Museum

Vol XXIV, n° 1, 1972

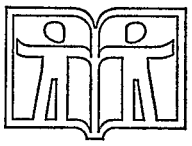
Problems of the museum of contemporary art in the West

NOTE TO THE READER

With this issue, *Museum* begins its appearance in an entirely new format.

Since its creation, the review, except for a change of cover, has maintained the same format, each article appearing in English and French with résumés in Spanish and Russian.

A considerable increase in printing costs over the last few years led us to study a variety of new formats which would allow us not merely to maintain our current subscription price but also to offer a better service to our readers. The results of this study brought us to the following decisions: henceforth, *Museum* is to be published in two separate editions (English and French) with a slight modification in size and a completely new graphic presentation. These changes permit us to increase the number or the length of the articles and the quality and richness of the illustrations. The résumés in Spanish and Russian are no longer incorporated in the review itself but are printed separately and sent to readers who wish to receive them.



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Museum notes

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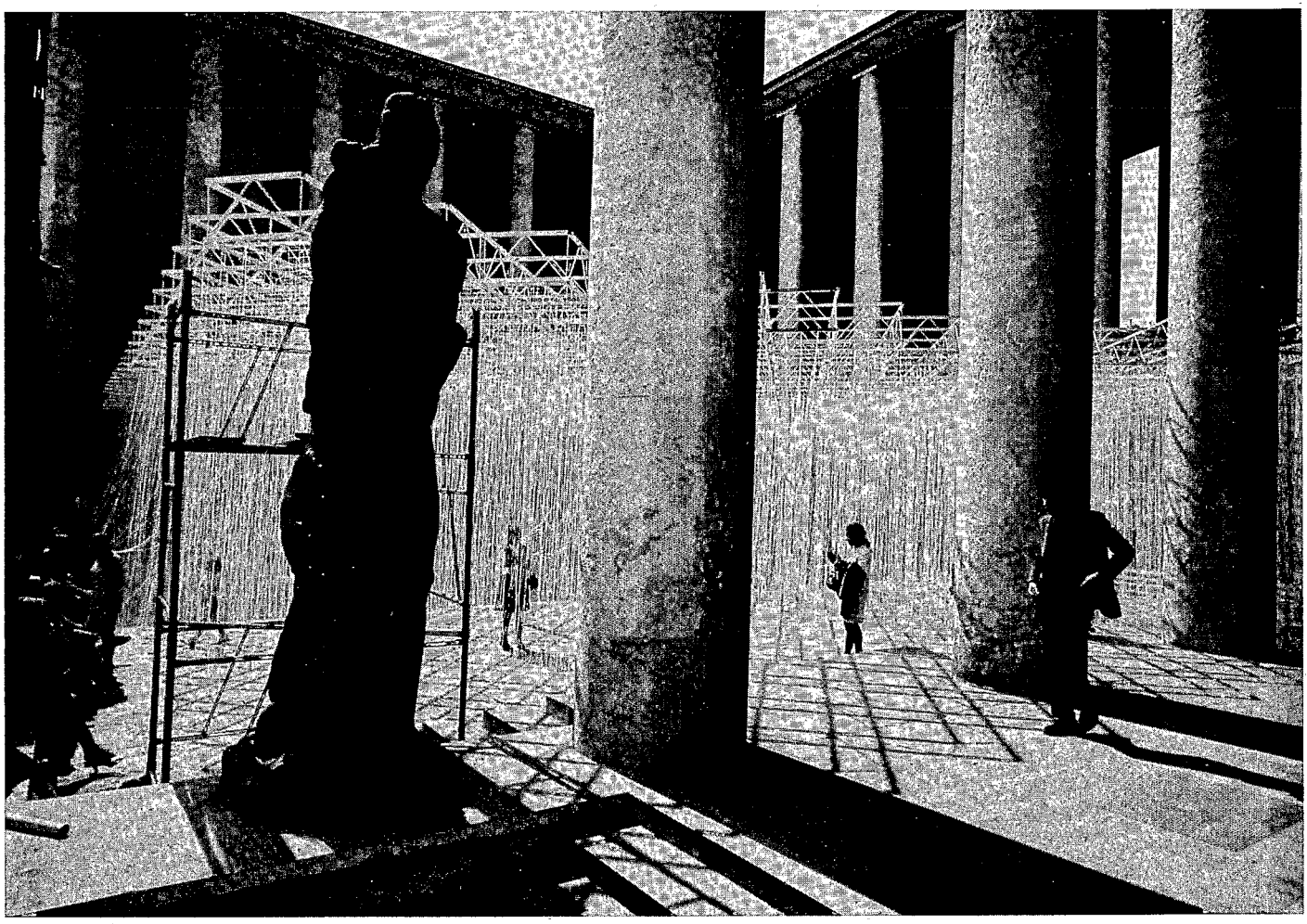


ARC (Animation, Recherche, Confrontation), Paris. The visitors to the exhibition participate immediately as they walk through Soto's *Penetrable* at the entrance.

Problems of the museum of contemporary art in the West

Georges Henri Rivière

Editorial

Museum has on several occasions dealt with modern art and contemporary art as they affect museums. In a recent number, it published a preliminary interpretation of the results of a comprehensive inquiry carried out in Toronto by a group of museum specialists and specialists in related disciplines on the initiative of the International Council of Museums (ICOM) and with the aid of the Canadian National Commission for Unesco.[1] A final interpretation will be published later.

In the above inquiry, the 'potential' museum public was consulted by experts and expressed its views. In the present inquiry, experts themselves expressed their views, in the following stages:

1. On 6 and 7 October 1969 and again on 1 April 1970, at the invitation of Unesco, a group of museum specialists in contemporary art and a general museologist[2] met in Paris to exchange views on problems of common interest to Western museums of contemporary art: ethics, organization, exhibitions, cultural involvement and other events; relations between such museums and their trustee bodies, artists, the art market, press and other mass media, the public, publishers; ideas and experience in relation to architecture and equipment. Tape recordings were made of these discussions.
2. A questionnaire taking into account the content of these discussions was sent to 116 museums of contemporary art or contemporary art sections. Sixty-six replies were received.[3]
3. One of the members of the group, Harald Szeemann, wrote an account based on the taped discussions. This was sent to the other members of the group who made their observations known to the editorial staff of *Museum*. A revised text was then prepared reflecting the opinion of all the members.
4. Another member of the group, Michael Kustow, wrote up the replies received to the questionnaire.

The Toronto inquiry aimed at being objective; the results, at certain points in the proceedings, were processed by computer. Its organizers would like it to be repeated in other countries, using the same methods for comparison.

The present inquiry, which has been entrusted to European specialists and is closely involved with *avant-garde* movements in art, is, by its very sincerity, essentially subjective in character.

It is closely associated with a complex, changing, indeed delicate combination of circumstances, involving not only artistic and cultural but also social problems, with all their divergences and convergences, in an ever more rapidly changing world.

1. cf. (a) *Museum*, Vol. XXII, No. 3/4, 1969: inquiry presented for specialists; (b) Unesco *Courier*, March 1971: inquiry presented for the readers of wide-circulation magazines; (c) Unesco *Courier*, July 1971: letter from Irina Antonova, Director, Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts, Moscow, and E. B. Georgievskaya, Chief Curator, Pushkin Museum, Moscow, giving their opinion on the inquiry as presented by the *Courier*.

2. Pierre Gaudibert, Deputy Curator, Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris and ARC; Pontus Hulten, formerly Director, Moderna Museet, Stockholm; Michael Kustow, formerly Director, Institute of Contemporary Arts, London; Jean Leymarie, Director, Musée National d'Art Moderne, Paris; François Mathey, Chief Curator, Musée des Arts Décoratifs, Paris; Georges Henri Rivière, Permanent Adviser to ICOM, member of the board of editors of *Museum*; Harald Szeemann, formerly Director, Kunsthalle, Bern, and Eduard de Wilde, Director, Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam.

3. See Appendix, pages 58–9, for the text of the questionnaire and the list of museums consulted.

It should be repeated in relation to other concepts, with other experts, and in other parts of the world.

All this means that we hope our readers will send us their comments so that we can use them in subsequent numbers and as a guide to future inquiries.

Pierre Gaudibert, Pontus Hulten, Michael Kustow, Jean Leymarie, François Mathey, Georges Henri Rivière, Harald Szeemann, Eduard de Wilde (interpretation: Harald Szeemann[1])

Exchange of views of a group of experts

Introduction

This text is the result of an exchange of views between experts[2] of museums of contemporary art and a museologist who met at Unesco in 1969 and 1970.

The participants all endeavoured to view the matter under discussion from a theoretical standpoint, although the conditions for their doing so were anything but favourable. Indeed, several countries rich in museums of contemporary art were not represented (the United States of America, Japan, U.S.S.R. and some of the Latin American countries) and above all the status of the participants was only too clear: seven experts out of eight were practitioners, representing a local museological situation with all the difficulties which that usually entails (finance, premises, relations with local authorities, artists, commissions, architecture, etc.). In general it has to be recognized that all problems are approached from the practical point of view. The group consisted of people used to taking empirical and pragmatic decisions. The lack of theoretical reflection was often regretted by the participants, but it must be said that what united them was full-time professional activity, and this does not leave much time for theoretical reflection. In this summary, we have refrained as far as possible from including descriptions of local situations in the museum world and have only mentioned local practice if this helps to clarify the context.

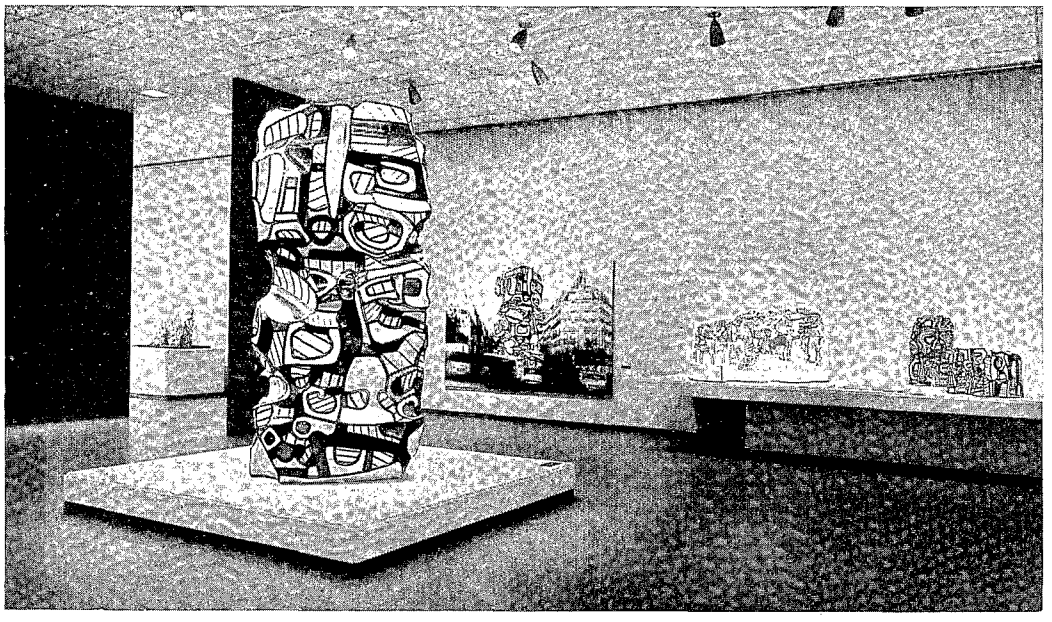
The principle and function of the museum

The function of the museum is the function of art itself. It shows how art changes with time. After the Second World War, the museum catered for a small élite. Its function was almost exclusively aesthetic and it operated in a highly eclectic fashion, although it was already taking account of the artist and not only of art. But the structure of the museum remained that of the nineteenth century: in the eyes of the public, the museum was still functioning as though the war had never taken place.

Today the emphasis is on information. The artistic scene is illuminated by a judicious selection of works of art from all over the world. The museums have also undertaken the task of making the visitor aware of the inhuman world in which he lives. Today the museum has an artistic and social message to convey. This has brought about a democratization which has put a question-

1. Harald Szeemann was born in 1933 in Bern (Switzerland). In 1960 he terminated his studies of the history of art, archaeology and journalism and his dissertation was on the beginnings of modern book illustration (Nabis, *Revue Blanche,* Alfred Jarry, Théâtre de l'Œuvre, Ambroise Vollard). He was Director of the Berne Kunsthalle 1961–69, the Bienne Municipal Gallery 1961–65, and the Berne Gallery 1966–70. Since 1970, general secretary, *Documenta 5 Kassel 1972,* and free-lance exhibitor (*Happening and Fluxus,* Cologne, 1970 and Sydney, 1971) with his own agency for intellectual exchange work. Main publications: forewords to exhibition catalogues, interviews in *Die Zeit* (April 1970) and *Der Spiegel* (September 1969 and April 1971), *Von Hodler zur Antiform* (with Jean-Christoph Ammann), Bern, Benteli, 1970. In preparation: publications on Kowalski and Agam.

2. See facing page, note 2.



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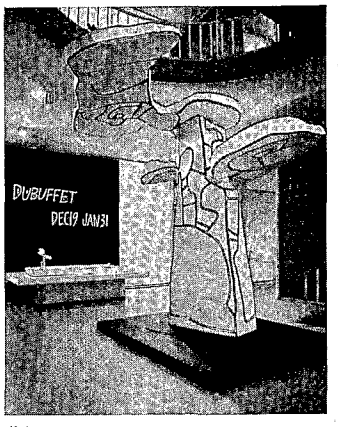
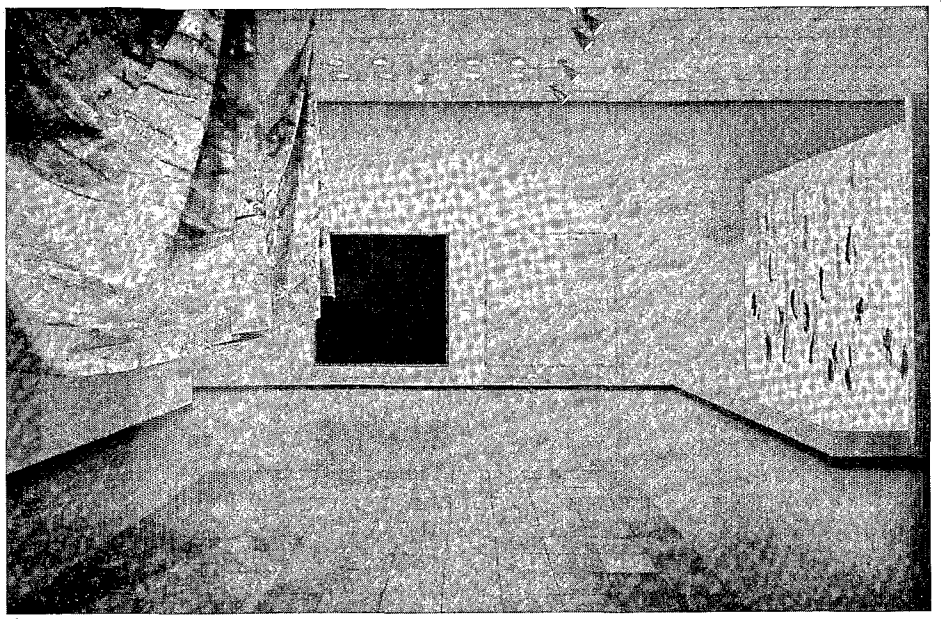


(b)

mark against the old museum structures, still based on the principle of artistic performance. Nowadays, while the artist is still taken as the starting-point, attention is more and more focused on the community. It is difficult to tell how the structure of the museum will develop in the future, on account of the present system of museum organization. The artistic function is easier to define, because it can to a large extent be derived intuitively. We judge past works of art by present-day standards and act accordingly. Many people today consider for instance that the *'papiers découpés'* by Matisse are much more important than Braque's entire output. These 'preferences' we derive from our preoccupation with the most recent trends in art, about which we can often only give information, knowing that what is shown as the most recent is not really the most recent, and often guessing by intuition rather than actually knowing what is most important in contemporary art production. In this respect, a great deal has been achieved by museums since 1945. But this function is not the only one valid today. We must no longer regard the museum as just an instrument for offering art to the public. The museum has become more critical both of art and of itself, because it has become aware of its function outside daily life. It does indeed function outside the system, sets itself up in opposition to the Establishment, yet continually shows itself to be an instrument of the system. Like art it is a place of freedom, but of freedom which stops at the museum door; and like art it is a cosmetic medium, not absolutely essential. This inner contradiction in the role of the museum —that it is the epitome of the system, but at the same time relatively free to criticize it—is important for the museum of today and for its immediate future. To put it bluntly, the ideal museum would be the one that was closed by the authorities. The museum can only function towards promoting artistic interests provided it is outside the restraints of society. Because it is none the less subject to the rules of society, it falls into a position of conflict, which is aggravated by the fact that the authorities like to see highly controversial subjects discussed within an art context, because they are thereby rendered harmless.

On the other hand, the museum is also the sanctuary—at once the place of confinement and the antechamber to freedom—wherein are represented tableaux, prefigurations, visions, utopias, personal experiences which communicate to all. From this point of view it is important that the museum should be preserved and that it should make an effort to bring an ever wider public into touch with the conceptions which it presents; all this is equivalent, if not



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1 (a), (b)
ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO, Chicago. Jean Dubuffet exhibition: *Edifices and Monuments*, 1970–71.
2
ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO, Chicago. Andre, Gilliam, Cooper, Van Buren exhibition: *69th American Exhibition*, 1970.

physically at least spiritually, to widening the museum's field of action beyond the actual museum walls.

Insight into this new function of the museum eventually enables us to live with the contradiction which is inherent in every anticipatory activity, every prefiguration of a future way of life. Utopia holds an ever more important place in present-day society.

Applied to the museum, it makes it possible for each individual to take part in the reality of life, and is therefore a social rather than an artistic function. Many museums have taken this democratization of culture into account. They have, however, been forced to the conclusion that it is particularly difficult to do without the original work of art, which alone conveys to the visitor something of the artist's personal experience and creative activity, although of course nothing more than a single work of art can be imagined. This is also true of the presentation of art to the public, which operates more on the artistic level than on the social level and all too often assumes the character of a laboratory of the imagination or a utopian wonderland. Ideally, the museum must break through existing social discourse in order to recover the freedom and spontaneity of personal experience and enable part of the social discourse to occur within a democratic context.

One of the main problems of museums today is to succeed in avoiding the influence of an authoritative museum culture, determined solely by one man. The need to replace the one-man system by a team is obvious everywhere, although all dynamic museums of modern art have so far been due to individual initiative. In order to break with eighteenth- and nineteenth-century structures, even the team system should also be replaced by a participation of the public.

This text reproduces the discussion on a crisis, or rather on the beginning of a functional and structural re-evaluation. If one asks at what date the conditions for the present discussion occurred, and consequently the date of the post-war acceleration in the exchange of information and the move toward democratization, the answer, as regards museums, would be the 1960s, a period of the expansion of 'object art', during which the museums placed themselves unconditionally in the service of artistic production, and again since 1968, the summit of the moral and ethical crisis among intellectuals and artists.

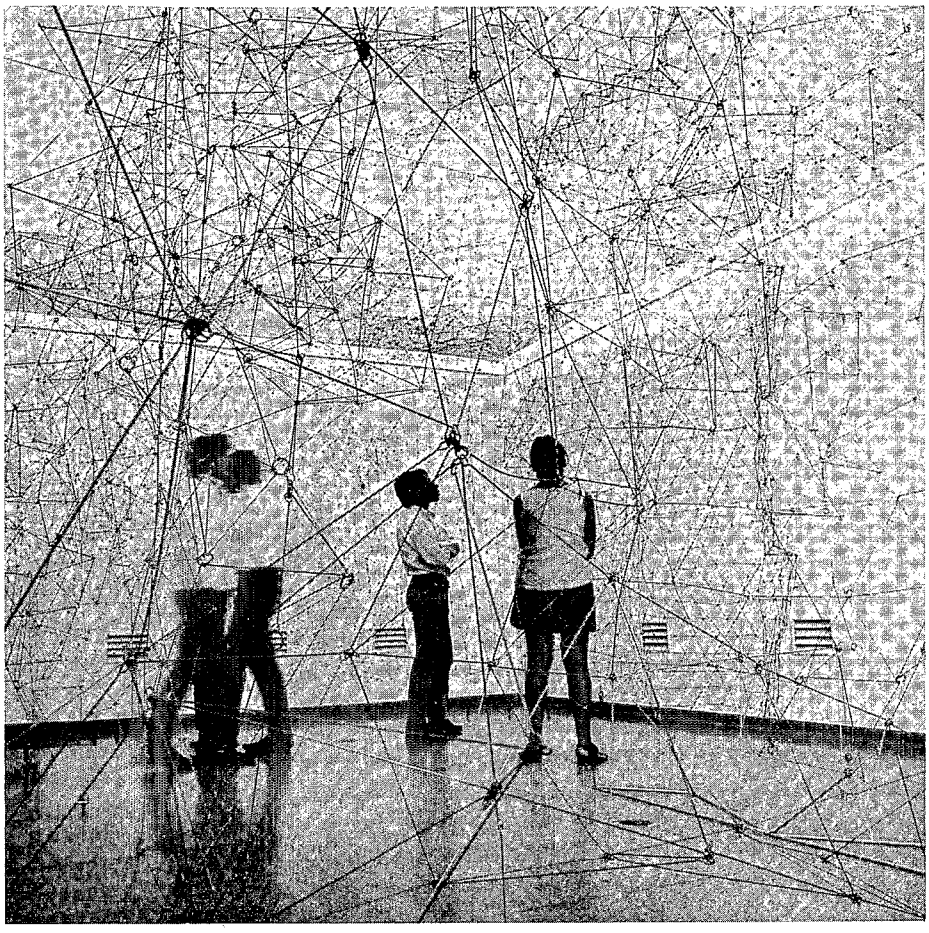
3

New art forms and the 'museum explosion'

The sixties saw a dynamic expansion in the arts which was paralleled, and to some extent influenced, by a new industrial revolution. The creative activity of artists forced museums to be receptive to new work, while the moral crisis in art forced museums to reconsider what they stood for. Thus it was in fact practical and ethical rather than aesthetic considerations which led to the 'museum explosion'. The new dimension was the entry of the human element into a hitherto closed preserve: first came the artist with his claims on behalf of the totality of art, secondly, the museum-goers, preponderantly young, with their perceptions noticeably quickened from 1968 on. The living museum relies on a well-adjusted relationship between artists, intermediary and public. Before 1968 the image of the museum based on this accepted view was questioned not so much by artists and public as by the middlemen (curators and exhibition organizers). It is the intermediary who is the most liable to suffer from local conditions, such as the limitations imposed by local politics and the availability of premises and finance. One way of removing or breaking through such constraints was to co-operate closely with the representatives of *avant-garde* art before their work fetched high commercial prices. The artist's pleasure in setting up his work in a museum, showing it for approval by the public, and seeing it on show, meant that the museum was transformed into a studio rather than a temple. With limited resources, exhibitions were mounted which were the joint production of enthusiastic artists, museum staff and workers.

