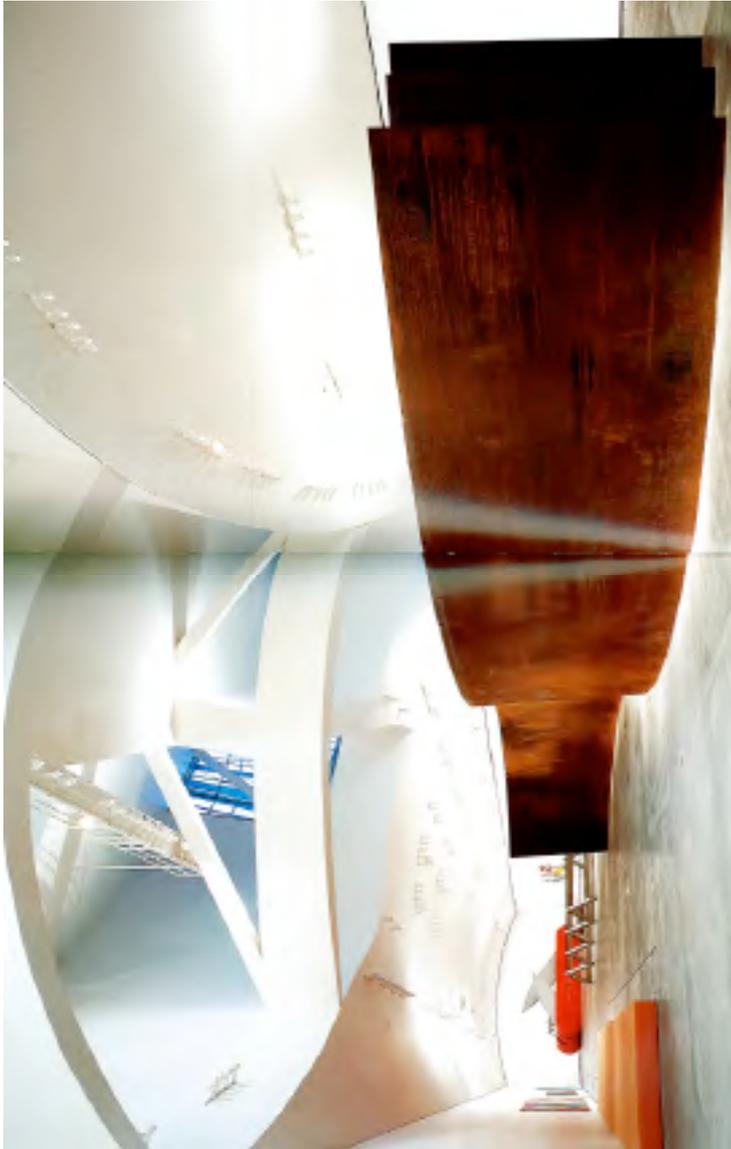
⁴⁴ Architectural Design, Art + Architecture

⁴⁵ The Low Down on High Art. The Coagula Interview

⁴⁶ The Low Down on High Art. The Coagula Interview

⁴⁷ New Museums pg130

the end of the room, allows for a comparative look at the pond outside the gallery and the artwork on the wall. The white walls, allow for the colours in the artwork and around to play together. The layout of the objects in this gallery and the architecture, have been collaboratively well designed and arranged. When inside, it is the subtlety of the gallery and the layout of the objects which make it a very pleasant gallery to visit.



**Richard Serra's 'snake'
artwork, as situated in the
Guggenheim Museum Bilbao**

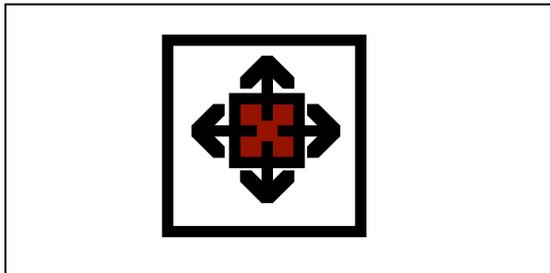
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⁴⁸ Guggenheim Museum Bilbao pg192-193