The professional incentive of the middlemen then became the wish to discover new artists, and they found it easier to overlook what were frequently unfavourable local conditions.

In the sixties, museums were presented with a wealth of production as never before and, what is more to the point, many of them responded to the offer. A new development of art in the sixties was the gradual appearance of groups and teams of artists, which led directors of museums to sense, and reflect, a new trend or movement almost every year. Art in the sixties was spectacular, entered on a rapid succession of innovating movements, and radically questioned traditional methods. It tended to be large-scale, and discovered new realms of reality as subject-matter. It extended the range of sculpture to include movement and light; and adopted new, mostly synthetic, materials to express newly acquired relationships between space and time. The discovery that floors and ceilings can be used as elements instead of walls and pedestals,



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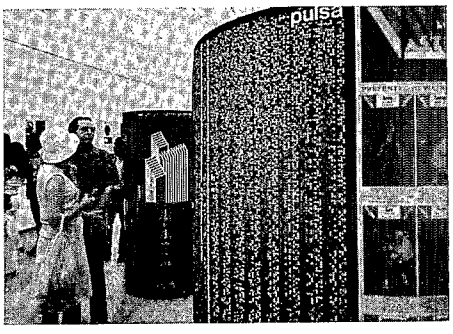

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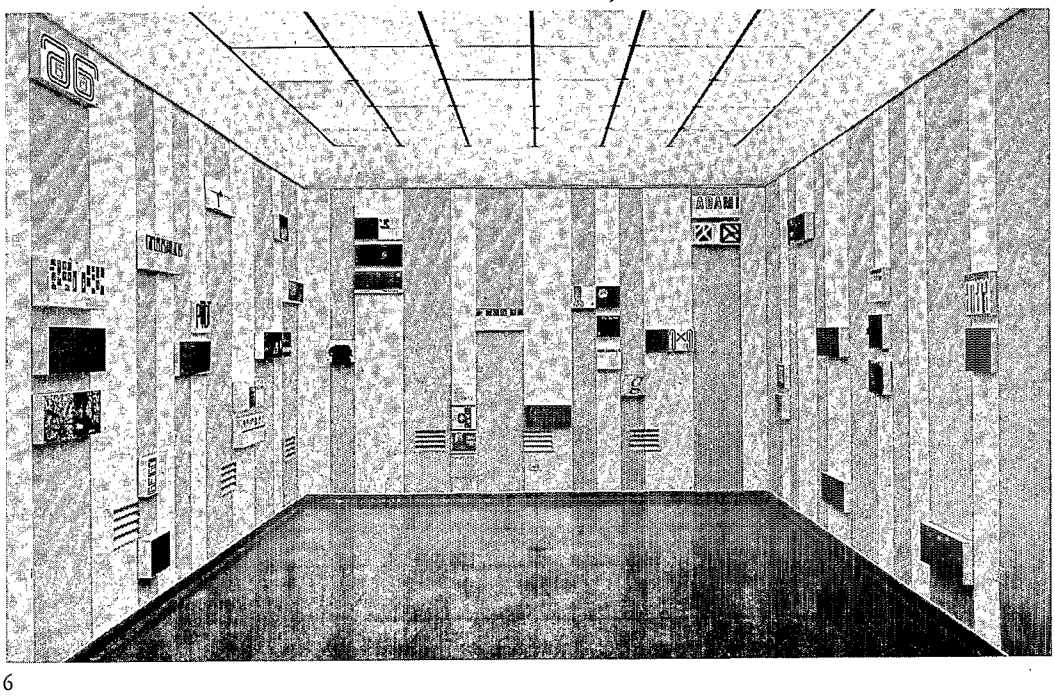

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Museo de Bellas Artes, Caracas. *Aire*. An exhibition of sculpture and art of the machine, 1970.

4
Museo de Bellas Artes, Caracas. Gego exhibition: *Reticulárea* (sculptural environment), 1969.

5
Museo de Bellas Artes, Caracas. *Diseño Gráfico = Communicación*. An exhibition of graphic design.

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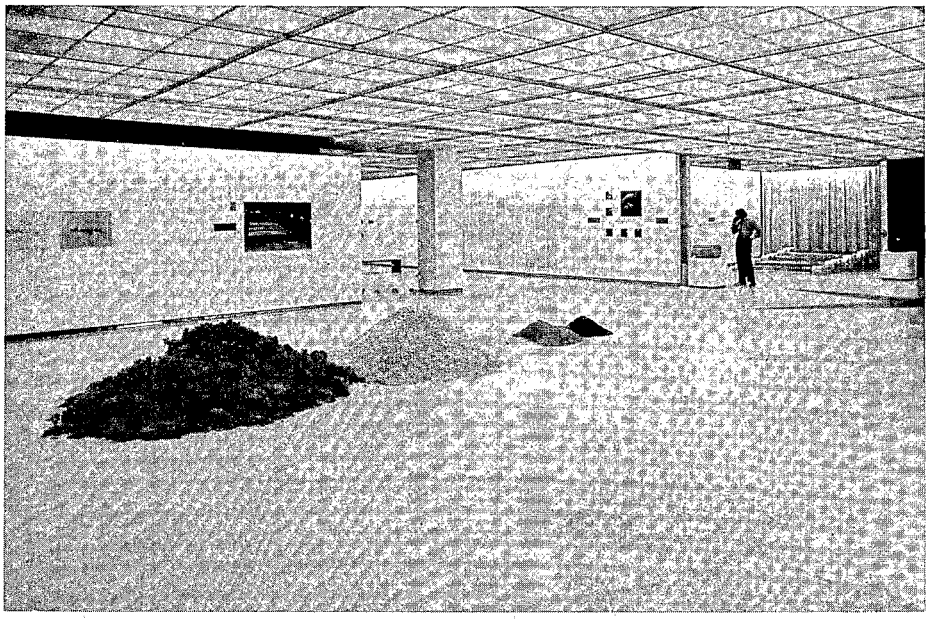
Museo de Bellas Artes, Caracas. *El Diseño y el Museo*. An exhibition about the museum's exhibitions and their design, 1970.



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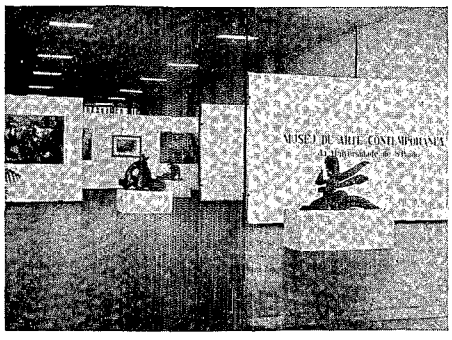
7
Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago. *Art by Telephone* exhibition.
8
Museu de Arte Contemporânea da Universade de São Paulo, São Paulo. Permanent exhibition of national artists.
9
Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Moderna, Arte Contemporanea, Roma. Permanent exhibition of twentieth-century artists.

culminating in the creation of complete museum rooms, indicates the effect on presentation clearly enough. Kinetic art, pop art, 'hard-edge' technique, minimal art and 'environments' marked the successive stages of an art which made the greatest demands on museums for its display. The history of presentation followed closely on the heels of the creative works themselves, and gave visible expression to the progress from painting and sculpture, via plastic art and object art, towards the creation of space.

The museum explosion led to such well-known results as the museum itself being presented as an object, by the use of wrapping (Christo), radio-active radiation (Barry), roofing (Hans-Rucker & Co.) and abolishing the pedestal (Dibbets).

From 1967–68 onwards reaction against this flood of objects set in from a succession of artists scattered throughout the world, whose works were first exhibited together in 1969. Their productions were of such a personal character that exhibitions became impossible without the artist being present in the museum; often they represented the action, the negation of the object, signs, concepts or notions, which could be pronounced as art only in the context of a museum. To the artist's claim to totality in the name of his art was now joined the claim to totality in the name of the museum. When the sculptor Carl André said, 'I climb a mountain because it is there; and I create art because it is not there', or, 'Art is what we do; culture is what is done to us', the museum director's reply was 'A work of art has the vocation assigned to it by its place in the museum' (W. Hofmann). For the first time, making all things possible, museums ushered in the explosion, whose effects have made themselves felt more or less throughout the world. Taking what was being produced, museums assumed the almost amoral attitude of claiming the prerogative to decide what was or was not art. The obvious result was that museum directors found their functions transformed by publicity into those of 'super-artists' forced to outbid each other for productions. The best-known example was probably Henry Geldzahler, Director of the Metropolitan Museum in New York, as much admired as attacked.

The second reason behind the museum explosion is to be found in the sociology of art. It is a fact that during the sixties the traditional art centres declined in prestige—after Paris, the New York art scene is now also disappearing. One of the consequences was that younger artists preferred to work in their place of origin. They no longer lived in Paris or London, but in small towns. Their interest was no longer directed towards a retrospective



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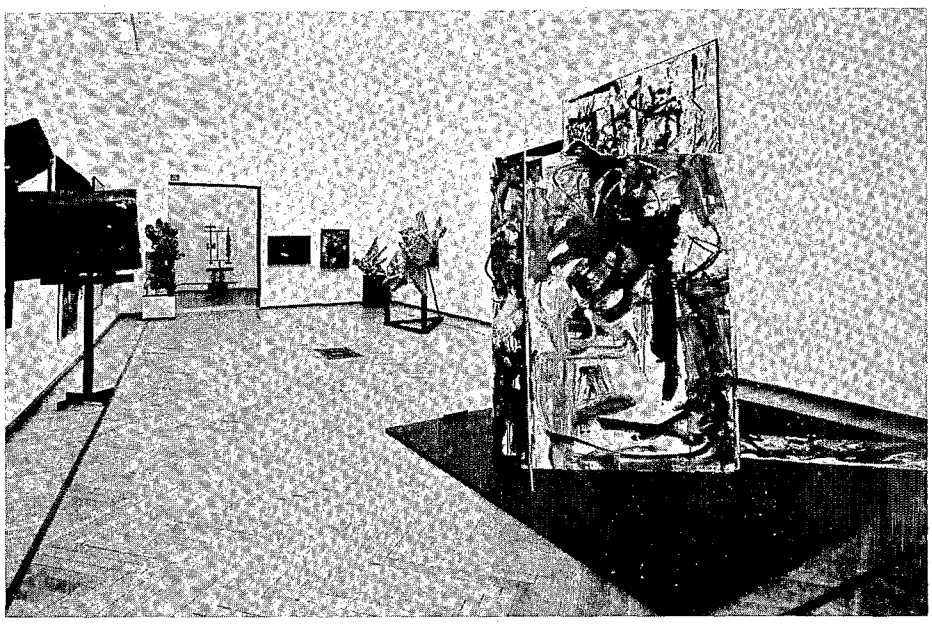

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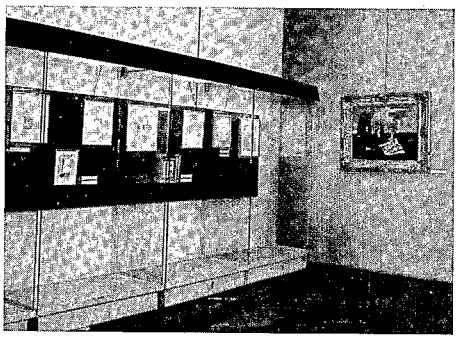
exhibition in Paris, but to an immediate appraisal of their work in their own neighbourhood. Kept informed about the latest developments through the press, exhibitions and travel, they try for their part to confront the public with their opinions about art—opinions which are also frequently social in character—in their local museum. Familiar with local conditions, they are often better placed from the outset to put forward their ideas, in a more spectacular and radical form, than could a team of 'foreign' artists and museum staff (for example the exhibition *Veränderungen* in the Basel art museum, which involved functional changes in a building familiar to the people of Basel, was only partially successful).

It was thanks to, and in co-operation with, artists that museums surpassed themselves throughout the sixties in espousing the artist's cause. Museums took part in the positivistic expansion of object-art and played a decisive part in promoting it. At the same time they also assimilated 'works' which virtually refused to be considered as such and so joined forces with representatives of the trend towards rejecting the object and demanding in its place processes, concepts, the characterization of techniques.

The flexibility of museums in adapting themselves to each new development held out, in many quarters, a promise of freedom which has already been denounced as illusory above, and detected as such by many of those concerned with museums. The many resignations by museum staff in the last two years speak for themselves, and may be regarded as a warning that the function of the middleman is not the same as that of the producer of art.

In the sixties the museum also became the shared home of all the arts, since it was often the only place in which new films, plays and music were produced. The museum of the future might develop into an information centre for related subjects. Here one might cite as an example the new type of museum as described in January 1970 at the Wuppertal meeting. It is true that this description followed on a suggestion by the authorities but its orientation was radically modified by the participants (Leering, Brock and Szeemann). The first prerequisite is to preserve today's objects for tomorrow, and to reflect what is taking place today (which entails as a result a changed attitude to the past). These new tasks are more easily translated into action when a new museum is being built or if tests on theoretical models are made.

The Wuppertal meeting may serve as an example. Here the city wanted a new museum at a cost of DM.12 million to house a collection of paintings from Renoir to Warhol, displayed at the time on the top floor of the city hall.



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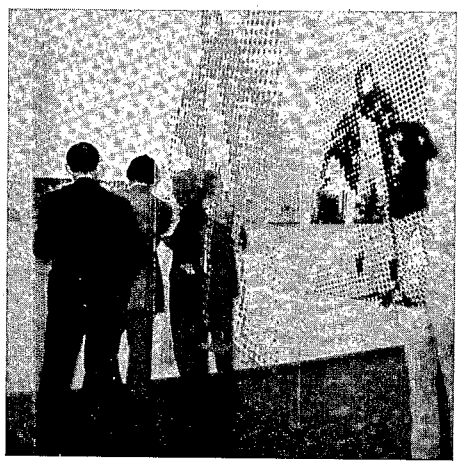

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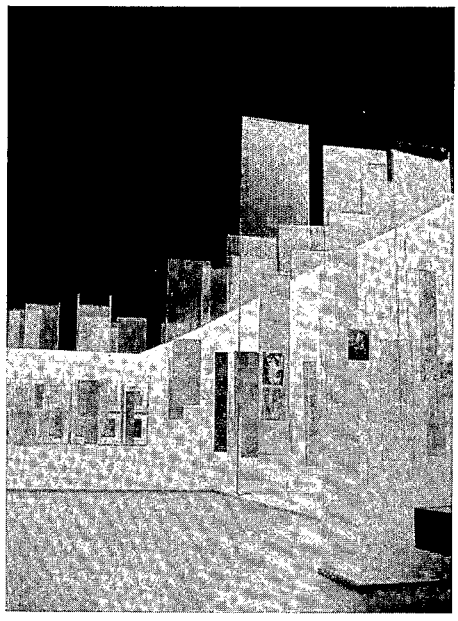

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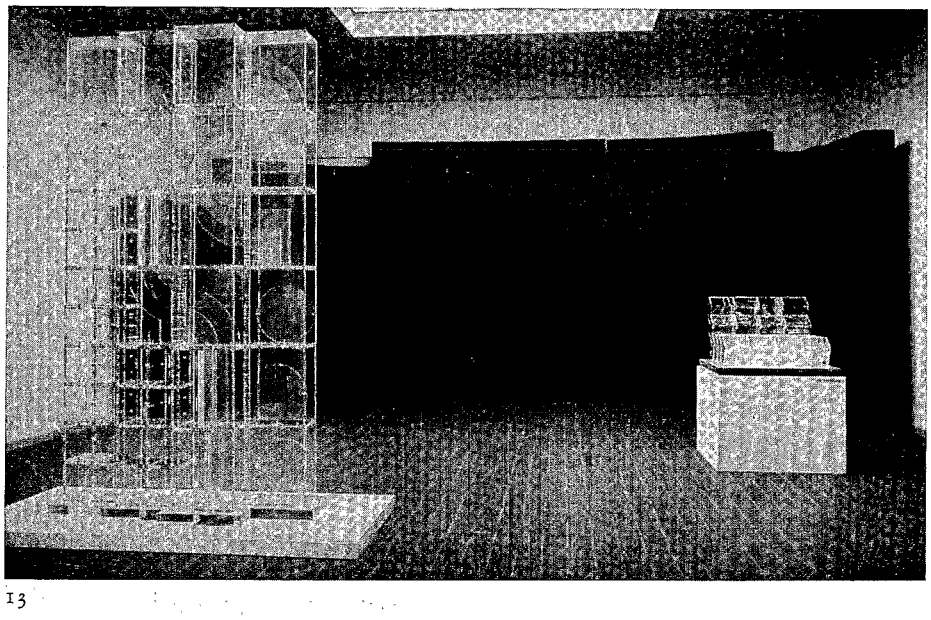

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Muzeum Narodowego, Kraków. Exhibition of the Jan and Susanne Brzękowski collection donated in 1969.
11
Muzeum Sztuki, Łódź. Alain Jacquet exhibition, 1971.
12
Muzeum Sztuki, Łódź. Karol Hiller exhibition, 1969.
13
Rijksmuseum Kröller-Müller, Otterlo. Nevelson exhibition.
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Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven. Andy Warhol exhibition, 1970.
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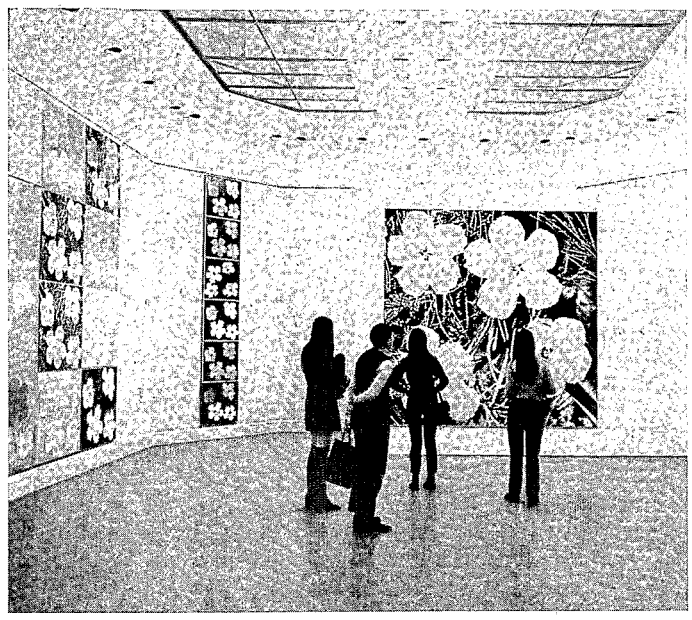
Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven. *Cityplan*, temporary exhibition.



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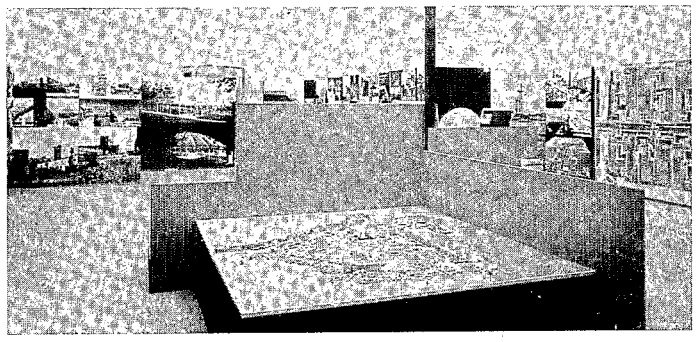

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The prospect of DM.12 million was held out for the understandable reason that the city councillors were aware of the value of the collection (the van der Heydt collection) and also, among others, for cultural and touristic reasons.

Our part in this discussion was to say: 'Why waste these DM.12 million on building accommodation for a collection? Further, who will provide the additional resources to operate the museum and establish communication with the public?' What we proposed was a multi-purpose building for DM. 1.8 million; provision of technical facilities at a cost of DM.2.5 million, to remain invisible but be available when required; the remainder of the sum to be used to stimulate, and even direct, active participation by the city inhabitants. Thus, approximately DM.8 million would be set aside to operate the museum in the best possible way. In essence, the collection should not be the sole reason for a new building, it should be one stimulus among others.

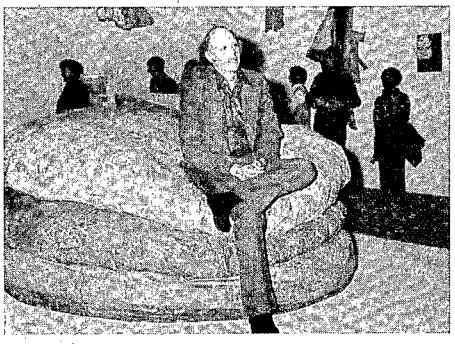
The museum of the future might take the form of new activities planned on ideological lines. To begin with, it should be recognized that the adventure which is art is moving further and further away from the function of a community monument or collection, which must be classified with the art of the past almost as soon as it takes shape. Today's adventure is increasingly to be seen as a protest against the system and authority. In practice it is becoming increasingly impossible to display accepted works of art simultaneously and on the same premises with the new 'anti-art'—though this situation suggests exploiting this paradox provocatively against the system based on possession.

Information centre

A new conception of the museum would entail a new approach to the purpose of a museum. The museum should of course be the place where one comes closest to the artist's sensibility and intentions, but instead of always aiming at working outwards from an item displayed up against the wall, one might also include in the museum of the future art which does not express itself in material form.

A cross-section of a spherical museum of this type would be roughly as follows:

First circle activity. Primary information, i.e. all information, even before it is processed by television, radio and the press; in other words material from press agencies, wire services, live discussions, news comment, fashion reports, etc.



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Second circle. Studios and technical facilities for processing information for the public, artists and the museum.

Third circle. The processed information, which is currently available in the form of exhibitions, concerts, plays and films.

In the centre. The collection as memory bank.[1] The memory bank and what is stored in it together make up the collection as a place for contemplation (not necessarily in the same building).

Purpose. Protection against predigested information. Resistance to monopolies. A stimulus to the public to ask why it is so difficult to receive television programmes from such and such a country when it appears that technically this would be very easy to achieve, whereas weather forecasts are excellent.... In this way the museum would become a transmitting centre instead of being as usual a repository of consecrated material.[2]

A world information museum of this kind, which is a technical possibility, raises the question of leadership, quite apart from the likelihood that it would come up against political difficulties. Very few individuals would have the 'openness' of spirit, not so much to direct such an enterprise as to hold it together. Involving as it would continuous discussion of primary information, it would be an experience which would have to be lived, lived with, on a plane outside time; in other words, the museum would have to transcend all that at present characterizes it as such.

Thus we return to art: system and future trends. Here the problem is still that of the choice of information. Whether we wish it or not, the role of art has always been not only to develop the individual's sensitivity and give rein to his personal experience, but also to imbue him with the feeling of being a man in a given society.

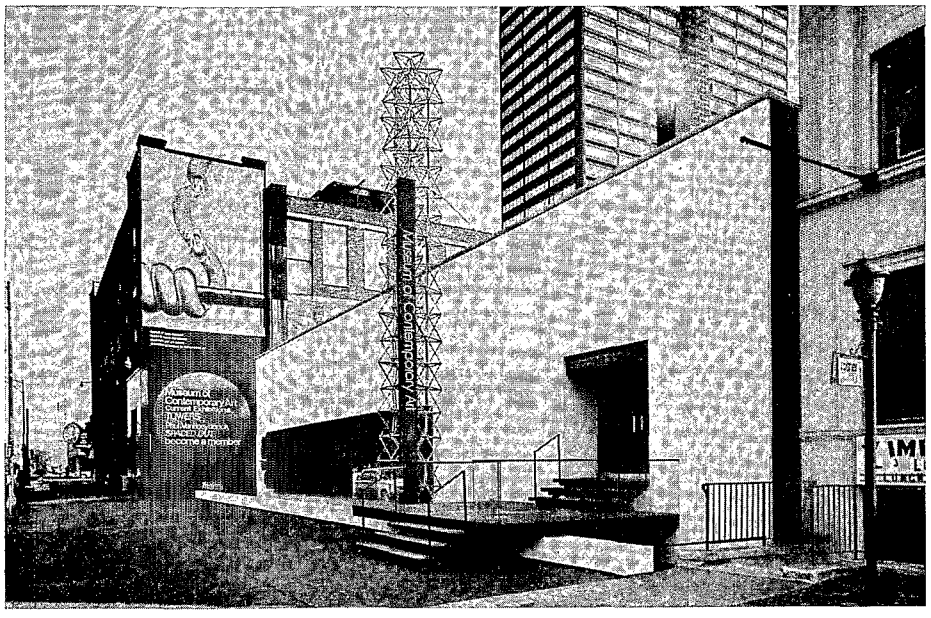
Awareness is hampered because information is constantly distorted. Each of us finds himself, and the public itself, in an increasingly confused situation. All need information, and the question is what method should be used to obtain it? We advocate the creation of a model system in the form of a vast experimental laboratory, which could stimulate and test every kind of information situation; in other words, the museum seen as a centre of information, as a television broadcasting station.

The museum and the artist

The museum explosion coincides with the expansion of art. About 1960, artists began to work for the museum, in the sense that they created works knowing in advance that they would be shown exclusively in the museum. However, even in the sixties, artists were already beginning to become allergic to the idea of co-operating with museums, seeking to escape from the static atmosphere of the museum by organizing their happenings and concerts. Today in 1971, their preoccupations have a more social aim. Artists are no longer interested in getting into the museum, but want to conduct their activities on a wider stage; for example, the municipality. Their appetite has grown: what they primarily want is social recognition. This might point to a new function for the museum which would once more be in harmony with the conditions and attitudes prevailing in the artistic world today, namely to provide the artist with work in the context of the municipality even though this exposes him to a greater risk of repression than work in the context of the museum. But if a museum were to sponsor works outside the museum, the ambiguity would be perpetuated.

Today artists are showing signs of a tendency to stand back from the museum. They claim that this withdrawal in itself ranks as art. The flood of documentation released by artists about themselves is an illustration of this tendency. It is our duty to show a sympathetic interest even in this form of

1. One of us expressed the opinion that the technical impossibility of preserving certain works could be overcome by use of film and sound-tracks.
2. See below, article by M. Kustow, pages 43-44.



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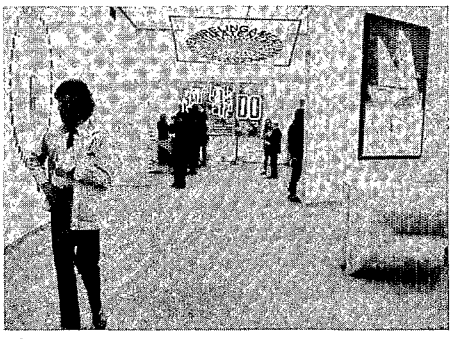


18

artistic expression and in the artists themselves, for our work still primarily consists in the critical examination of the individual achievements with which we are confronted.

The sympathetic interest we must show in a creation which represents the sum of personal risks and responsibilities is yet another reason why we cannot satisfy this social demand for 'transparency', since we are constantly in contact with people who, as artists, still see themselves as being 'different'. Even when they choose social problems as the theme of their artistic activity, their work results in highly personal autonomous forms. Even when artists concern themselves with utopian ideas relating to social problems, these utopian concepts are never presented in socially relevant terms, but must be evaluated as the expression of a personal experience: conditions are described which do not yet exist.

It is becoming increasingly difficult to act as a middleman in the presentation of these ideas, although we are aware that the importance attached to individual experience and the urge to be 'different', and to stand out from the crowd, have never before been so close to the general trend of feeling in the community at large. The point of contact is the presentation of an imagined social situation or another life style, to which artists, being 'different', are capable of giving an anticipatory form. This may be the main explanation why recent museum admission figures show a majority of young visitors. Unconsciously, young people feel that there is a connexion between the aspirations of their own protest movements, which are aiming at a new life style, and the works of some contemporary artists.

Therein lies the difficulty: the museum staff must show a sympathetic interest in the artist's personal answer, although our common outlook lies to some extent outside the aesthetic field. Through our work we should like to make use of the individual's feeling that the current form of society is unacceptable, as an argument in favour of developing new and different ways of living, i.e. ways of feeling and thereby of living together on the basis of new kinds of human relationships. In this connexion, the aspirations of artists are often confused with the aims of art. Experiences in local situations frequently show that the most militant artists are very conservative in their work, while progressive artists, to whom the independence of the artist's message is the very breath of life, are not at all rebels in their attitude to society, although contemporary ways of living are called into question as an indirect result of their life style.

16
Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam. Opening of the Oldenburg exhibition.
17
Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago. Exterior view of the museum showing *Frayed Wire*, a wall monument by Claes Oldenburg and a sculpture by Zoltan Kemeny on the museum wall, 1969.
18
Kunsthalle, Köln. Exhibition of contemporary German art, 1970.

Another task of the museum is to help artists, through its activity, to change their 'post-Renaissance' situation. Some believe that the solution is emerging from the progress of technology, which is leading artists to find new ways of working together: in a group or as a team in new kinds of studios, free from the traditional signs of use by the 'tragic' artist.

Yet another of its tasks, and this presupposes radical change, is to abolish the performance principle in the field of art, for if we give only moral support to the desirability of new ways of living, the idea of creative, 'classless' society will hardly become a reality. This creative, 'classless' society is the theme of artistic activity today, but here again, we attach value only to the form of expression and not to the intention. The transformation of our relationships with artists and thus the transformation of our action as middlemen depend upon the abolition of the performance principle. We are duty bound, almost against our will, to give support to all individual efforts, because society does not yet offer any alternative means of giving everyone the opportunity of feeling and behaving like an artist. Artists are privileged beings, and we know that their privileges are necessary in order to give art its exemplary mystique, but we should like these privileges to be accessible to everyone, as in the fairy tale about the shepherdess and the princess. We should like all shepherdesses to be capable of becoming princesses. These, too, are merely the words of a fairy tale. At the present time—and this explains the interest shown in our work—only the middleman has the power to fulfil the dream of unison between the creative individual and society.

In practice there is a vast gulf between what we ourselves have to do in respect of highly individual, irrational, even bizarre or opaque art forms and the job of linking society with this presentation process.

A contemporary art museum has to deal not only with objects, but also, and to a greater degree than other institutions, with artists.

When we consider the development of contemporary art, we see that some of the importance formerly attached to objects has now been transferred to gestures, attitudes, events. Conservation has become less important. This situation, in which the presence of artists is essential and less importance is placed on the work of art as a product or for its intrinsic value, should be maintained as long as possible, for it is a characteristic feature of the contemporary art scene. Today we are in permanent contact with artists. Artists are our raw material, our suppliers, and also our most interested public. This means continual collaboration on the basis of mutual confidence between museum staff and artists. Such confidence is necessary because otherwise our activities suffer. Our relations must not be administrative, formal and bureaucratic. The museum staff must share the doubts and ideas of the artists, participate in their life and join in their environment.

Such empathy is not achieved without difficulty. Least of all can it be learned through formal training. The artist sees the museum as a place for the promotion of his ideas, as an essential component in the threefold system comprising studio, exhibition and collection, as a complement to the dealer's showroom, as a stage on the road to fame, professional success and well-being.

Artists collaborate with the museum in various ways. There are the traditional ways: participation in exhibitions, co-operation in drawing up and carrying out plans for their organization, and hanging and positioning exhibits. What is relatively new is the role performed by the artist-organizer as an intermediary between an exhibition or other artistic event and the public by taking part in discussions, or by acting as a lecturer or guide for private groups. Finally, the museum is tending more and more to become a place of work, a studio.

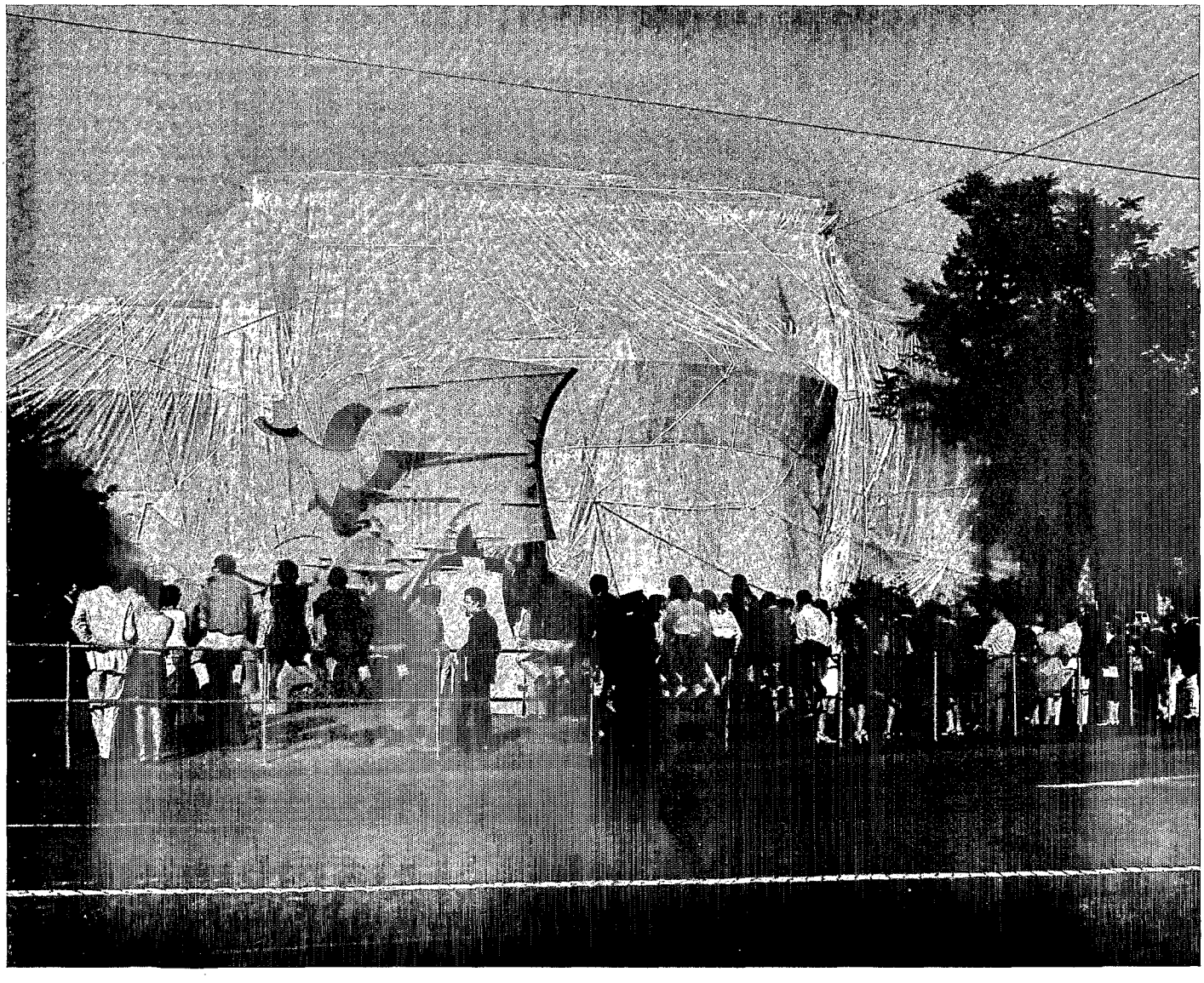
For artists, the museum is often the only place where they can express their opinions freely and openly and where they can voice their demands, so the museum becomes the place where they thrash out their social, corporative

and political problems. It is also in the museum that they meet the younger generation, the students.

As far as participation in the museum's decisions is concerned, artists are still confined to expressing their views at the committee stage, being represented for the purpose by delegates. At the Moderna Museet in Stockholm an artist is consulted about purchases of Swedish art. In general, however, participation raises very great difficulties. The blame for this lies with the artists themselves, who are often only prepared to answer for their own work and to speak for such colleagues as they approve of, but who are otherwise indifferent or hostile as soon as they have to express an opinion on some other subject, or when their own exhibition is over. When the museum director himself appeals to artists for advice, he turns, as a general rule, to such artists as he knows share his views.

Discussing the museum's task and function with artists is worth while, but they are less qualified to deal with museum policy and its implementation. Cases have occurred which show that artists often set out to cripple a museum's activity.

Artists and the public should be involved with discussions about the functions of the contemporary museum. As soon as the guiding principles have



19
KUNSTHALLE, Bern. The Kunsthalle in a plastic wrapping by Christo.

been laid down, the director and his staff or a team should assume responsibility for five or six years.

Efforts have already been made to start such discussions, but in most cases the only representatives of the artist's side were people who are frustrated as artists and merely hope to win recognition for their art in the museum. Indeed, it is typical that those whom we recognize as important are not organized and therefore cannot be considered for election as delegates of an artist's union. We have to deal with characters like the local politician who dabbles in painting or the municipal painter who dabbles in politics. As far as artists' involvement with the museum is concerned, very little is heard of their acts of protest, although of late there have been far more cases of this kind. Various types of case can be distinguished: local conservative artists who feel that any form of international activity is no concern of theirs and who urge their supporters to campaign against 'decadent' art; individual's protest—for instance, an artist seeks to draw the attention of the general public to himself by undertaking a fast on the museum premises; politically conscious minorities who seek to register a protest against the museum as part of the bourgeois establishment and a centre for the propagation of 'bourgeois' culture.

Our main problem in all three cases is how to ensure the safety of the works in the museum or of exhibition material temporarily entrusted to us, while doing all in our power to avoid calling in the police, although this means that we ourselves are once again in the paradoxical situation of having to perform police and guard duty ourselves, in order to preserve the freedom of one of the few free places that exist.

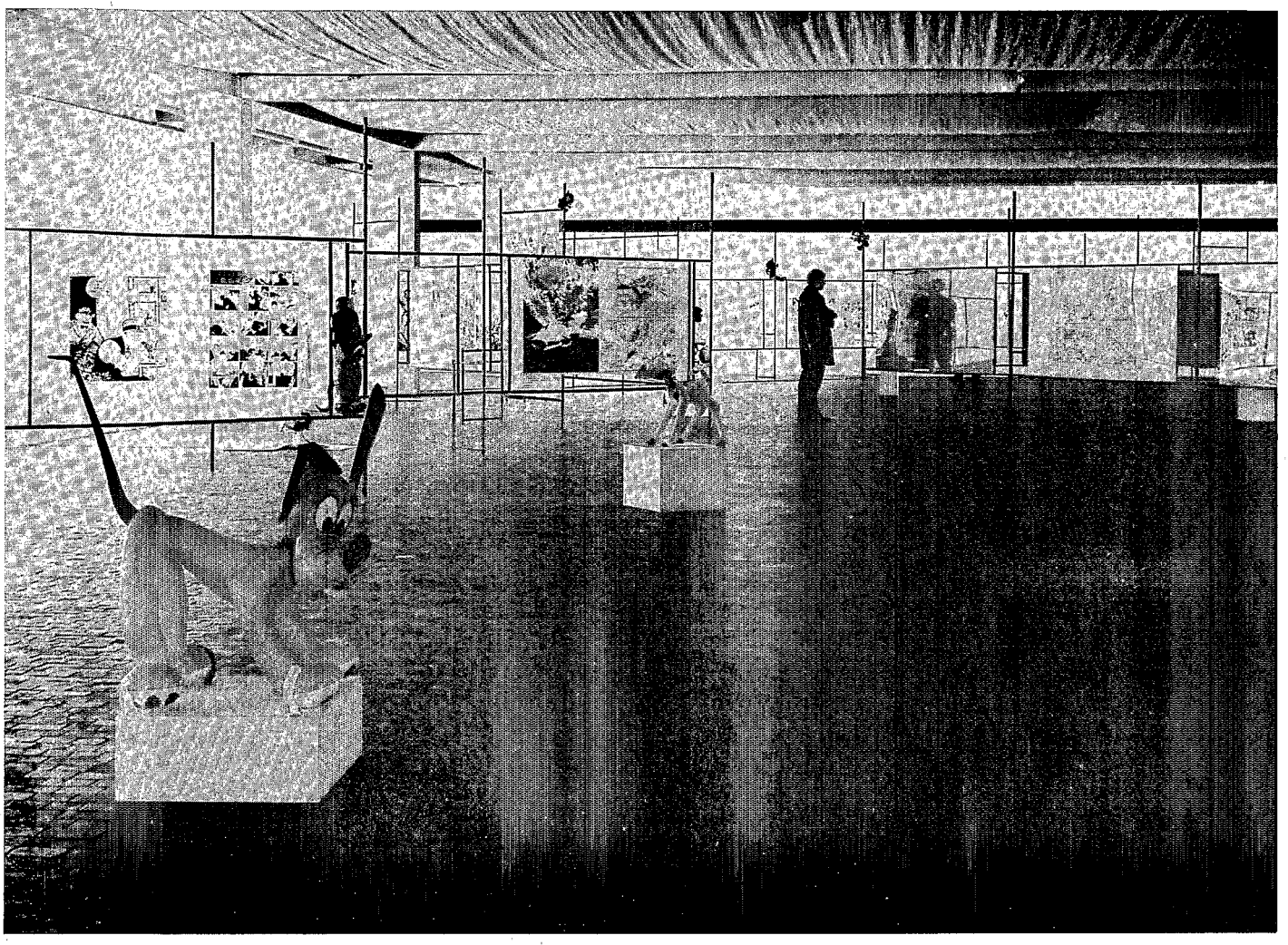
It must be said that in most cases it is not the protesting artists who attack the works in the museum, but their followers and sensation-mongers.