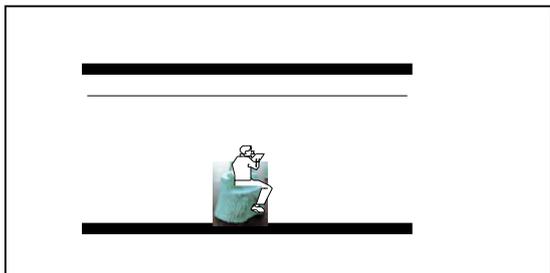
Determining a container for the contained

- ***A vessel for the objects: art***
- ***A building for the vessels containing art***
- ***A context for the containers containing vessels***
- ***the museum***

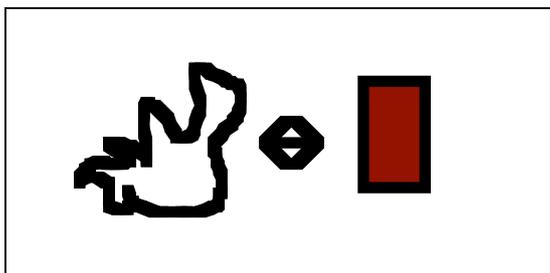
As the displaying of art, and the object of viewing objects, has become central to my topic, I have decided to see art as being contained rather than displayed in forms. The forms as containers, each then being contained by another, and finally the site or context of the object being the final container of the museum building, rather than the concept as art or architecture, nor form or function.



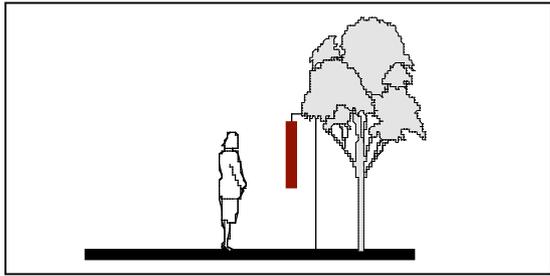
What is the container? The room or the building, or the context?



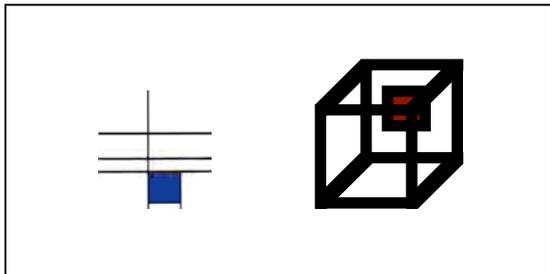
Does interaction with the art, affect a person's perception of the piece being art?



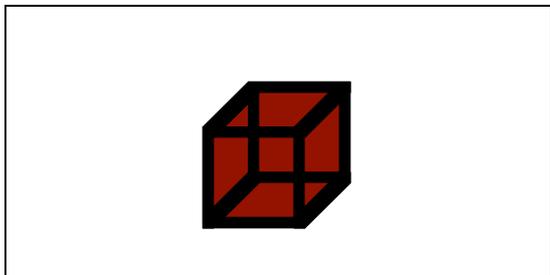
Organic container or geometric container?



If an object was placed on a pedestal, or hung in a park, would this draw people's attention to it, in the view that they think it is art?



Should the art be the main focus, and therefore the container, a white box, free of any distractions?



Or can the art be the container?

Conclusion: The Container or the Contained?

From this study which has only toyed with the great debate of art or architecture, the container or the contained, the modern paradigm of the museum has been viewed in its varied forms and architectural approaches. There is no set formulae, and there is no one museum the same as another. It is the principle of varying factors, of the contents being contained, of the multiple contexts for the containers, which means there will never be one set formulae or calculative approach for the museum. These will forever be the key issues facing architects and museum curators, of sustaining public interest and how to tackle the dialogue between architecture and art, or the 'container' and the 'contained'. There may be principles of design, but the "conflict of two unequal brothers"⁴⁹, will always sit in debate, as to what is the best approach to take.