However, once it is a question of stronger forces laying hands on objects displayed, the only situation is to close the museum and seek police protection, not in a spirit of repression, but out of respect for other people's work. In the last analysis, there is no denying the fact that our institutions are subsidized by the municipality or by the State and we draw our salaries from public funds. Museums, therefore, have their place in society, whether we like it or not. However, this fact must not provide the pretext for a swing to the extreme left, nor for a provocative attempt to exert our authority over the artists. The supervision problem is therefore decisive in this connexion.

A problem which has been becoming more acute of late is the question of payment of artists. The practice of paying them in the form of lending fees for the loan of their works has already been adopted on a small scale (Stockholm). Smaller museums cannot yet do this, because their subsidies are barely adequate to meet their current operating costs. The outlay on posters, catalogues and exhibitions is, after all, expenditure on behalf of the artists and in many cases the payment of fees to artists would rule out these promotion expenses. In principle, an attempt should be made to work out an indemnification system, in order to create a true alternative to dealing in works of art to which many artists have recourse in the absence of other possibilities, although they would really prefer not to sell, but to devote themselves to 'research'.

However, the museum can only operate an indemnification system for the artists whose work it exhibits, and who is to decide which artists are to be allowed to exhibit their works? It is evident that democratization in the museum is a vicious circle.

In the Netherlands, there is a highly diversified and well-balanced system of scholarships and grants, which is operated direct by the Ministry. The works acquired in this way are then entrusted to the museum for safe keeping. On the occasion of the exhibition *Happening and Fluxus*, a single contract was concluded with an artist both for his own works and for the display of the works of his colleagues. That was a mistake, for when difficulties arose, the



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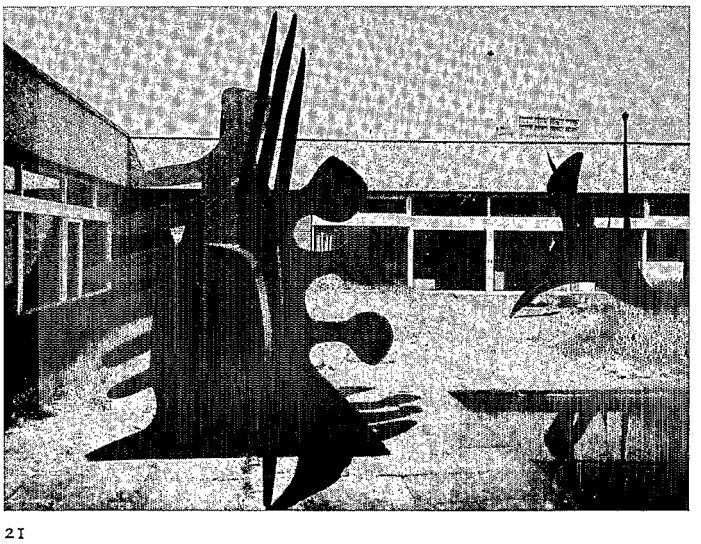

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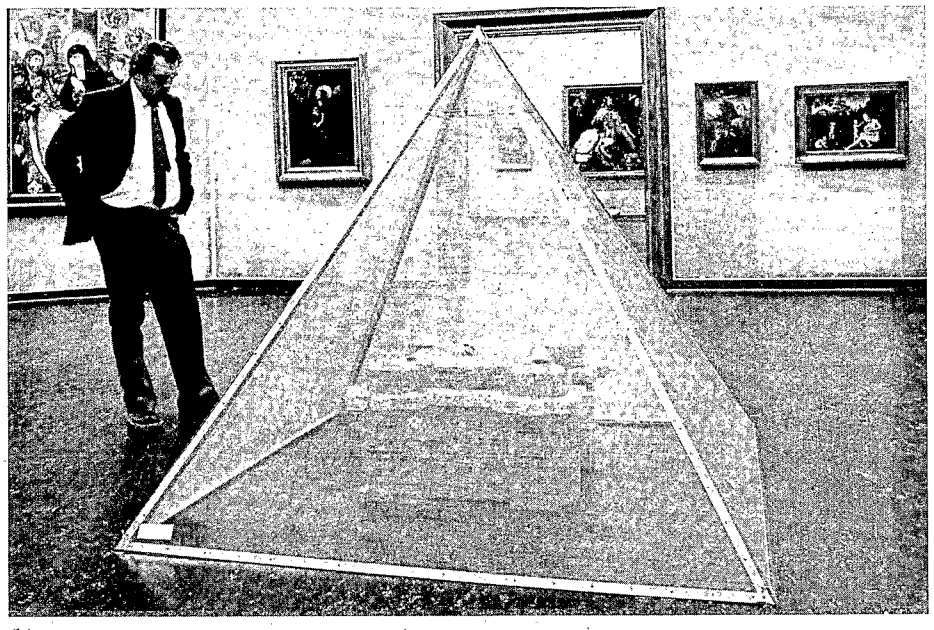
20
AKADEMIE DER KÜNSTE, Berlin.
Comic-strip circulating exhibition, 1969–70.
21
AKADEMIE DER KÜNSTE, Berlin.
Alexander Calder exhibition in the sculpture court of the museum, 1967.

22 (a)



(b)

contracting party protested as an artist and ignored his responsibility as a co-organizer. We still have a great deal to learn in this respect.

An extreme solution to the problem would of course be to let the artists wield the sceptre in the museum for four or five years. Everyone is agreed that it is a mistake to swap professions, but it might be worth while trying the experiment. At the local level, such an experiment could be justified, for museums receive their subsidies not only for the élite of the minority social group engaged in artistic activities, but as an indirect form of social assistance for regional artists. That the artists usually react badly is an established fact: in smoothly functioning museums, they want to seize power, in institutions which welcome them with open arms, they want a director. They attack the museum and want to get into it, they attack the art market and yet allow themselves to be exploited.

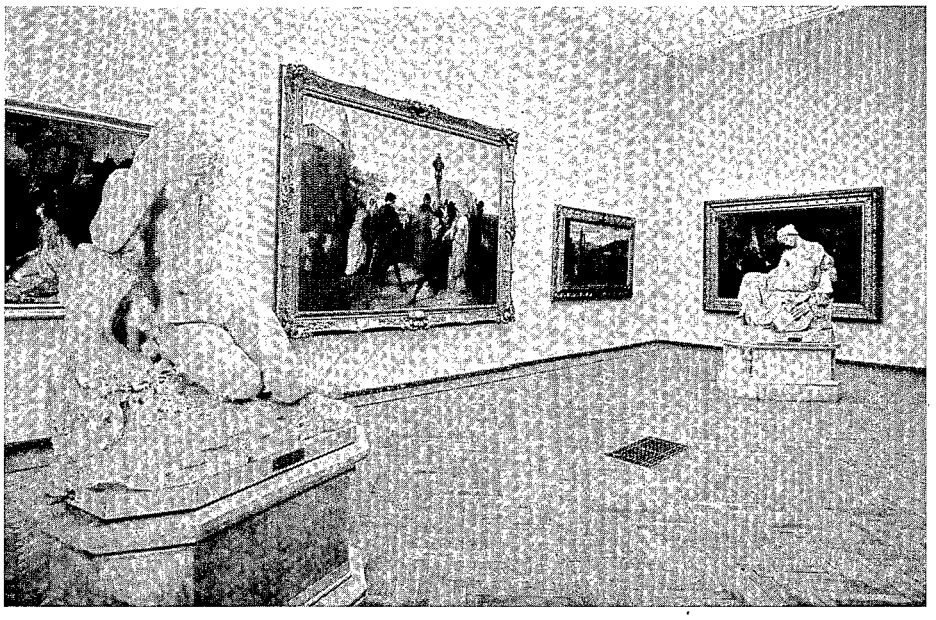
The artist is the most authoritarian and, at the same time, the most anti-authoritarian being, and as long as he remains so, he will continue to be subject to the laws of competition and, from the social point of view, continue to be an underdeveloped, subsidized, pampered creature. This we know. But if there were no artists, museums too would cease to be necessary. All attempts to convert the museum into a place of freedom are shipwrecked on the rock of the artist, who cannot surrender his position. The positive conclusion which we are left with can be formulated as follows: a new vision and intimations of a classless way of life, free from the measurable value principle, can only find expression nowadays in the work of eccentric outsiders.

Museums and the public

Aim: as in the fairy tale, we want at least in 'our' houses to turn shepherdesses into princesses, i.e. to do away with social barriers.

The prerequisite for this is an active and continuous on-the-spot activity, in preference to periodical exhibitions which allow the local collection to lie fallow in the interval.

Problems of structure: the public, the artist, the market, the team. At present it seems impossible to let the public take part in decisions about the function of the museum and its implementation (programmes, purchases). We are in the process of creating a platform for active co-operation and above all for



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22 (a) (b)
KUNSTHAUS, Hamburg. Work of a contemporary artist Jörg Heydemann shown in the room of sixteenth-century German painters. The intention behind this presentation is to incite visitors to discern the art values of works with which they are not familiar. (a) The work during construction; (b) the finished object.

23
GALLERIA NAZIONALE D'ARTE MODERNA, ARTE CONTEMPORANEA, Roma. The exhibition of works of the nineteenth-century Academic schools poses problems in relation to the exhibiting of *avant-garde* schools of the same period.

making discussion possible. The platform does not yet exist. We intend to take note of the varied opinions, remarks and verbal suggestions that may be proffered, which means we must also take up a critical attitude to the public in order to stimulate discussion.

Such an inquiry can be carried out using such well-tried methods as questionnaires, visitors' books, tape recordings and video tapes.[1]

We propose:

Stimulation of the public through previews and outside presentations, as in the theatre, circus, etc., in schools, housing estates, factories, etc.

Mobile units which go out to meet the people (museum buses and other forms of travelling display).

Reduced rates for schoolchildren and free entry for members of the family accompanying the schoolchildren. (Thirty per cent of these family tickets are used at the Moderna Museet.) In this way social groups are reached which would otherwise never visit a museum.

Co-operation with the trade unions.

Organizing meetings and provoking discussions with museum staff. One difficulty is that they have their own hierarchy and are often artists themselves, although producing precisely the opposite of what is shown in the museums.

(These means have a limited impact because of the symbolic and material obstacles, due to living and working conditions. Attention should be focused on the middle classes (tertiary sector: white-collar workers, students, self-employed workers) rather than on the working classes. They have more curiosity and are more willing to learn about modern art, as well as being more open to efforts to move them and arouse their concern.[2])

The creation of branch museums in these districts, where finances, staff or transport belonging to the museum are lacking. (However, such branch museums are themselves far from being an ideal solution, for the exhibits are not 'experienced', as the museum is too remote from the atmosphere of everyday life.)

Adoption of free entrance[3] (a museum is not a theatre or cinema). The ticket for a football or rugby match is of course more expensive, but what is offered is in a sense irreproducible, unique.[4] The entrance fee is a heritage of the museum as a temple.

Lectures. [5]

All the various external trappings attending a visit to a museum (formal

1. The Hamburg Kunsthaus went one step further with the exhibition *Künstler Machen Pläne —Andere Auch* (Artists Make Plans—So Do Others). By advertising in the daily press, the people of Hamburg, as well as the artists, were invited to send in their projects. The results were as follows: while the artists imagined themselves in utopian situations and depicted existence on that plane, the plans and projects of the people of Hamburg were aimed at practical changes: three-handled cups, better household-refuse collection, lower steps for entering public-transport vehicles, etc.

2. Results of a survey of the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, show a very high level of culture; the public mostly between 20 and 30 years of age, mainly students. People in the surrounding area visit the museum more than once a month (48 per cent): those living in districts further away make fewer visits.

3. Entrance fees cover one-third of museum expenses. Higher entrance fees have not, however, affected the rising number of visitors at the Stedelijk.

4. Similar comparisons may be drawn with gramophone records in fashion.

5. At the time one of us was curator in a provincial town, he was obliged to present a rough estimate of costs, i.e. to establish the balance between profitable and non-profitable exhibitions. With a view to stimulating interest, he gave fifty lectures to representatives of all classes, over a period of five years, and thereby established that the opposition came primarily from the *cadres* (teachers, foremen).

24
KUNSTVEREIN, Düsseldorf.
Opening of the Tetsūmi Kūdo exhibition, 1970.
25
BIENNALE, Venezia.

24

architecture, entrance regulations, staircases, closing times, museum attendants, etc.) at present put a great many people off. The way in which museums function is linked up with a cultured way of life, i.e. it unfortunately presupposes a high standard of intellectual training.

It would be advisable to have a platform on which the public feels itself called to take an active part in museum policies and in the work of selecting programmes. The problem does not lie in the number of visitors, but rather in how the public can be brought to participate in the decisions. It is obvious that the platform in question will at first be overrun with dilettantes and that it is only thereafter that it can be looked to for a worth-while, serious contribution. Is this the right approach or should a distinction be made in relation to the people for whom the museums are catering, i.e. should not only the personality of the artist but also—much more difficult—that of the visitor be taken into account? Personal contact is undoubtedly the best formula for the future, but it is asking too much of one person to expect him to combine administrative functions with those of an 'Ombuds-Museum Director'. In Paris it is customary for the artists to make themselves available to the general public, schoolchildren and, also, on request, small private groups. It is they who seek to arouse interest, inside the museum as well as out. In Stockholm, contact with children is given priority. They are taken, according to age group, to the studios, where there are discussions for the older pupils and games for the younger ones. Then each is encouraged to engage in some activity: painting, playing, story-telling. At the weekend their families come too. On Sundays there may be up to a thousand children with their parents and brothers and sisters. Perhaps these examples will suffice to show that the relationship between the museum and the public depends, more than in other spheres, on local conditions, as they are and as they can be made to develop.

Museums and art dealers

The art market is ruled by a few basic principles which stem from the assumption that the work of art is an object with a specific financial value. The buyers are collectors and museums. There are two kinds of collectors: the first invest in prestige and works of art while the second speculate. Dealers are not particularly important to collectors of the first type. They are amateurs who indulge their own tastes, are proud of the works they possess and gladly show

them to their acquaintances; their collection is also something of a status symbol. Rich amateurs have often built up remarkable private collections which later become public.

Today collectors are more likely to be speculators. They speculate on rising prices and so encourage the modern system which exists: works by certain painters become artificially rare and these artists are turned into stars at the expense of others who never find their way into this closed circuit. In some countries the ultimate aim is often not even to sell at a profit but merely to reduce tax liability.

Dealers used to favour other methods. Financial interests may well be adversely affected if a painter changes his style. Attempts have therefore been made to prevent artists from abandoning a given style after money has been spent on launching it. The museum also has a part to play in this system which ensures that only major artists become known. But the artists themselves need considerable staying power. Many have found their way into the circuit only to be forgotten soon afterwards. The process of selection is always at work.

Over the years museums and galleries have shared the role of scouting for talent, but the artist has always had to prove himself. Museum exhibitions, which tend to 'consecrate' the work selected for display, have always had important consequences for the artist: the price of his work rises and his position on the art market is assured.

More recently dealers have even taken an interest in the more ephemeral forms of art. There is nothing that cannot be sold.

Dealers and speculators are well aware of the moral scruples of modern artists and leave them complete freedom to begin with. Pressure is only exerted when the artist becomes better known. Attempts are then made to prevent him from changing his style. This explains why museums sometimes try to bypass dealers. The Moderna Museet in Stockholm published a statement to the effect that it would buy no more paintings from galleries. Artists were requested to send photographs and slides of their works direct to the museum. In principle the artist's price would be accepted if the work was bought. The galleries reacted vehemently. And most artists were indifferent to the experiment. This procedure was probably worth trying in Sweden but it would be difficult to introduce internationally. Quite apart from the question of effectiveness, many artists would certainly refuse to bypass the galleries.

The Swedish and Dutch examples do, however, show, if only on a limited scale, the efforts being made to create a valid alternative to the dealers by taking steps to counteract the system under which the cultural arbiter also holds the purse-strings. Museums can also make an economic contribution to the establishment of a parallel system and so reduce speculation. A parallel system cannot, however, be set up without municipal or State funds. We know that in accepting money we are tacitly supporting the Establishment by confirming the *status quo* in the cultural sphere. On the other hand, we can use this money to create a genuine, if only local, alternative to the unsatisfactory closed shop controlled by the dealers.

In short, the dichotomy we have seen in discussing every aspect of our subject also characterizes relations with art dealers. As independent institutions we recognize dealers as a useful filter for talent, yet we accept money from the authorities not in order to enhance their prestige, but in order to give artists an alternative to the self-interested dealers—and even though for the most part artists respond to our efforts with indifference.

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Museums and authorities

The authorities with which we come into contact are our sponsors: the State, municipalities and semi-private, subsidized associations. These authorities are

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appointed democratically and it is usual for the money earmarked by them to be accepted. As we have already seen, culture has become an industry in our society. The museum for its part, since its establishment, has made good its claim to independent status. And the reason why it became independent was that art put forward a similar claim; by supporting this claim, the museum in effect cuts itself off from its social background.

Artists specialized in 'making' pictures and sculptures, detached their work from the architectonic context and through many detours, e.g. the phase of the 'tragic' artist, eventually became aware of their otherness. They also came to see themselves as critical opponents of authority, capable of changing attitudes and thereby, social conditions. The arts in particular broke away from cultural association with the State when the latter began to take over cultural functions (education, religion, administration of cultural centres, protection of monuments, etc.) in addition to its civilizing role. The free arts did not want State patronage but demanded neutral material support.[1] Confronted with this latent conflict, the museums came out in support of the artist and from their intermediate position between artists and the authorities—on whom they were dependent—sought to create a workable, liberal climate enabling artists to criticize the system through their work and create independent representational worlds which imply criticism by their very otherness. The museum director is therefore faced with a real problem: can he be the employee of a system which he questions or wishes to question through his activity? He enjoys no support from the authorities or the majority of artists; his only backing comes from ill-organized groups of museum staff in other countries and artists who understand him but often have no influence in the local situation. It is only under this late capitalist system that we museum staff have the freedom to make friends, meet and discuss beyond the barriers of national frontiers. It is high time for this fact to be clearly stated. What we need more than trade unions is the possibility of maintaining free contacts among ourselves, which are far more valuable for informational purposes.

Contracts are a special problem. Most of us have no contract because it would inevitably contain too many unacceptable clauses. Our work is felt either to undermine the system or on the contrary to represent a form of repres-

1. When the Minister of Culture suggested to Courbet that he could after all dilute his wine with a little water, the artist made a typical reply: 'I am my own government and take orders from no other. . . .'

27

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26
KUNSTVEREIN, Düsseldorf. J. R. Soto at an exhibition devoted to his works, 1968.
27
KUNSTHALLE, Bern. Etienne Martin at his exhibition, 1963.
28
KUNSTVEREIN, Düsseldorf. Niki de Saint-Phalle (at left) at an exhibition of her works, 1968.

sive tolerance (Marcuse); from this ambiguous situation we derive the freedom which each of us must use in his own local situation, regardless of whether we are considered as civil servants or as persons in authority. Our ideal would be to enjoy the respect granted, for example, to scientific institutes on which society passes no value judgements. We should like support for the sake of what we do and not for our services in promoting the cultural prestige of our backers. Nor do we wish to throw down a challenge to the authorities by aggressive behaviour. Our proximity to the sources of artistic production often lends our decisions (exhibitions, acquisitions, organization of cultural activities, events, etc.) the appearance of provocative attacks, but time and a more balanced appraisal show that we are in fact pushing back the frontiers of aesthetic experience.

Oddly enough, our relations with the authorities are much smoother than our dealings with artists. Our own problems cannot be settled in the cold light of reason by objective, administrative agreements with officials; they are problems of conscience and scruple constantly encountered in making the selection forced upon us by the changing artistic situation. Because we are engaged in a permanent process of questioning ourselves and everything else in order to develop new formulae, it is ridiculous to call us 'civil servants'. Ultimately, however, the title is not a decisive factor; what matters is our work, which has the advantage of independence not least because of the relatively low salaries we are paid.

The comparison which is repeatedly drawn with scientists is not entirely satisfactory; the latter cannot work at the government's expense for years on end without achieving results and we probably enjoy greater freedom in so far as we are regarded as intermediaries in the art world rather than researchers into future patterns of life. Our training is also very different from that of scientists. They can follow internationally organized courses of study whereas we must acquire our own training in an active working environment. We should therefore not hold it against the authorities if they pay us what they consider an appropriate fee for the measure of irrationality latent in our activities and increasingly treat us with benevolent mistrust or mistrustful benevolence, instead of merely pointing, as they do, to the unprofitable nature of our efforts. It is obvious that we shall never be given enough money for all our projects. It is also obvious that we should like more.

The authorities and society as a whole therefore look upon us as a subversive force while still recognizing that we conscientiously discharge our duties, i.e.

29
KUNSTHALLE, Bern. Soto Exhibition. The *Penetrable* at the entrance of the museum.
30
KUNSTHALLE, Bern. Exhibition: *Light and Movement, Kinetic Art.* Active participation of the visitors.

29

cultivation of awareness, education of visitors, provision of information and the development of sensibility. We establish a measure of harmony in an increasingly strife-ridden society by demonstrating that the free development of sensitivity may offer a means to overcome the problems to which the loss of that quality have given rise.

The director and his team

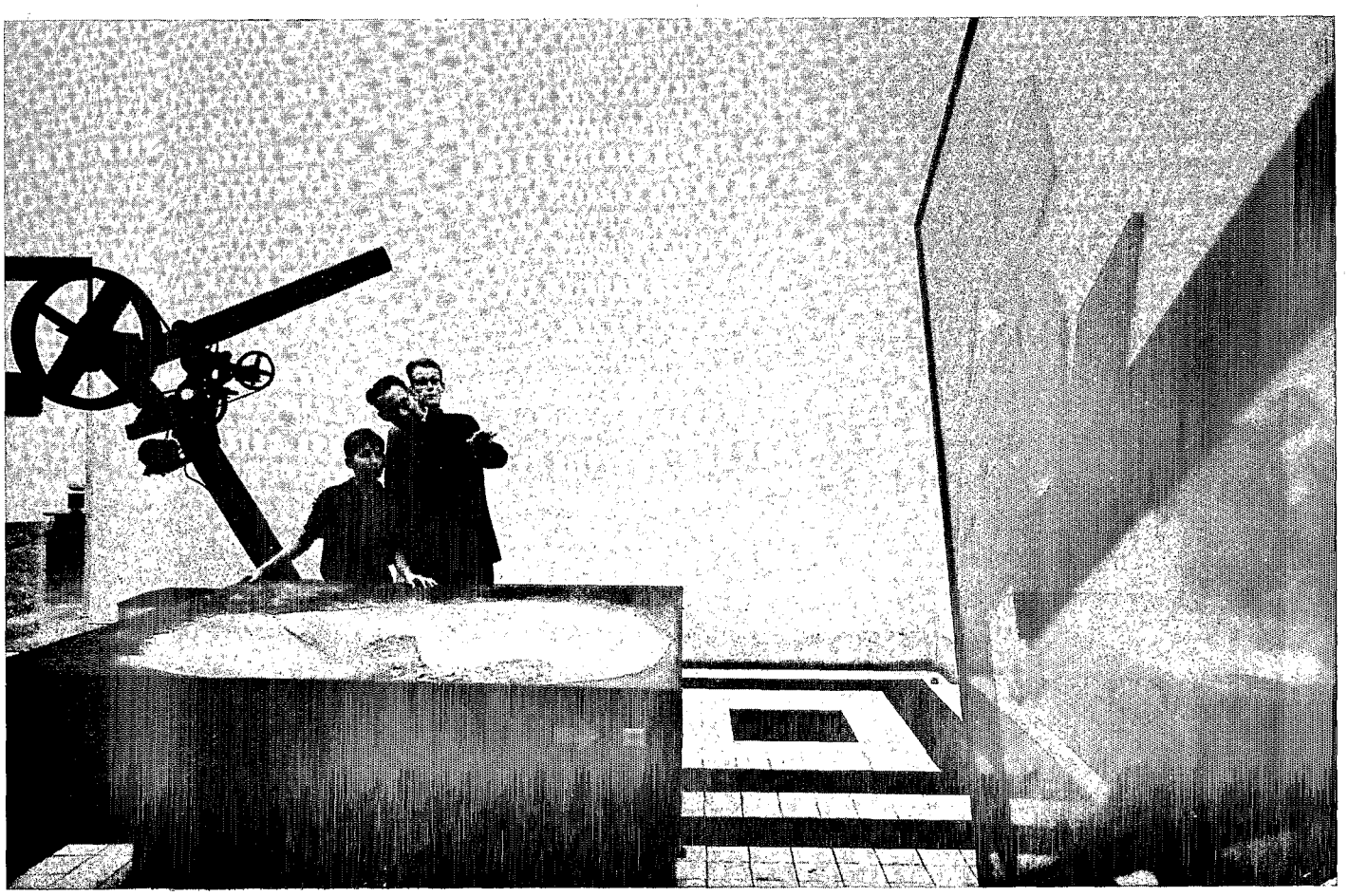
It is generally agreed that a public hearing or check-up of senior museum officials could be arranged every four or five years, the ultimate aim being to replace the director by a team. This is hardly the place to discuss the composition of the team because in spite of the international nature of the art world, exhibition practice still varies from country to country. Leering recently developed a novel scheme for team management under which members of the team would share their functions on a rota basis: while one was in charge, the second would be preparing to take over from him and the third would be engaged on research. According to him there is general willingness to replace directors by teams but funds are lacking. It is, however, conceivable that the serving director might receive a full salary and his colleagues only half pay with a supplement for special services. With a team of three members, functions would alternate as follows in a six-year cycle: X = director, Y = assistant director, Z = administrator; Y = director, Z = assistant director, X = administrator, etc. After six years the team would come up for re-election by the general assembly.

The collection

We are all aware that no museum can exist without a collection, i.e. a selective nucleus as a storehouse of information and a source of inspiration for future decisions. The collection is a yardstick by which the internal art situation can be gauged; it contains an unrivalled memory of past experience in concise form. The collection gives a bird's-eye view of ideas which were formulated and came to dominate at specific times in the past. We believe this to be an important consideration also for the information centre we described above. The collection is often justified as a summary of collective experience. Nevertheless it is practically always put together by a single person.

It is not here our intention to defend the collections made by persons present at this meeting, but it does seem worth considering a practical question with which the director of the Stedelijk Museum is now confronted. In the context of a museum of contemporary art, what is to be done with the body of generally recognized work that a collection comprises? What about Cobra for instance? How can we function as a museum following its time if we still show yesterday's work? This has become a problem because the role of a museum which exhibits the art of today and tomorrow has changed completely. Nevertheless we are lumbered with a mass of works which correspond to quite different reactionary conceptions of property. Yet the collection also embodies the collective memory and without that memory and the knowledge of past adventures we shall fall into the same old traps. How far back should this collective memory (the collection) extend? Usually for not more than sixty years, i.e. to the age of Cubism, though in thirty years' time Cubism together with De Stijl and the documents of the Bauhaus period will have to be transferred to a museum of 'old' art.

Let us not forget that a collection which stands for the notion of possession of property frequently prevents a museum from serving its true purpose. Action and possession are still incompatible in our society. Only a change in the whole concept of property could lead to museums of a new kind where any question of a recognized art heritage would no longer arise. Here again we encounter a dichotomy. We feel free when we make an acquisition. But the day after that acquisition already belongs to the recognized artistic property of the municipality. However exciting the adventure of acquisition may be, the object purchased soon becomes a mere possession. The greater its value, the more difficult it will become for the museum which houses it to embark upon new projects—out of veneration for the existing work.



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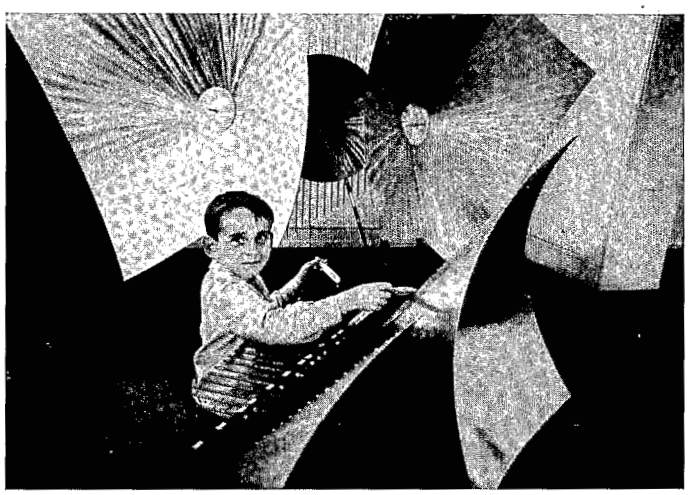

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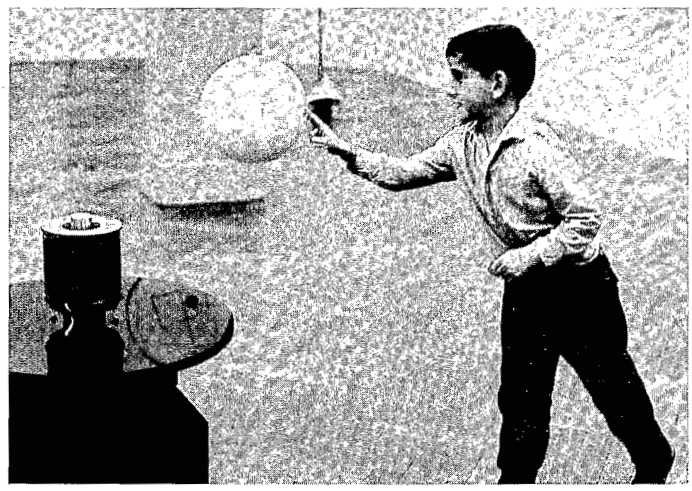


(b)

31 (a), (b)
KUNSTHALLE, Bern. Exhibition: *Light and Movement, Kinetic Art.* Children's participation.

32
MUSÉE NATIONAL D'ART MODERNE, Paris. Moulded cows of polystyrene and fibre-glass, painted by Samuel Buri and Claude Stassart, shown on the terrace of the museum. An example of involvement outside the museum: the visitors are put into direct contact with the works exhibited.

33
MODERNA MUSEET, Stockholm. Since the autumn of 1968, a lot has been done to convince either the authorities or people in general that transforming society is above all a question of human relations. Hence the accent on having some place in a community where all kinds of people, of all ages, could meet, without having to pay, to work or play, or simply be together. The 'Model for a Better Society', at the Moderna Museet in Stockholm, was an example. It was paid for by the government, by firms and by private people. The museum provided the staff and the premises. All kinds of material were made available to the children, who were given an almost total liberty.
The illustration shows children dressing up in costumes provided by the Stockholm Opera.

32

33

The building

Categories of information required as guidance for the architect are: artistic information; information in general.

The museum of the 1960s was a centre which enabled artistic intentions to be put into practice. The new museum should offer the widest possible range of experience. This is bound to have an impact on museum architecture.

First of all we would break from the flat uniform informality of frontal encounter with a 'valuable' object. Some artists have already tried to do this through their works and museums have followed with new forms of presentation.[1]

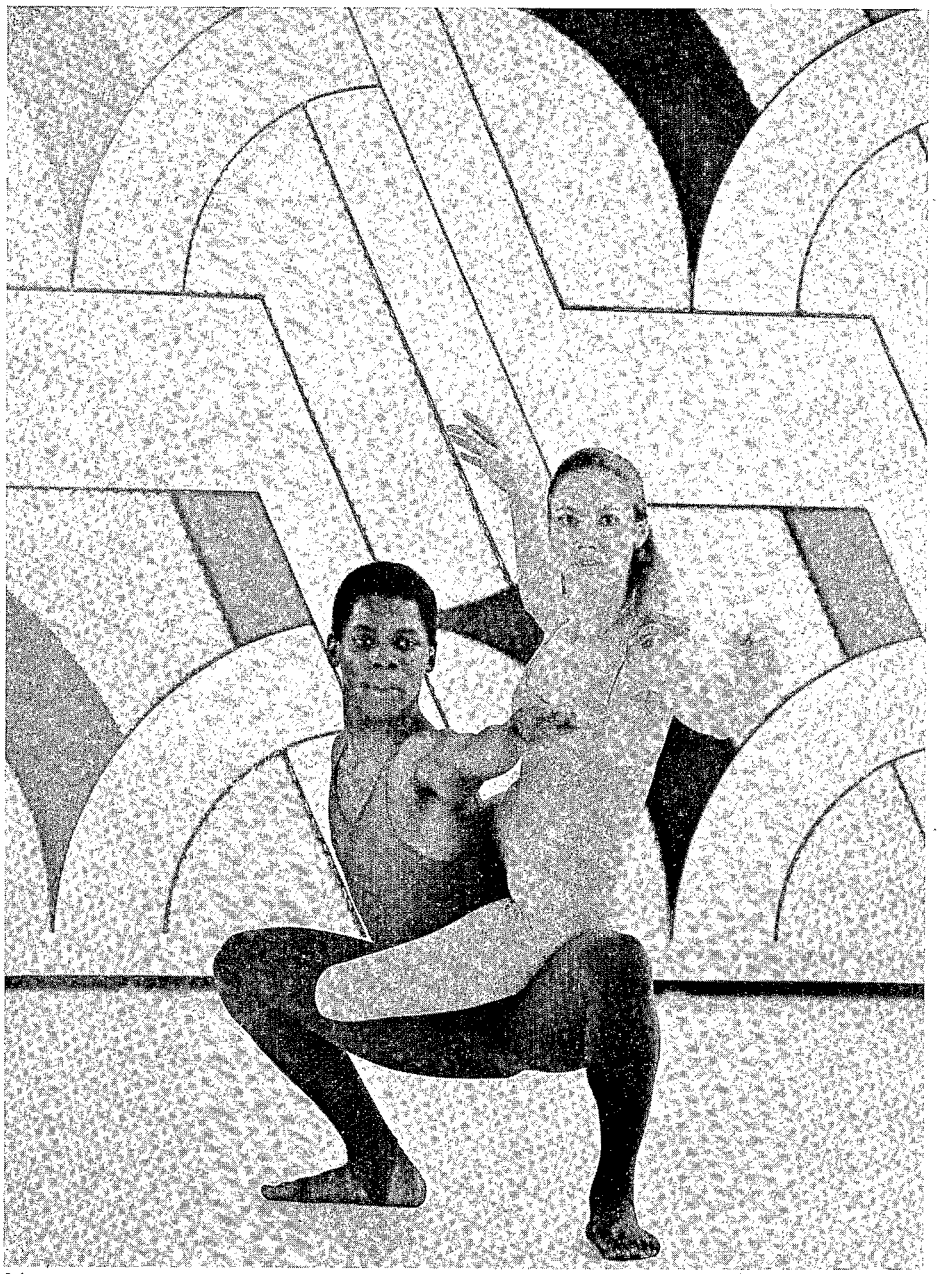
Monumental museums have had their day. The modern solution is a framework costing as little as possible with maximum flexibility of space arrangements. This framework must offer the facilities (e.g. electricity, stereo systems, gas, fire) necessary for artists and other collaborators to implement all their projects. How many projects still cannot be organized today because of inadequate power supplies?

Activities should also spill over outside the museum. This is purely a matter of organization. The erection of a new museum calls for a detailed programme of action rather than specialized architecture. If we hope to fire the interest of our visitors and turn shepherd girls into princesses we have no need for a monument in honour of the architect, the collection or the government which has dipped into its pocket.

The collection presents a different problem. In order to conserve collective memory, exhibits should be hung permanently in rooms which are separate from the activity centre of the museum. It may, however, also be possible to use the collection (i.e. the encounter with familiar objects) to arouse the visitor's interest. He should not have to find his way through a maze of rooms to reach the work that interests him. One might dream of the masterpiece on call first by help of pertinent information in the entrance hall and then presented on a goods lift. This entails a transition from 'horizontal' to 'vertical' perception. However, this effort to make everything easy for the visitor entails a contradiction: on the one hand the public is expected to participate more actively but on the other the effect of the presentation is heightened in such a way that the user of these penny-in-the-slot culture machines can only admire and applaud. We do not want this either.

Artists and their work naturally influence the type of presentation, which can

1. The Stedelijk Museum for example has put on simultaneous exhibitions (judgement-forming as a concept) and worked out projects such as *Bewogen Beweging* (participation from different points) and *Dylaby* (spatial integration of the viewer).



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34
Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago. Murray Louis Dance Company. Lecture demonstration, 1970.

35
Vancouver Art Gallery, Vancouver. *Special Events*, 1970, with the artists John Juliani and Juliani Wedding.

36
Vancouver Art Gallery, Vancouver. *Thursday Noon Event*. (a) With the artist Bruce Miller, 1969; (b) with the artist Gathie Falk, 1970; (c) with the artist Glenn Lewis, 1971.

37
Vancouver Art Gallery, Vancouver. *Thursday Noon Event* with the dancer Norbert Vesak.

38
Musée Municipal d'Art Moderne, Paris. The Sara Pardo Company improvising in the Rauchenberg exhibition, 1968.

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36 (a)

(b)

c

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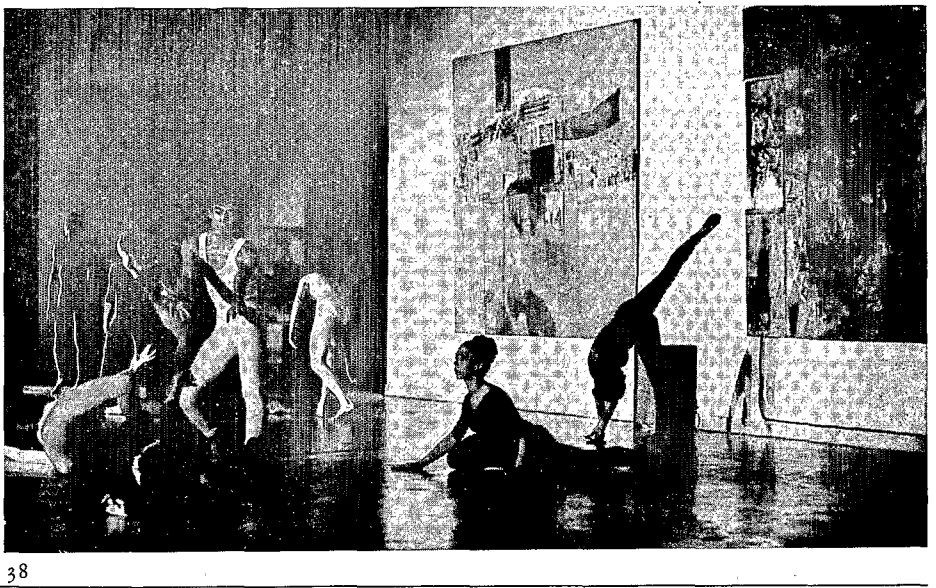

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readily be changed every five years. It is a fact that artists sometimes go off the rails and then become optimistic again. In other words they alternate between different behaviour patterns which influence their life, their work and its presentation. But this is a problem of fashion. It seems to us far more important for the work of art to refer the visitor back to the basic constants of nature (trees, leaves). The task of stimulating the visitor's interest does not preclude confronting him with obstacles and objects that arouse his resistance, and should not be confused with the installation of neutral escalators and cafeterias. One special kind of stimulation consists in enabling the visitor to call for the picture of his choice, proceeding from formation material to the original. At the moment of choice the picture is both a source of information and a valuable object. Values are therefore placed in a new perspective. This is a prerequisite for a society which respects what is precious without thinking all the time of its value and which sees the collection as primarily a cultural adventure and a fragment of human history.

Is it possible to house under the same roof a collection and a display designed principally to stimulate? Opinions differ. Ultimately architecture is governed by considerations of content and objectives. Modern artistic production has a

39
Musée Municipal d'Art Moderne, Paris. Improvisation of pop music by a group of college boys, surrounded by the visitors to the opening of the Andy Warhol exhibition, 1971.
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Musée Municipal d'Art Moderne, Paris. The Merce Cunningham Company improvising in the exhibition of structures *Hors-space* by Degotter (ARC, 1970).

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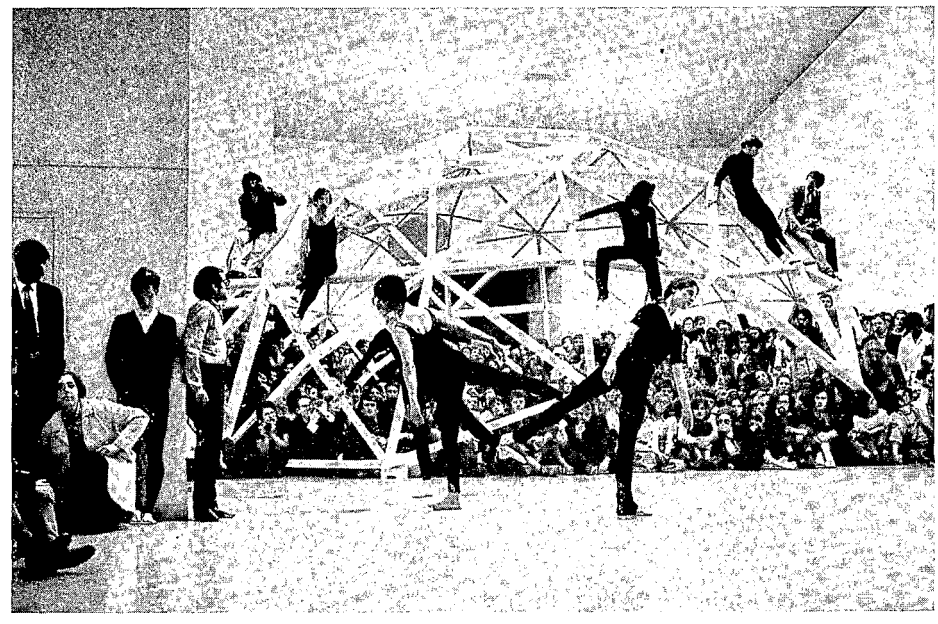

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need for centres with a dense cultural content, but in abstract terms they are no longer necessary.

In Hamburg for example a number of people at the Kunsthaus worked out new guide-lines for their work. They then transferred their activities to housing estates, intentionally turning their backs on the prestige of the Kunsthaus and art. But after only a short time they were obliged to return to the protective umbrella of art and redefine their point of departure in order to convince people of the need for their action.