⁴⁹ Art Museums of the 21st Century

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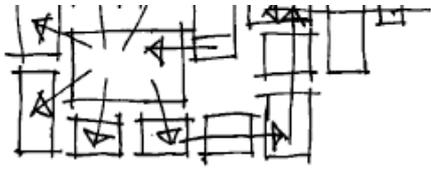
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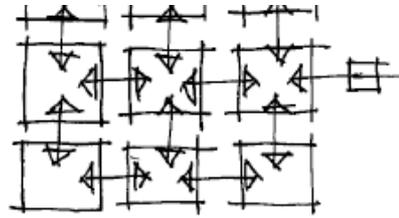
Accessed: 3 September 2004

Appendix

GENERIC PLANS FOR THE CONTAINER.



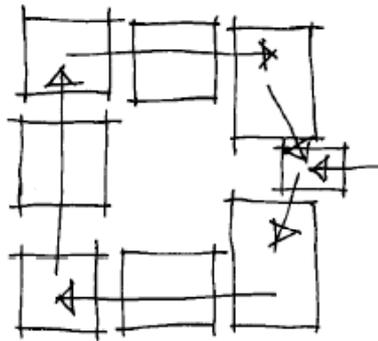
COMPLEX



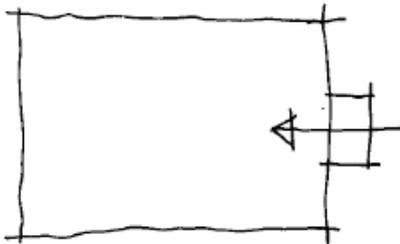
LABYRINTH



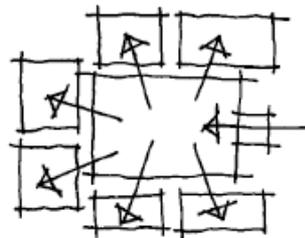
LINEAR PROCESSION



LOOP



OPEN PLAN



CORE + VESSALS

INTERPRETATION, COMMUNICATION AND DISPLAY

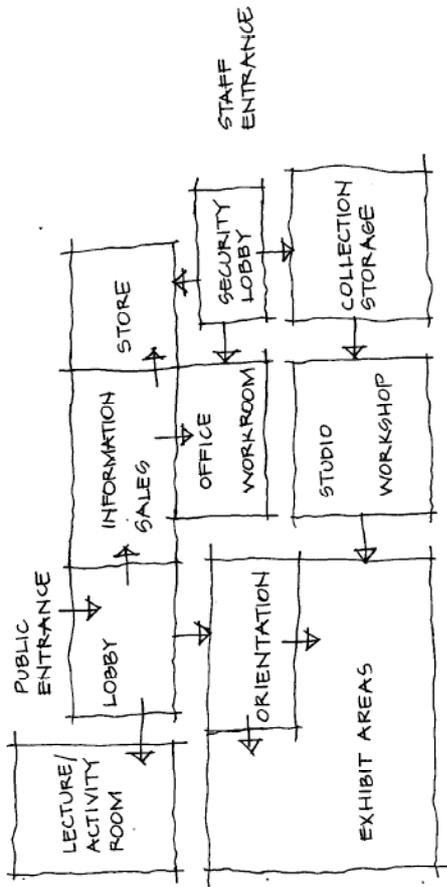
Different Planning Methods for the Museum

Sketch: August 2004

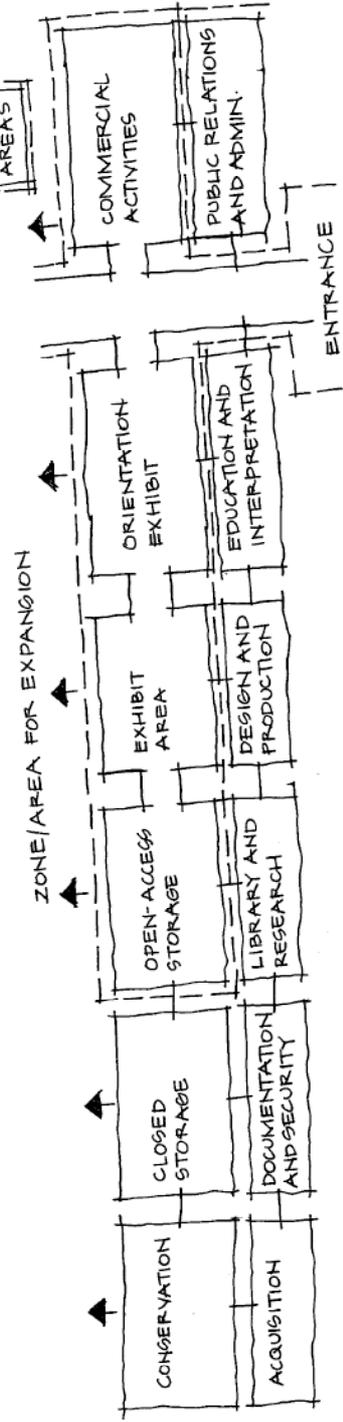
50

⁵⁰ Authors Own

POSSIBLE LAYOUT FOR MUSEUM ZONES



MUSEUM PROCESS → LAYERED PUBLIC ACCESS → STAFF AREAS AND CONTROLLED ACCESS

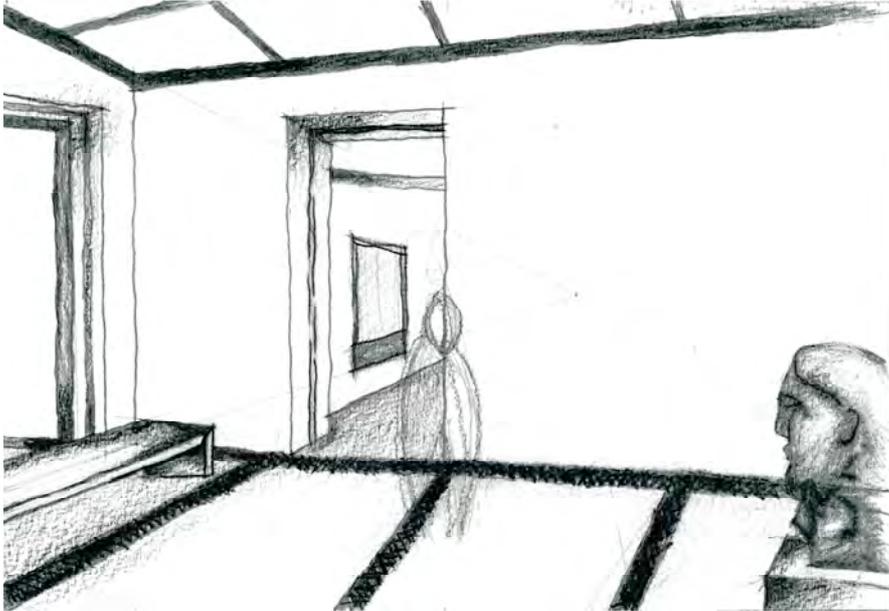


MUSEUM FUNCTIONS - RELATIONSHIP

Analysis of the Containers that make a Museum Plan