What external form should this bastion of freedom take? All kinds of improvements and changes can be made in existing buildings. A new museum cannot do without an information department and special areas to stimulate choice, as well as activity areas and a collection. Unfortunately it must also have originals which alone can guarantee the museum visitor's participation in events. But as long as we must exhibit original works to inculcate a new visual perception we cannot break away from the concept of a treasure chamber. We can, however, use the original as a vehicle for comprehensive information. In this respect a great deal remains to be done. Indeed we are only just beginning.

[*Translated from German*]

Profiles and situations of some museums of contemporary art

Michael Kustow[1]

For this special issue of *Museum* on the problems and future possibilities of the museum of modern art a questionnaire was sent to the principal modern art museums and to those museums which, in addition to their historical collection, maintained a department of contemporary art or mounted changing temporary exhibitions of contemporary art. Sixty-six museums replied to this questionnaire.[2]

These sixty-six museums represent a wide panorama of diverse local conditions and it is very difficult to draw generalized conclusions for the conduct of a museum of modern art from their greatly divergent replies. It was also clear from the nature and detail of the replies that many museum directors were far too busy to reply in detail to the questionnaire; indeed, one director, in reply to the question 'any further suggestions or additional remarks', contented himself with drawing a loving heart in the space provided!

It was also clear that many of the questions simply did not make sense in the local context: a museum governing body will be one thing in London, another in Paris, and something quite different again in Kraków. Questions like 'does the governing body intervene in the exhibition programme or purchasing policy' cannot be answered by a simple yes or no. Any museum director knows that 'intervention' can take many ambiguous and subtle forms. Perhaps the truth about the functioning of the museum can only be told by the museum director after he has left. Statistics in the field of arts institutions are notoriously unreliable, since what is being examined is strictly unmeasurable: the quality of life, vitality, energy and relevance of a place where art happens, or from which art is produced. One cannot measure the 'soul' of a museum; no amount of tabulated figures of resources, works owned, attendance figures or equipment can convey the feel of a place. This is often the result of a unique human chemistry between the director, his team, the architecture and position of the museum, and the flair with which its programme is mounted.

Perhaps a more valuable survey could be made by sending a reporter to live the life of a chosen number of museums for a period of months. The in-depth portrait of say, six typical museums in widely different situations could perhaps communicate more than a comprehensive tabulation of statistics. The reporter might be accompanied by a photographer, using both still and ciné or video cameras. It is notable that in the photographs sent by museums with their returned questionnaires, there are many installation shots of works of art, and several splendid pictures of the museum as a work of architecture, but very few pictures of people in the museum, of the encounter between art and people,

1. Michael Kustow was educated at Haberdashers' Aske's School and Wadham College, Oxford. Director of the Institute of Contemporary Arts until 1970, he is today a freelance writer, theatre director and producer. He organizes exhibitions, edits books and mounts festivals: in one word, an '*animator*'. He took up a post-graduate position at Bristol University Drama Department and later joined Arnold Wesker's Centre 42, of which the aim was to make the arts accessible to more people. He was also responsible for People's Arts Festivals and has worked on several productions as writer and assistant to Peter Brook.

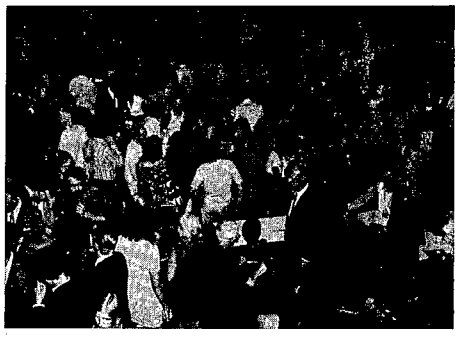
2. See Appendix, page 59.

the way they enter, sit, observe, move, speak or remain silent, the way their behaviour alters from the everyday to what they believe is appropriate behaviour in a museum—and the way that modern artists are often challenging and uprooting these ideas of what is appropriate.[1] Perhaps the most useful and communicative report on the situation of the modern museum would be a film or a video tape, rather than print.

However, it is print and statistics we have to deal with and out of the mass of replies and information, some interesting profiles of different situations of modern art museums emerge. This summary will try to draw out some key factors from the information received. It will be qualitative—an attempt to evoke art/life situations, and not just quantitative—tables of figures and facts. This seems the only appropriate approach.

Private museums, public museums

Broadly, the museums in this survey can be divided into two kinds: those financed by government or municipal funds, and those which receive their



41 (a)

(b)

42

41 (a), (b)
STEDELIJK MUSEUM,
Amsterdam. Festival week commemorating the museum's seventy-fifth anniversary.
42
KUNSTHALLE, Bern.
The museum is an ideal place for entertainment.

1. Many of the photographs in this number, which illustrate the lively aspect of the museums, were obtained only after repeated requests.—Ed.

funds from a private or family foundation. The former are more common in Europe, the latter more common in the United States of America, where many tax advantages operate in this direction. State-subsidized museums are commonly under-financed, and this is a major factor in preventing them acquiring works which they need to make a coherent collection, or in mounting exhibitions which require an unusual expenditure on technology or special display.

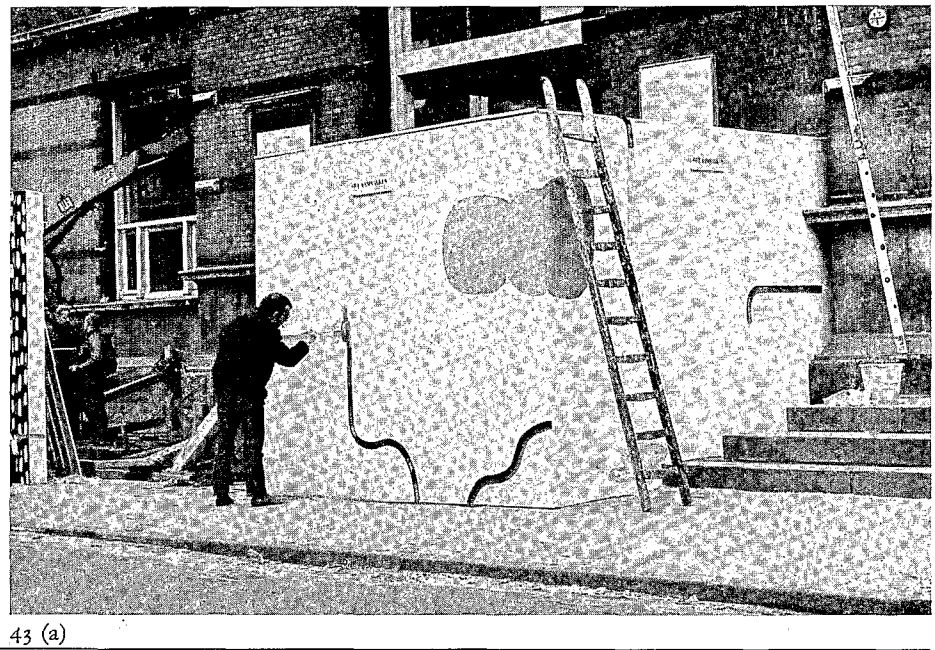
Privately financed museums commonly are not short of funds, but other considerations—hard to capture in a statistical survey—often come into play: for example, a greater degree of personal interference from trustees, who are often seeking recognition or renown by buying their way into the museum. How many museum directors, for example, have had to face the situation of accepting a work donated from the collection of a trustee, which on aesthetic grounds they do not particularly want in the museum collection, but are obliged to accept 'because Mr. X has been so kind and generous to the museum'? Tactful hanging is often the director's only solution; many such works often remain in the vaults because of supposed lack of hanging-space.

In private museums, however, once the donated collection on display has reached a certain level of quality, this in itself becomes a sufficient insurance against such embarrassing situations: quite clearly an inferior work would be ludicrously overshadowed by the works already in the permanent collection and this can be enough to prevent such works being offered to the museum. This is realistic appraisal; but in case it sounds graceless and ungrateful, due tribute should be paid to the enormous contribution made when a private museum is founded around an individual's collection of great artistic value.

It is very difficult to choose a 'typical' private museum, but examination of the Guggenheim Museum in New York will indicate the situation of one of the most firmly established private museums. Financed by the Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation, the museum's collection is based on donations to the already famous permanent collection, and by financial gifts from individuals towards purchases. Money is also occasionally sought for special educational or social programmes in addition to the exhibitions. The museum employs a staff of approximately seventy people, excluding guards and cleaners. A selection from important exhibitions in the last five years includes: *De Staël, Latin American Painting of the Sixties, Dubuffet, Klee, Joseph Cornell, Sculpture from Twenty Nations, Adolph Gottlieb, Works from the Peggy Guggenheim Foundation, David Smith, Roy Lichtenstein, Moholy-Nagy, Francis Picabia and Carl André, Contemporary Japanese Art.* Some of these shows were taken from other museums; the majority travelled on to other museums; two shows were created in collaboration with other museums.

In addition to its exhibition programme, the museum has run lecture series on 'the future of art', with speakers like Marcuse, James Seewright, Arnold Toynbee and B. F. Skinner; offered a 'summer art programme for underprivileged children in New York'; presented concerts of electronic and Moog Synthesizer music; and welcomed dance and mixed-media theatre groups into the museum. It attracts about half a million visitors a year, and an important exhibition can draw 120,000 people. There is a substantial publication programme covering monthly calendars, illustrated catalogues, postcards, posters, slides and handbooks. The museum works in a controversial but practical building designed by Frank Lloyd Wright—the famous 'descending spiral'. In reply to the question about how the museum is equipped, the museum replies with a list which may make the mouths of some of its less well-endowed colleagues water: 'Fork-lift truck, screens for storage of paintings, Xerox machine, table saw, X-ray machine for conservation department, film projector, tape recorder, audio equipment, microphones, etc., etc.' The security system against theft or fire is impressive, including new plans which involve two-way radios.

And yet, after this extravagant list of possessions and properties, the respondent from the Guggenheim concludes: 'Art of the 1970s may be moving itself



43 (a)

43
Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam. Hoardings placed before the museum façade while renovation work is being carried out. The museum director encouraged artists to paint the hoardings following their imagination. (a) Artist at work; (b) finished decorated hoarding by the same artist.
44
Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago. *Street Experience*, presented by the artist Taller, of Montevideo.

right out of the museum, due to size, nature or lack of either, i.e. conceptual art. Contemporary museums should have a great deal of physical flexibility.' Which would seem to indicate that even the most sophisticated and well-equipped museum may now find itself too rigid, too well-organized and structured, to keep up with the latest authentic developments from the artists.

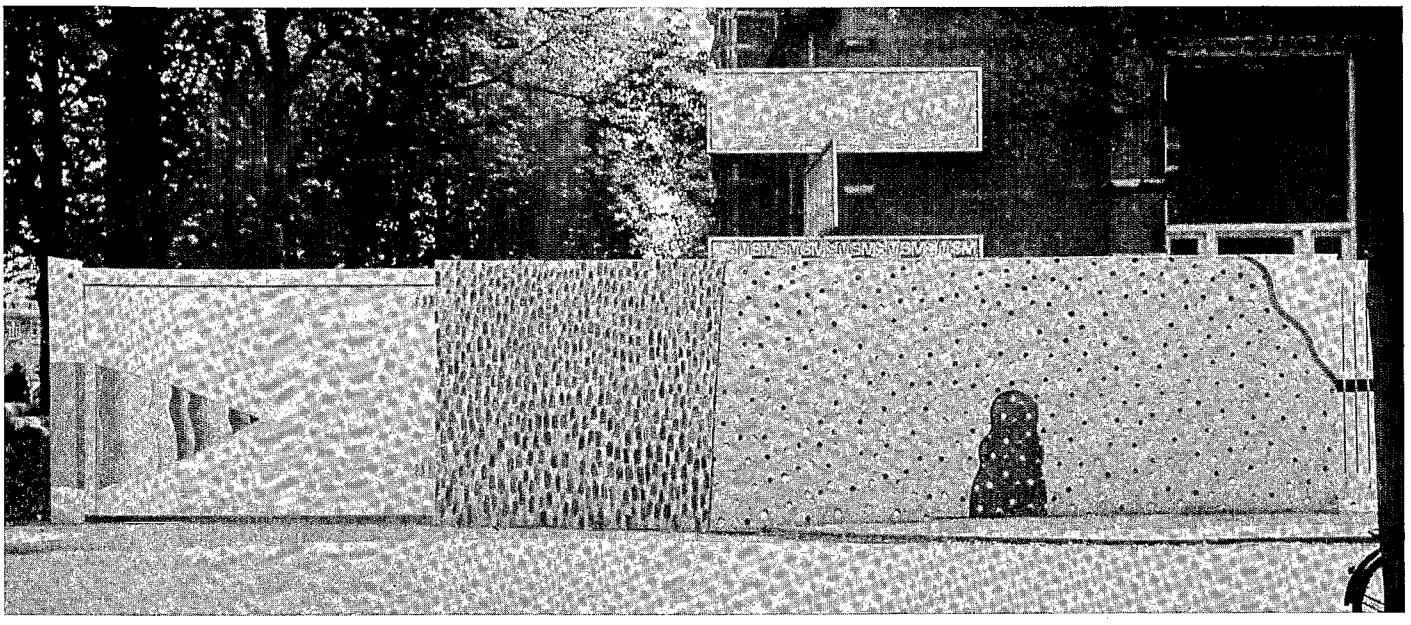
The Guggenheim Museum is a model—and an admirable one—of the well-financed modern art centre enjoying much prestige in a prize situation in a major metropolis. Yet it is not merely on the material, physical level that it may be fearing to be outstripped by the latest developments in art (and recent conflicts between artists and museum administration over the hanging of a collective international show of specially realized projects have high-lighted this physical resistance of the architecture—the museum was unable to exhibit a work in the way the artist had conceived it because within Lloyd Wright's architectural environment it was not possible to prevent this work overpowering other works). It is also on the conceptual level, the level of ideas about what constitutes an exhibition, an art-show.

Take another look at the list of exhibitions mentioned by the Guggenheim as 'among the most important of the past five years'. Predominant among them is the homage to one man or the survey of a nation's art, which usually means choosing six or eight one-man shows and giving the result an umbrella title. Creative programming is certainly to be seen in the pairing together of Picabia and Carl André, for example. But there is very little sense of the pressure of self-questioning (including political and social self-questioning) which, as outlined in the preceding article summarizing discussion among museum directors, began to infect art and artists in the late sixties.

An artist's description of a museum

Now compare the programming of a contrasting museum, publicly financed, also in a major metropolis of its country: the Moderna Museet in Stockholm. Perhaps significantly, the best description of the Moderna Museet's career is provided by an artist, Oyvind Fahlstrom, who has been shown at the museum and taken part in many of their discussions:

'I first came to the Moderna Museet in 1958, just after they'd moved into a naval drill hall dating from the early nineteenth century. Two rooms, each the size of an aircraft hangar . . . Since then the museum has been refurbished and



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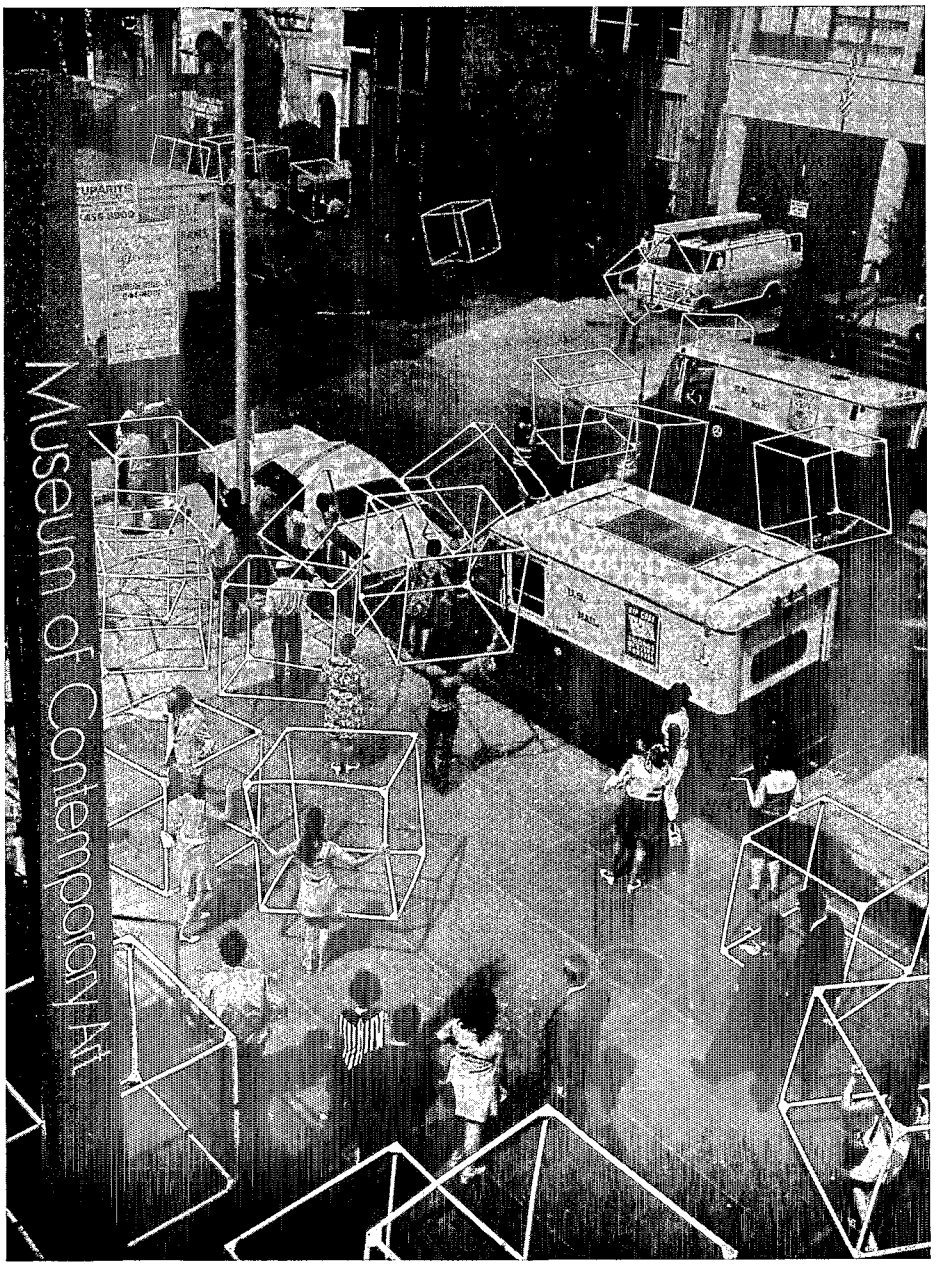

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has acquired more staff and more money. But on the whole, under the management of Pontus Hulten, the Moderna Museet has remained two large hangars. In these it has been able to offer some grandiose, carefully planned and surprising exhibitions that have attracted anything up to 250,000 people (out of a population of 900,000). Many of the exhibitions staged here—*Art in Motion*, Saint-Phalle–Tinguely–Ultvedlt's *She*, *Inner and Outer Space*, *Warhol, Oldenburg*, *The Model*—were a kind of total art, happening-operas on the grand scale that activated the public they captured and also meant that artists were drawn into the projects. Works of art and display arrangements were to a certain extent specially commissioned for the exhibitions. The gigantic *She* sculpture, which people were able to enter and discover events within, was so large that it could not be got out of the museum and had to be scrapped when the show ended.

'Another step forward was taken in 1968 with *Modellen* (The Model), when a group of young Swedish activists was commissioned to transform one of the hangars into a large-scale advanced playground for children and at the same time into a kind of model society. The emphasis was on creative activity and movement—hanging, bouncing, sliding, climbing, jumping. The children themselves continued the construction of their playground where the activists had left off. The roles of the artist and museum official, the craftsman and the general public all merged into one. The result was a sensual demonstration of "life art" as well as a trenchant contribution to social discussion. It was also a radical development on a large scale of Alan Kaprow's do-it-yourself corner in a previous show, *Art in Motion*, 1961.

'The next phase came with the exhibition *Poetry Must be Made by All! Transform the World!* (1969), where the catalogue was more comprehensive than the exhibition itself (concerning the fertility rites of certain tribes, Russian art 1917–25, surrealist utopias, the May events in Paris and its graffiti). The exhibition was devoid of all glamour and consisted of photographs and a few models, all lightweight and pre-mounted on aluminium screens so as to tour easily, thus striking a blow against the usual privileged centralization of the museum. Another important feature of the exhibition was a "book cafe" (with radical books and periodicals) and a large wall where different groups were given the chance to put on short exhibitions of their own (these temporary exhibitions included the Black Panther Support Committee).'

I will interrupt Fahlstrom's narrative here to stress the difference between the kind of activity represented by this developing programme at the Moderna

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KUNSTHALLE, Bern. Room for children.
46
BIENNALE, Venezia. The artist Roy Lichtenstein interviewed in front of his work *The Temple of Apollo.*

Museet and the kind of activity represented by the Guggenheim programme. However high the quality and artistic taste of the Guggenheim shows, they remain safely within the charmed circle of 'art'. The Moderna Museet's programme, realized on much less money (and consequently with much less 'polish'—the difference can be summed up in the contrast between Frank Lloyd Wright's spectacular 'exhibition machine' and those two naval hangars in Stockholm), nevertheless incites art to spill over into life, and vice versa. Sometimes polish and good taste can be a prison too. . . .