Sketch: August 2004

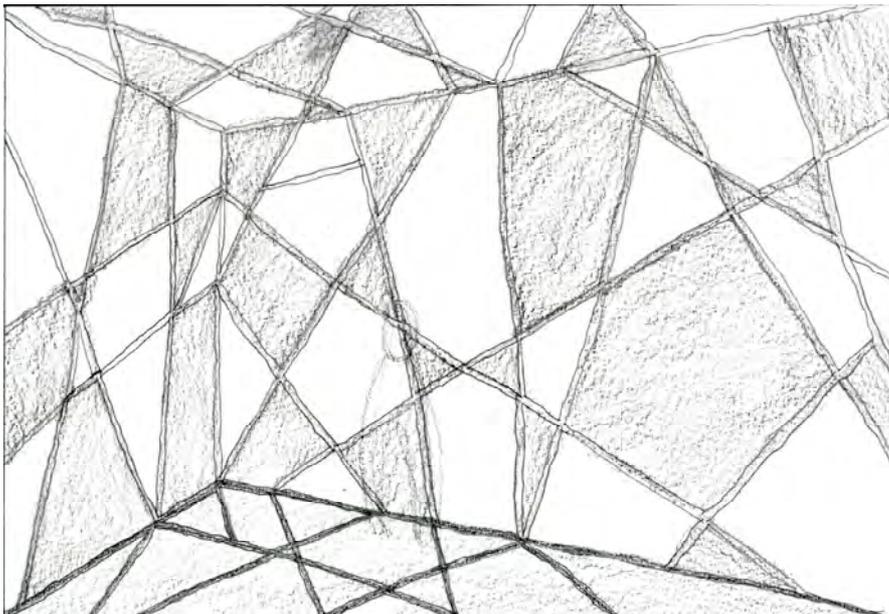
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Beyeler Foundation Museum Sketch

Sketch: July 2002

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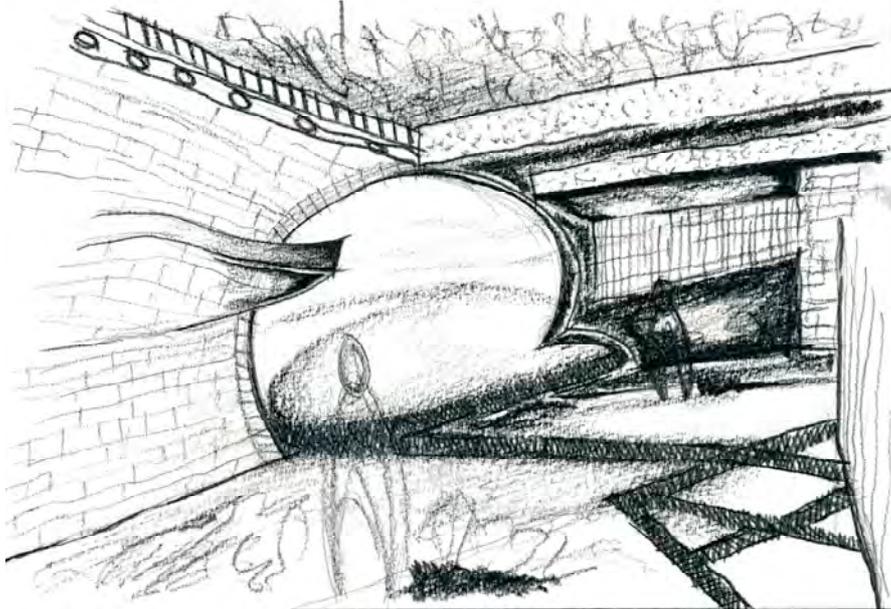
Federation Square, Melbourne Sketch

Sketch: July 2002

53

⁵² Authors Own

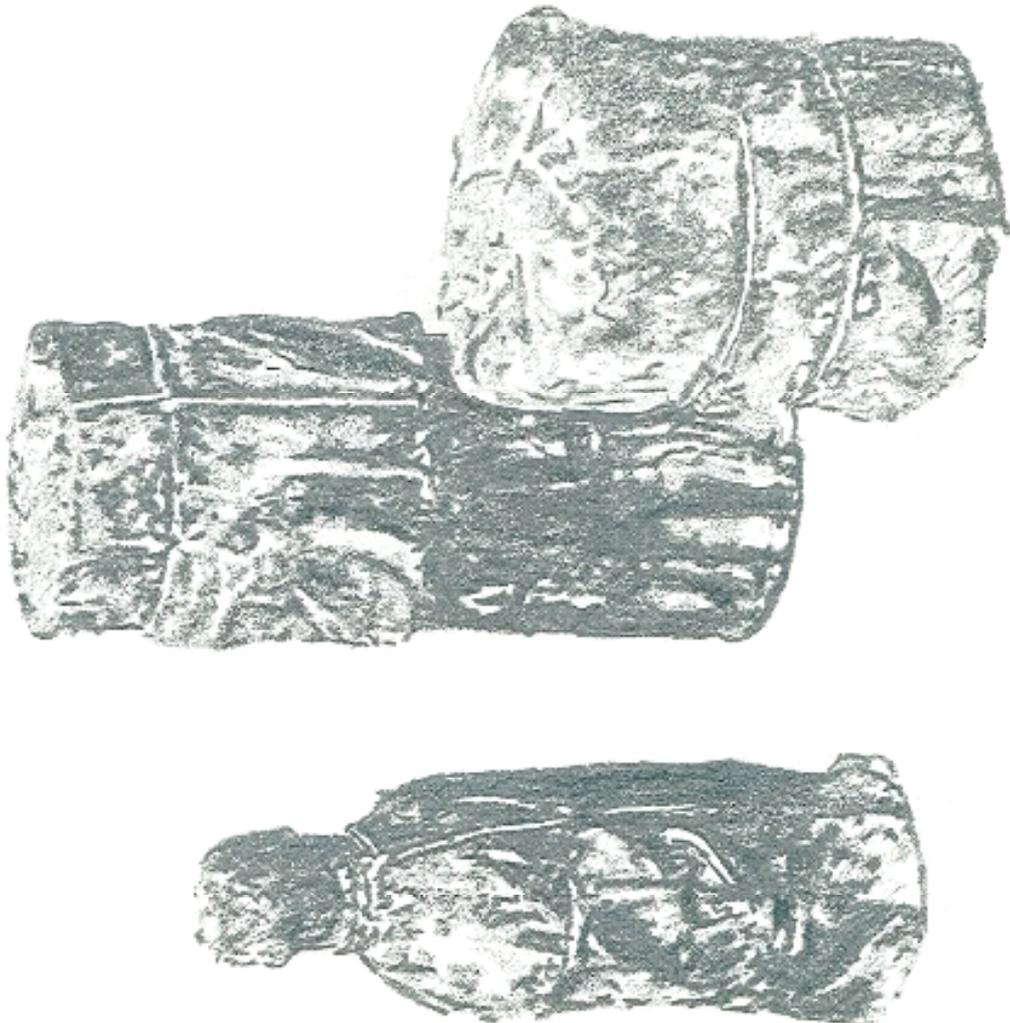
⁵³ Authors Own



An organic form as the container...

Sketch: July 2002

54



Christo's concept of wrapping objects. The folds in the fabric, and the structure of the string, create interest and intrigue, to what is actually being contained? This can be compared to the fabric and structure of a building.