It is also clear that such expeditions into this volatile area between art and life can, for the present, be carried out much more easily in a State-subsidized museum than in a privately sponsored one. A glaring example of this was the recent attempt by the director of the Metropolitan Museum in New York (privately funded) to mount a documentary exhibition about Harlem. *Harlem on My Mind*[1] was a coolly presented audio-visual exploration of the world of the Negro ghetto. Some of the contents of the exhibition and catalogue offended some of the trustees: the director was disciplined (later he left) and the exhibition was modified as a result. Yet this was exactly the same kind of attempt to extend the relevance of art and artists to an urgent local situation as were the Stockholm exhibitions mentioned above. Oyvind Fahlstrom draws the conclusions which are appropriate:

'In many respects the Moderna Museet is now undergoing an important transition. Its managers were deeply affected by the events of 1968, particularly the May events in France. They feel it is not enough to be an enclave of liberty in an incomplete society, to function as an alibi for the State. (It should be remembered that the Moderna Museet is exclusively State-financed. This actually gives its management far more freedom than they would enjoy if they had to answer to trustees, for as civil servants they enjoy security of office, in addition to which they are by tradition immune from any political pressure from the powers that be. The only way in which the State could exert pressure on the museum would be by cutting down its funds, which in point of fact have risen every year.)'

Fahlstrom here raises a very interesting and paradoxical point: that freedom of initiative can be much greater under a State-subsidy régime, at least in the liberal parliamentary democracies we inhabit in Western Europe, than in a privately financed situation, whatever individualistic ideology it may promote.

There seems to be a kind of 'civic dimension' which artistic institutions can only attain when they are publicly financed. This is not intended as a prescription for an endless series of documentary exhibitions about social questions.

1. See: A. Schoener, '"Electronic Participation Theatre": A New Approach to Exhibitions', *Museum,* Vol. XXIII, No. 3, p. 214–21.

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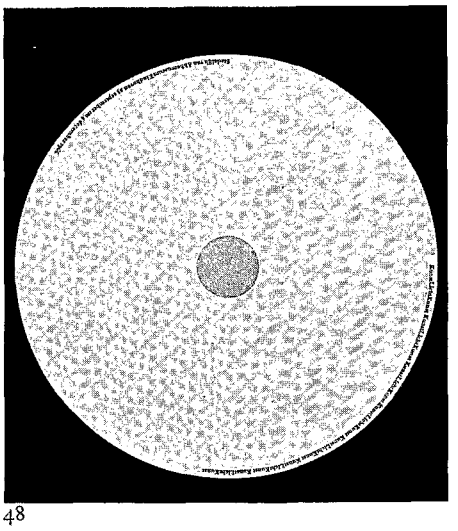

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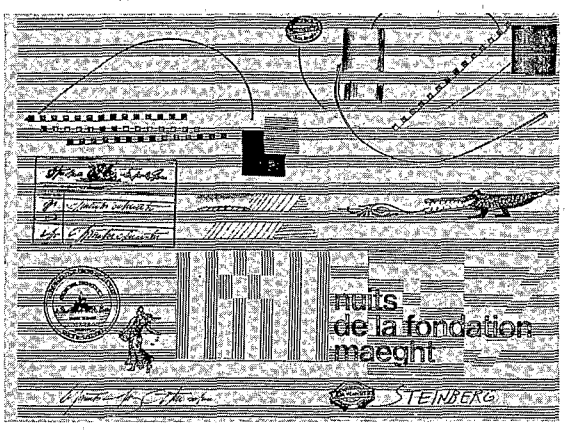

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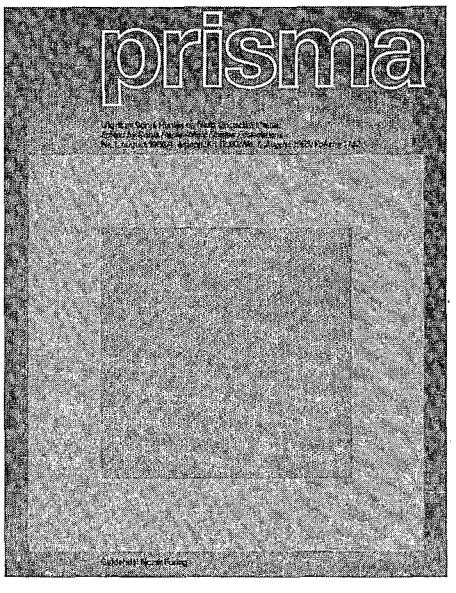

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47
Contemporary Arts Center, Cincinnati. Cover of a catalogue of an exhibition featuring seven young American painters.

48
Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven. Cover of the catalogue of a temporary exhibition: *Kunst-Licht-Kunst*, 1966.

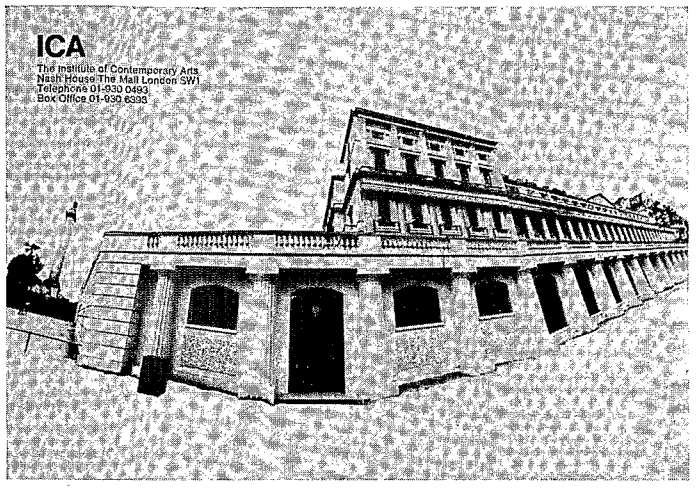
49
Fondation Maeght, Saint-Paul-de-Vence. Cover of the programme of the fifth International Music and Contemporary Art Festival, 1970.

50
Sonja Henies og Niels Onstads Stiftelser, Høvikodden. Cover of the periodical *Prisma*, Vol. 1, No. 1, 1968.

51
Institute of Contemporary Arts, London. Prospectus of the institute.

52
Museo de Bellas Artes, Caracas. Museum poster.

53
ARC (Animation, Recherche, Confrontation), Paris. A programme of the ARC Service, established in 1967.



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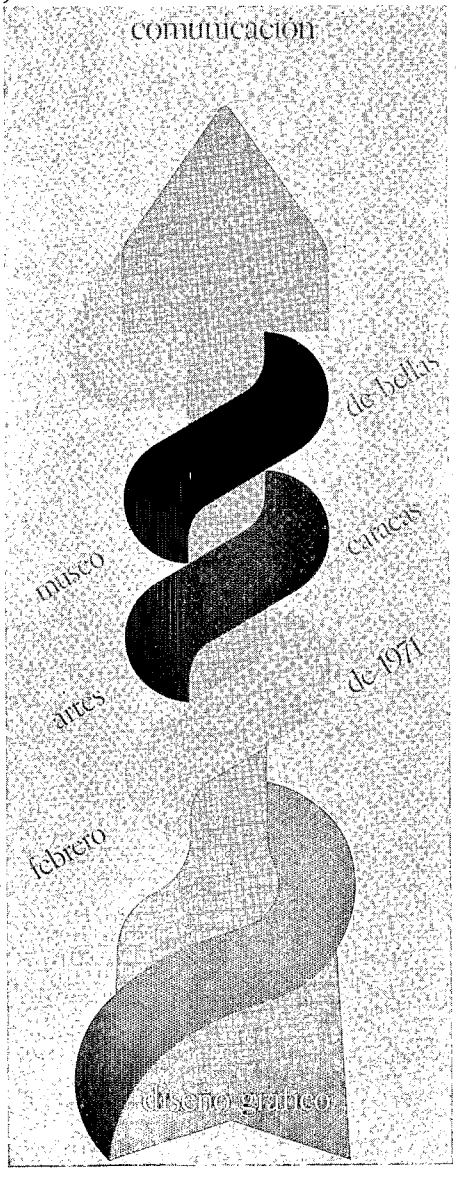


52

animation recherche confrontation

mai 1971

arts plastiques

Pierre Gaudibert, Suzanne Pagé et Gilbert Brownstone

du 11 mai au 6 juin

vernissages : le mardi 11 mai de 18 h à 22 h

Silvano Bozzolini
- Jeux Epoxy -
peinture plastique de sol

Ruth Francken
- Communiquer ou mourir -
sculptures-objets-tableaux

Jiri Kolar
- Collages -

Manfred Mohr
- Une esthétique programmée -
démonstrations sur matériel électronique Benson - traceur de courbes -
(de 15 h à 17 h les jours d'ouverture)

Gérard Tisserand
- Vous en êtes un autre -

Jean Rustin
- peintures -

exposition : entrée 3 F

cinéma

Christine Aubry

lundi 4 mai à 20 h 30

mardi 5 mai à 20 h 30

films de
Frans Swartjes
cinéma underground hollandais

participation aux frais : 5 F
adhérents au mouvement pour l'animation des musées de la ville de Paris : 3 F

musique

Maurice Fleuret

jeudi 6 mai à 20 h 30

Ensemble - Harpans Kraft -
voix, clarinette, trombone, violoncelle, piano, percussions
créations et premières auditions de musique suédoise contemporaine

jeudi 13 mai à 15 h, 17 h et 21 h

Aucassin et Nicolette
théâtre d'animation comique
animation : Françoise Achard
musique : Bernard Videt
spectacle pour enfants
formes géantes et musique
(contrebasse, violon, guitare, trompette, percussions, chanteuse, 4 comédiens animateurs de formes géantes)

participation aux frais : 5 F

jazz

Daniel Humair

dimanche 2 mai à 17 h
- Jazz Workshop de Lyon -

dimanche 9 mai à 17 h
Jazz contemporain en Europe : volet IV

dimanche 16 mai à 17 h
- Frick - Guin et les Swingers

dimanche 23 mai à 17 h
- Colelmec ensemble -
formes actuelles

participation aux frais : 5 F
nombre de places limité

calendrier des manifestations

2 mai à 17 h jazz

4 mai à 20 h 30 cinéma

5 mai à 20 h 30 cinéma

6 mai à 20 h 30 musique

9 mai à 17 h jazz

11 mai à 18 h arts plastiques - vernissages

13 mai à 15 h, 17 h et 21 h marionnettes

16 mai à 17 h jazz

23 mai à 17 h jazz

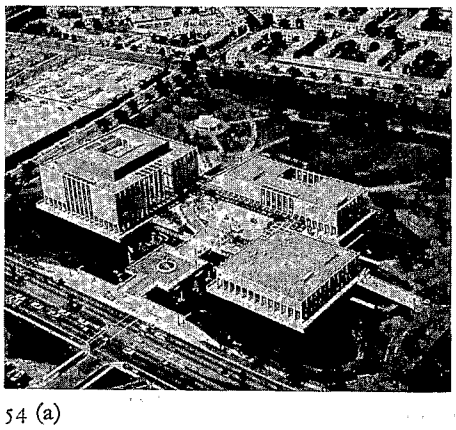
régie : Claude Dorge et Jacques Pyros

MUSEE D'ART MODERNE DE LA VILLE DE PARIS
11, avenue du Président-Wilson
Métro Alma-ou Iéna

Ouvert tous les jours de 10 h à 17 h 50
Fermé les lundi et mardi

53

But an awareness of our socially formed consciousness must feed into the practice of the museum in every detail. Of course the artists must be allowed and encouraged to pursue their own, often irrational and personal, itinerary. But their consciousness too has been moulded by an image of the only available channels of distribution for their work; if the museum can demonstrate an alternative way to communicate artistic experience, the art itself may gradually change—it is bursting the museums at the seams already. Shows of 'pure art' may well gain in intensity and meaning if they are presented as part of a continuous coherent programme of 'polemical' exhibitions—this is what Fahlstrom meant, I think, by calling the Stockholm exhibitions 'total art', and it was certainly borne out in the strong impact of the hanging, catalogues and indefinable haunting presence of the Warhol, Oldenburg and Beuys shows at the Moderna Museet. Maybe the museum director cannot be an artist, but if he pursues sincercly the task of opening out his museum to pressures of society, politics, perception and consciousness, he may be more susceptible to the true implications of the parallel 'art explorations' carried out by the painters and sculptors.



54 (a)

(b)

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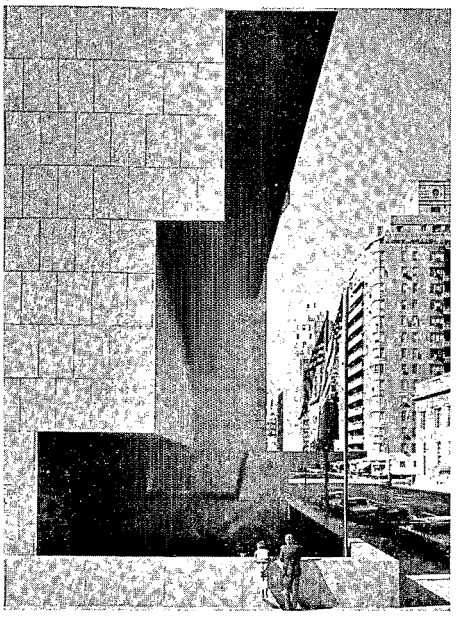
Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles.
(a) General view: left, permanent exhibition; centre, temporary exhibitions; right, library, auditorium, cafeteria:
(b) overhead view of the plaza facing south-east



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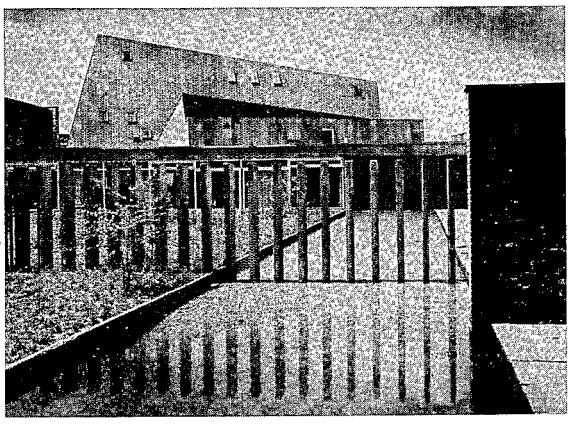

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55
WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART, New York. Corner view of the new building showing gallery setbacks allowing for large gallery space at top. Architect: Marcel Breuer & Associates.
56
AKADEMIE DER KÜNSTE, Berlin. View of the museum.

Project for a future museum

At the risk of making the Moderna Museet take star billing in this survey of the situations of modern art museums, I must return once more to Fahlstrom's remarks on its work:

'The Moderna Museet has grown out of its premises. It was planned at one stage to move to the newly built city centre in Stockholm, which would have attracted large crowds of working people during their lunch-hours or after work. At the time of writing , the terms of the city centre site are not acceptable. When the new museum was being planned for the city centre, it was intended to leave part of the space "open", i.e. provide access to tape recorders, loudspeakers, projectors, etc., as well as materials and tools for making scenery and/or constructions of various kinds. This was in keeping with the idea of "all-activity buildings" put forward in Sweden by radical youth groups, who in some cases occupied vacant buildings, putting in a great deal of work with very little money to create centres for social contact, agitation, and creative activity.'

Fahlstrom is here describing something which must be familiar to most European and American countries, whether under the label of 'squatters', 'arts-labs' or 'communes'. What is unique is that this kind of thinking—previously restricted to the 'underground' and 'drop-out' levels of society—now appears to be involved in the planning of a 'mainstream' museum of modern art, which stands a good chance of being realized. The plan must be quoted in full, because it represents the most advanced attempt to outline the future perspectives of a modern museum in our advanced industrial society:

'In the course of planning the museum has been divided into four "concentric" functions. Starting from the "outside" we meet the collection of raw, unprocessed information, events and facts about the world today (social-political-cultural). It is planned to equip this so that eventually it will be equal or even superior to the central news-room of Swedish television (e.g. with facilities for transmitting video tape by telephone). It will also be unique as the only news-room in the world with no built-in norms for the sifting and interpretation of its material.

'Nobody can predict the consequences. The museum hopes that at best they will have a "permanent critical seminar", which in turn, apart from increased awareness, could stimulate initiatives such as protests against abuses and publications, films or exhibitions.

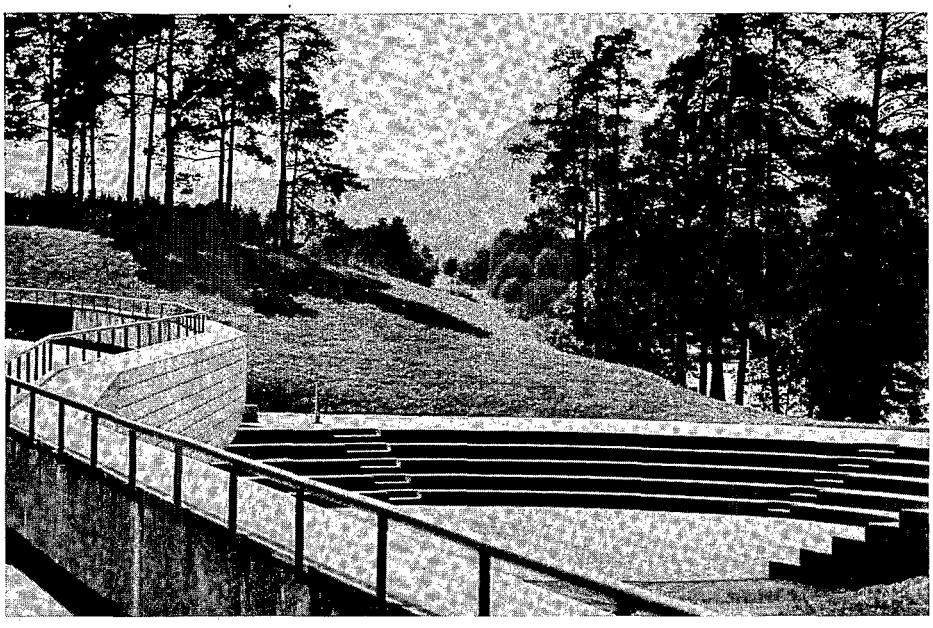
'This brings us to the next layer of the circle, the "workshop" for processing the information. The principle here is for everybody to have access to a printing press, video equipment, etc., so as to be able to make something of the information for themselves.

'This activity in turn overlaps with the material-processing undertaken by the museum itself to produce exhibitions and performances. These will be designed both by the museum staff and by outsiders on contract for a specific occasion, so that artists will be able to work as project makers and not merely as object makers, as is generally the case.

'Finally, we have the innermost circle, the traditional function of the museum, providing us with a constant and necessary reminder of what has been done so that the things now being done can be seen in their true proportions. It is here that the permanent works of art are collected and information stored in the library and in a computer with the help of which facts and references can be obtained at a moment's notice. This last circle is also information, treated by artists and preserved. It is the age-old function of the museum as MEMORY.'

The value of this project seems to me not merely in its ingenious design, which technologically is already perfectly feasible, but above all in its conceptual framework. Opening out the various functions of the museum—as forum, as *agora*, market-place of ideas and visions, meeting-place, making-place, and memory-store—it enables us to see each of these functions as linked, not to set too great a store on, for example, memory and conservation, nor to ignore the past in the search for an endlessly spontaneous present which in reality can only occur at one or two revolutionary cross-roads of human history. We can see the product and we can sense and operate ourselves the process which produces the product. Thus we are able to return to the product with a refreshed vision. Thus the charmed circle of the 'art atmosphere' is not broken, but opened out and fused together again in a constant dialectical process which gives understanding and a measure of wisdom. The 'enclave' of which Fahlstrom speaks is not banished; but its walls are no longer sealed so tight.

If this model of a museum in the full breadth of its functions and consciousness has been thoroughly developed at the Moderna Museet in Stockholm, there are many other examples of similar approaches in other city museums. In some cases, the wish to proceed in this direction is hampered by lack of money and resources; in other cases, as in the example of the New York Metropolitan Museum mentioned above, the wish of the creative team of the museum to extend the consciousness of the museum and to question its 'monumental' character has been frustrated by the very opposite factor: too much money, which has made the museum and its structure and bureaucracy too monolithic, too 'respectable'. In such cases, the museum remains as a cultural temple, enjoying much prestige, full of magnificent trophies, but somehow not coherent, lacking in the wholeness of experience that makes an artistic institution come alive.



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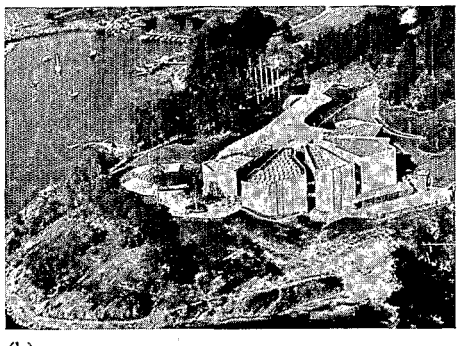


(b)

57
SONJA HENIES OG NIELS ONSTADS STIFTELSER, Høvikodden. (a) The museum's terrace and stairway in their environment; (b) general view of the museum.
Architects: Son Eivkar, Svein Erik Engebretsen, 1968.