Sketch: September 2004

55

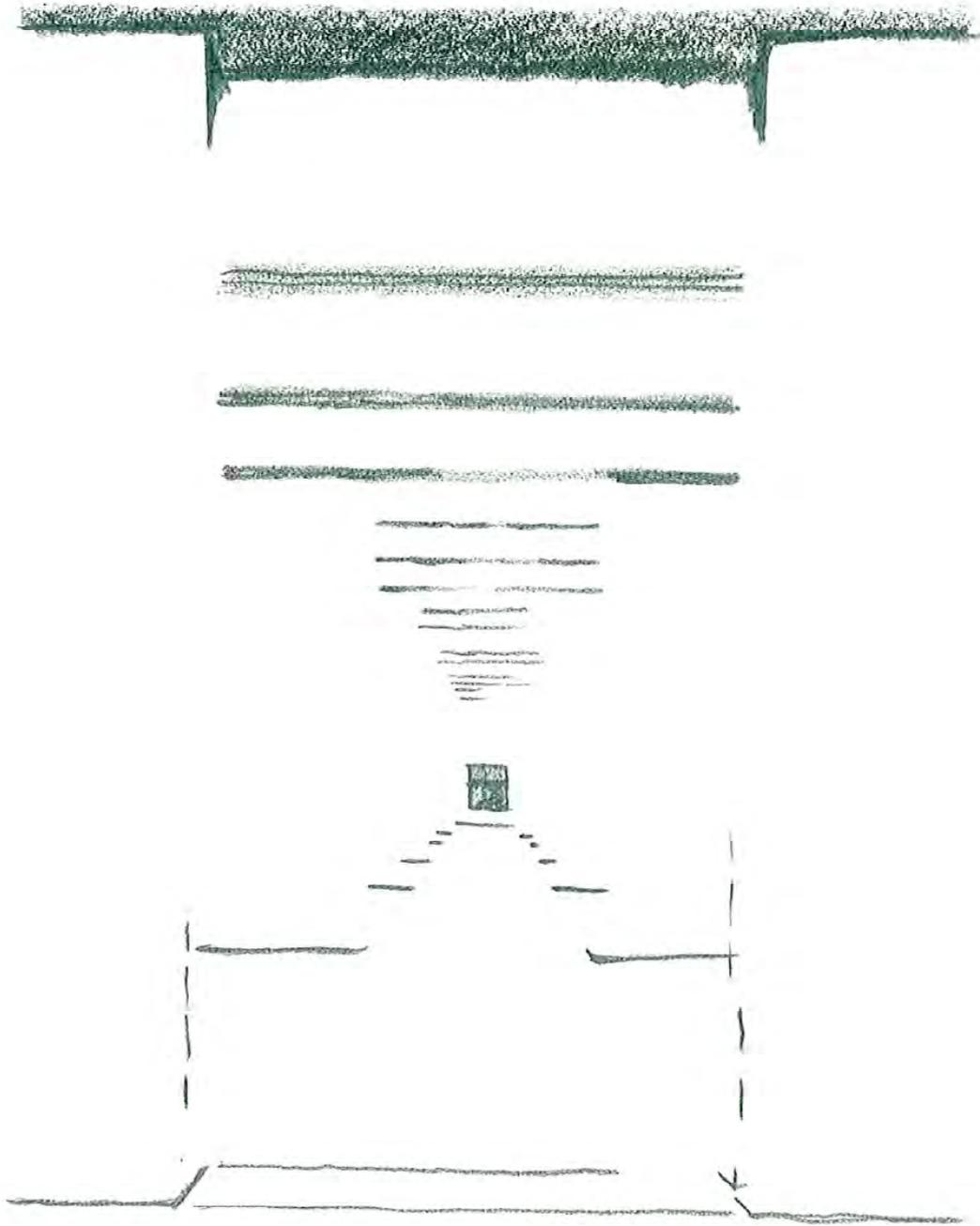


The fabric hitting the ground with the knotted string, deep shadows are cast, and the fabric, still appears fluid.

Sketch: September 2004

56

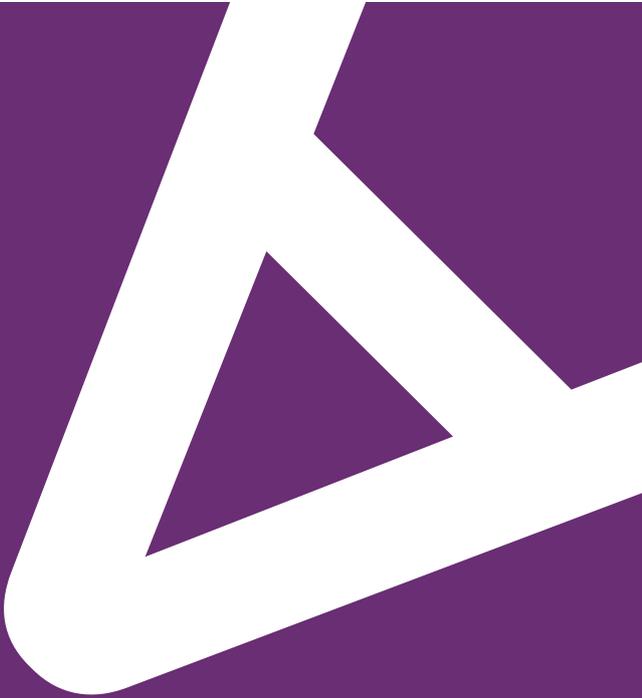
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A corridor leads to a painting on a wall

Sketch: September 2004

57



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