Order and disorder

This is a danger of which even the most munificently endowed and 'community-minded' of the privately financed museums must be aware. There is a significant phrase in the annual report of the director of one of the United States' art institutes enjoying most prestige: 'If achievements are gauged by attendance figures, exhibitions and programmes, and service to the community, the year 1969/70 ranks as one of the most successful in the history of the Art Institute. On the other hand this was a year fraught with problems—first and foremost, the large operating deficit of $411,000; second, the opportunities missed to acquire important works due to lack of purchase funds; and last but by no means least, problems with certain visitors who come here not to see works of art or participate in our programmes but seemingly to use the museum as a rallying point. By doing so they have imposed on the rights and enjoyment of other museum visitors. While it is sometimes difficult to identify the offenders, we have taken measures to correct the situation.'

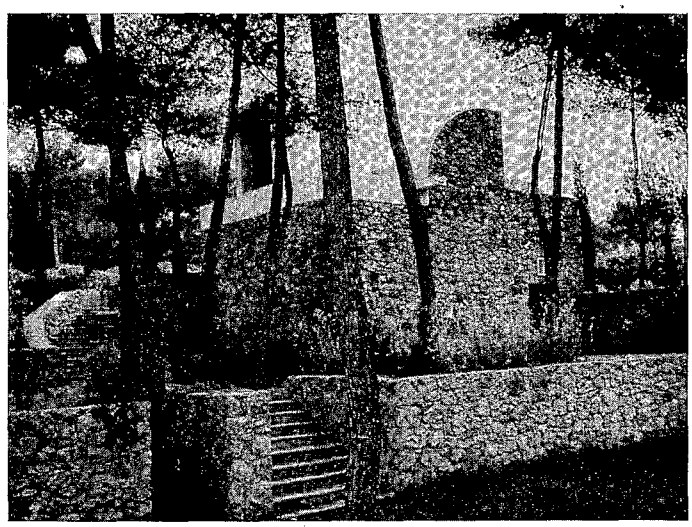
I shall keep the name of this art institute anonymous, because I think the case is exemplary. What is at issue—and it is a real dilemma for museum directors—is the degree to which the 'sanctity' of the museum can admit the often disordered behaviour of the surrounding society, of which it is a part and for which it provides a platform of expression. The director of this art institute does not specify the nature of these 'offenders'. They may have been artists with a particular axe to grind; frustration and exhibitionism, as well as a genuine desire to challenge complacency, are no less characteristic of painters and sculptors than of any other group of artists. They may have been 'drop-outs'—young people in rebellion who are arguing with a whole life style and the cultural superstructure that goes with it. They may simply have been the debris of our society—the old, the poor. In any event, there is a real contradiction between the attitudes involved in preserving and maintaining a significant piece of property (the permanent collection) in the manner which is felt to be proper, and the heady currents and provocative challenges which come in the wake of so much modern art. Perhaps the question is not so much whether the museum is publicly or privately financed, but rather the relationship, physical and conceptual, between the permanent collection and the space available for contemporary exhibitions or other manifestations. In some respects the situation is easier for such museums as the Institute of Contemporary Arts (ICA), London, the Kunsthalle, Bern, or the Akademie der Künste,

Berlin, which do not possess permanent collections and are thus free to use their 'activity space' much more fluidly.

But in museums where both memory and current activity are combined, it seems essential to think things out in such a way that the habits of conservation and security associated with highly priced treasures of the past are not allowed to infect the open space of the present in an inhibiting way. Politeness, good taste and 'quality', however essential, can become traps in themselves: we should not banish provocation, doubt, even disorder from our museums. They are still in many respects one of the last melting-pots and unconditional spaces in our societies.

An open, self-critical museum

Returning to the 'open', self-critical museum activity which characterizes the Moderna Museet in Stockholm, let me briefly indicate a few other examples of the same process in typical museums of the same kind. The Stedelijk Museum of Amsterdam is one of the most firmly established of the exemplary



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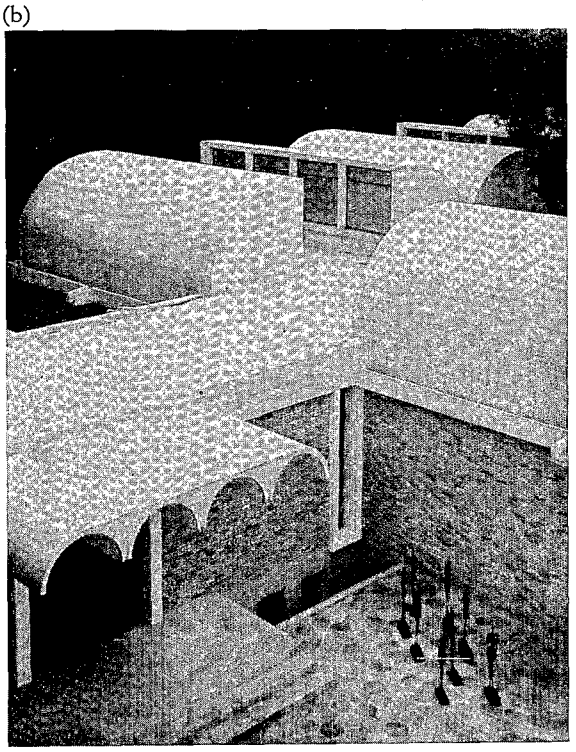


(c)

58
Fondation Maeght, Saint-Paul-de-Vence. (a) Part of the building in its environment; (b) general aspect of the environment; (c) view of the building. In the courtyard, sculpture by Giacometti. Architect: Cert.

modern museums. Larger than the Moderna Museet, it has succeeded undeniably in combining a large-scale operation with a sense of urgency and vitality and a continual self-questioning.

Financed by the municipality, the Amsterdam Stedelijk has a staff of 169, covering director, curators, management, secretariat, administration, library, sales, information, restoration, framing, photography, technicians (thirty-one alone), guards and cleaners. From September to June, the museum organizes between thirty and forty temporary exhibitions. To quote the director of the Stedelijk, Eduard de Wilde:

'Retrospective exhibitions held since 1963 include "venerable" masters such as Calder, Dubuffet, Max Ernst, Fontana, Gabo, Hoffmann, de Kooning, Morris Louis, and Picasso; in addition several exhibitions were devoted to surveys of work by younger artists such as Arman, Kienholz, Yves Klein, Kowalski, Lichtenstein, Manzoni, Oldenburg, Rauschenberg, Raynaud, Raysse, Soto, Warhol, etc. New tendencies were regularly shown in exhibitions covering a group or a theme: American Pop Art, Zero, Hard Edge and Colour Field Painting, Situations and Crypto-Structures. Moreover, so-called Studio Exhibitions regularly allow young Dutch artists to show their work. These exhibitions consist of twelve artists who are assigned one room each. A series of exhibitions were organized in an *avant-garde* theatre in Amsterdam. In connexion with exhibitions inside the museum, the Stedelijk has undertaken various projects in the last few years, in the street, around the museum building or elsewhere in town. Projects by the Eventstructure Research Group and artists including Wim Schippers, Jan Dibbets, Mike Heizer and Tjebbe van Tijen were realized.

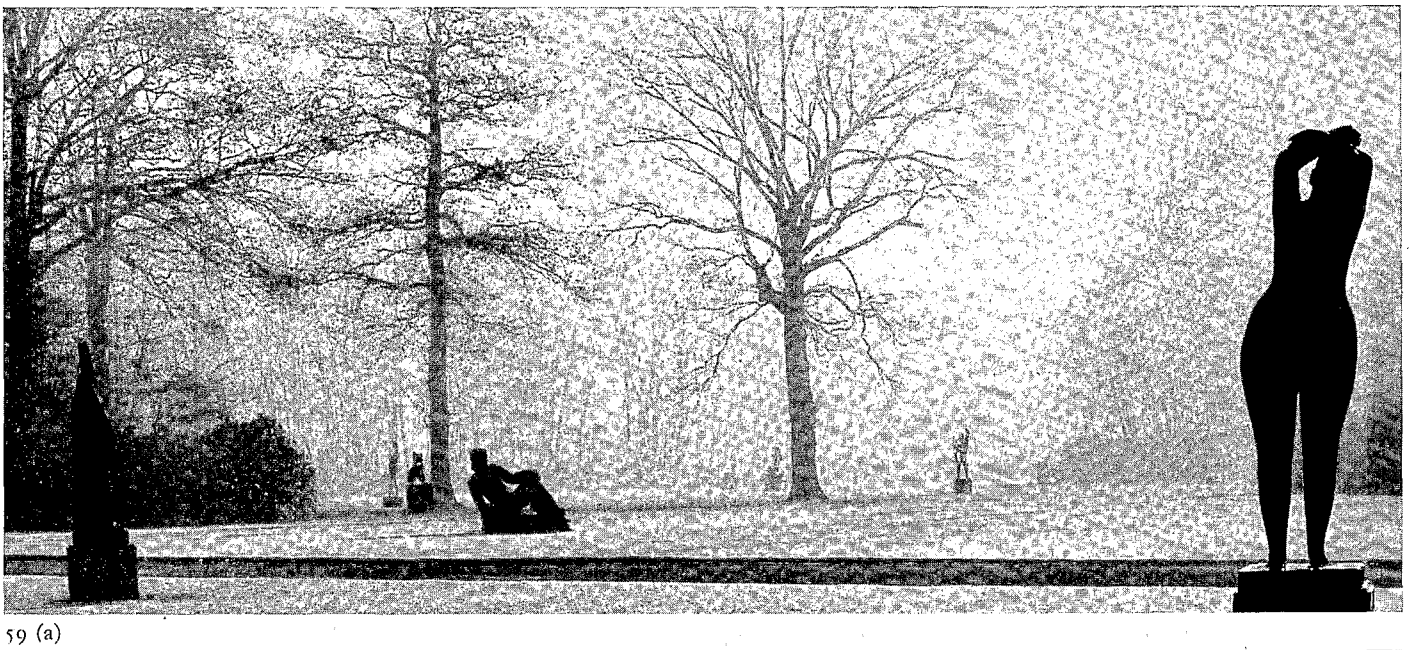
'The museum has its own loan service which supplies municipal bodies in Amsterdam with long-term loans. Works loaned in this scheme provide a regular income for artists who cannot make a full living from their art.

'In addition to exhibitions, the museum organizes dance performances, artists' theatre-groups, puppet-shows designed by artists, and concerts of modern jazz and *avant-garde* music.

'Artists are involved in the museum in the following ways: two artists sit on the acquisition committee; two rooms are given to the Amsterdam artists' association to organize their own shows, in which the museum does not intervene. Perhaps most interesting of all, the museum has two studios at its disposal, which are normally offered to foreign artists for three-month periods. By providing living and working space (though no allowance for living expenses and travelling), this scheme deepens contact between Dutch and foreign artists.'

This outlined programme, typical of many public museums in Europe, but carried out with great thoroughness and style by the team of the Stedelijk Museum of Amsterdam, shows a sharp awareness of the artist as well as the art. Attendances at the Stedelijk, and the whole relaxed but 'heightened' atmosphere of the museum, have proved the success of this policy. The museum fulfils its role of becoming an active cultural presence in the city. Moreover, by extending its activity beyond the walls of the museum in the case of the long-term loan scheme, the museum provides at least the beginning of an alternative economic system of survival for the artist, while at the same time carrying out a 'civic' function towards the community by disseminating works of art in public buildings.

Another striking example of engaging the artist in greater participation also comes from the Netherlands, from the Van Abbe Museum of Eindhoven. Like the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam, the Eindhoven museum has both a permanent collection and a changing exhibition programme. In the spring of 1971, Director Jan Leering took a step which harmonized these two functions in a very arresting and unusual way: he invited Marinus Boezem, one of the most provocative and surprising contemporary artists, to be 'guest director'



59 (a)

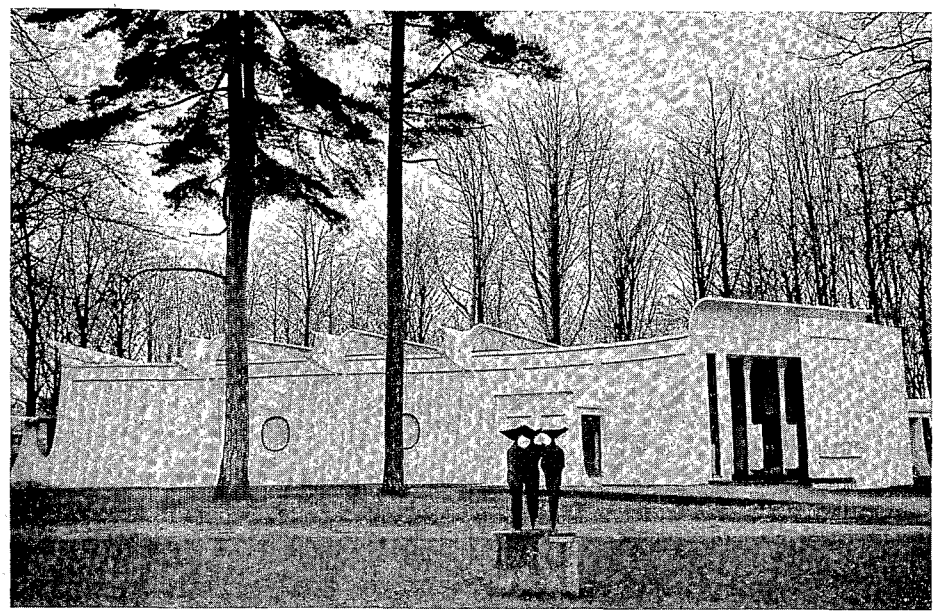
and exhibit the museum's permanent collection in a new way, to take into account the artist's own preoccupations and concerns. Thus the permanent collection, instead of being displayed simply on chronological or art-historical principles, was presented in a polemical light. The familiar became unusual, the accepted was suddenly shown in surprising contexts and juxtapositions; the result was to throw light on both the masterpieces of the past, and on the modern artist's intuitive way of looking at the present and the past.

This unconventional step, bridging the gap between the traditional hierarchy of the memory-bank of masterpieces and the new territory of experiment and innovation, could only have been taken in the context of a museum already aware and concerned about the relation between art and society now. A brief glimpse at the programme of the Eindhoven museum over the past five years confirms its basic policy of focusing on those artists who venture beyond the enclave of the museum, stretching out into the fabric and structure of social life, trying to redefine the boundaries that mark off the 'aesthetic' from the 'utilitarian': Lissitzky, Moholy-Nagy, van Doesberg, Christo, *Kunst-Licht-Kunst*, Joseph Beuys, Robert Morris, Richard Hamilton, Andy Warhol, and an important architectural-environmental exhibition, *Cityplan*.

Shared exhibitions

This programme too provides an interesting glimpse into the network of co-operation and sharing that links a number of European museums, and on the basis of a broadly shared ideology permits the realization of shows which are financially possible when mounting and transport costs are shared out between five or six museums, but would be too great if borne by one museum alone. At Eindhoven, the Beuys, Hamilton and Warhol shows were taken over from other museums; the Lissitzky, Moholy-Nagy and van Doesberg were among the shows toured to other museums. The loose network of co-operation which exists between European museums includes the Moderna Museet in Stockholm, the Stedelijk of Amsterdam, the Eindhoven museum, the Musée d'Art Moderne and the Centre National d'Art Contemporain in Paris, the Kunsthalle in Bern, the Akademie der Künste in Berlin, the Tate Gallery and the ICA, London.

This list is by no means exhaustive, but it does indicate a kind of informal fraternity of co-operation between like-thinking museum programmers and



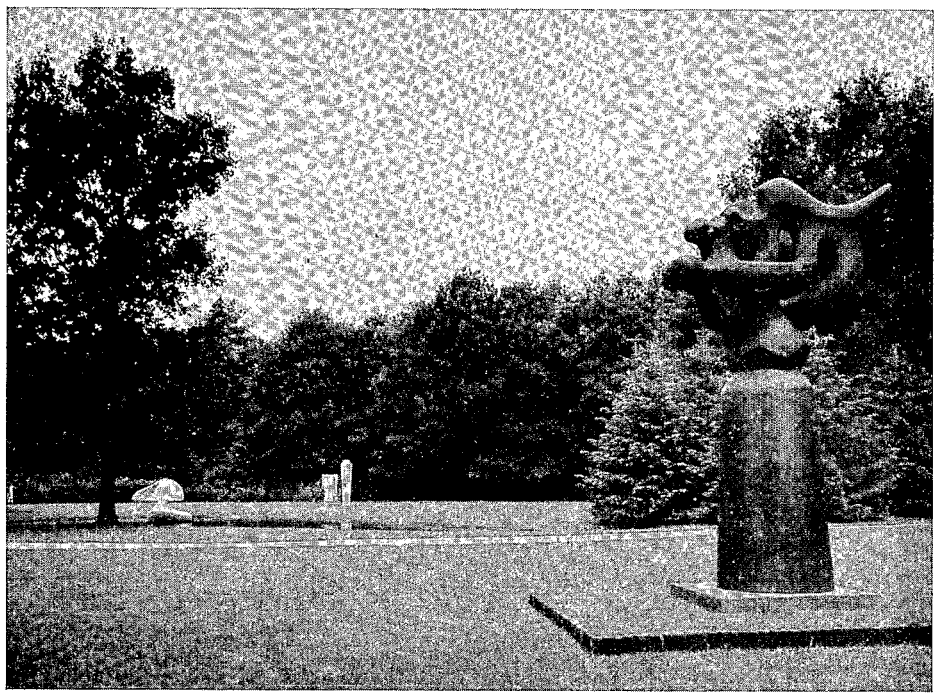
(b)

59
OPENLUCHTMUSEUM BEELDHOUWKUNST, Middelheim. (a) The park; (b) the exhibition pavilion. Architect: R. Braem.

represents the beginning of a system of comprehensive planning which will certainly become stronger in the years to come. All the museums mentioned co-operated with at least one show involving one or more of the others during the late sixties and 1970; some idea of the shared concerns represented by these touring shows may be given by further examples: *Science-Fiction* (originating in Bern, touring to the Musée des Arts Décoratifs in Paris, among others); *Comics* (originating in Berlin, travelling through many German museums and to the ICA in London); *When Attitudes Become Form* (a polemical exhibition of conceptual art and *arte povera*, originating in Bern and coming to the ICA in London). It is perhaps significant that two of these exhibitions deal with the 'low' popular arts, often felt to be too 'undignified' to feature in the solemn context of a museum, while the third was the most forthright presentation so far of an international movement among artists to challenge the primacy of the art-object-for-display-in-galleries, to use materials previously considered ephemeral and 'unworthy' (felt, grease, sand, etc.) and to force the spectator to consider the process and the imaginative intention as much as the completed product. It is also no coincidence that two of these shows sprang from the fertile brain of Harald Szeemann, until recently director of the Bern Kunsthalle, one of the most self-questioning of the European museums.

And finally, to bring the picture up to date, perhaps the most popular and memorable show shared by a number of these museums in 1970–71 was the show *Tableaux* by E. Kienholz, who ventures most deeply into this dangerous but fascinating area between art and life by making rooms, monuments and vehicles into which the spectator can enter, huddle, crowd, peep into and affect almost as in daily life—until he realizes with a creeping shock that this 'reality' has been mutated and horribly transformed by Kienholz's penetrating vision of time, death and injustice.

The Kienholz exhibition toured from the Moderna Museet, Stockholm, to the Stedelijk, Amsterdam, the Städtische Kunsthalle, Düsseldorf, the Musée d'Art Moderne, Paris, and the ICA, London. 'The essential factor' wrote Pontus Hulten, Moderna Museet's director and the moving spirit behind the show, 'is the collaboration that very spontaneously organized itself when the prospect of a Kienholz exhibition became likely. Several colleagues have, with great enthusiasm, gone onboard in the large operation which the transportation of these large and fragile works represent. . . . Our warmest gratitude goes to the artist and to Lyn Kienholz who have volunteered to devote



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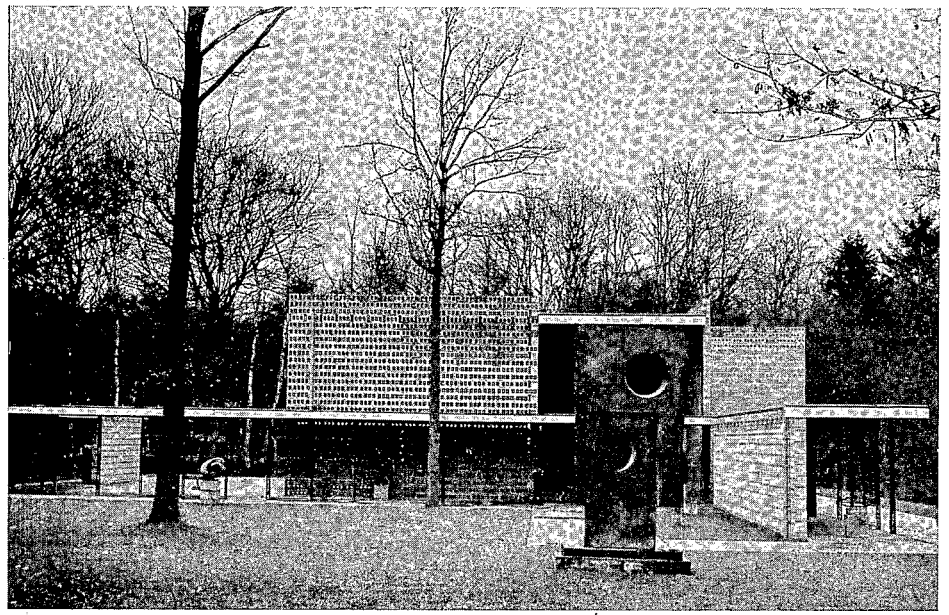
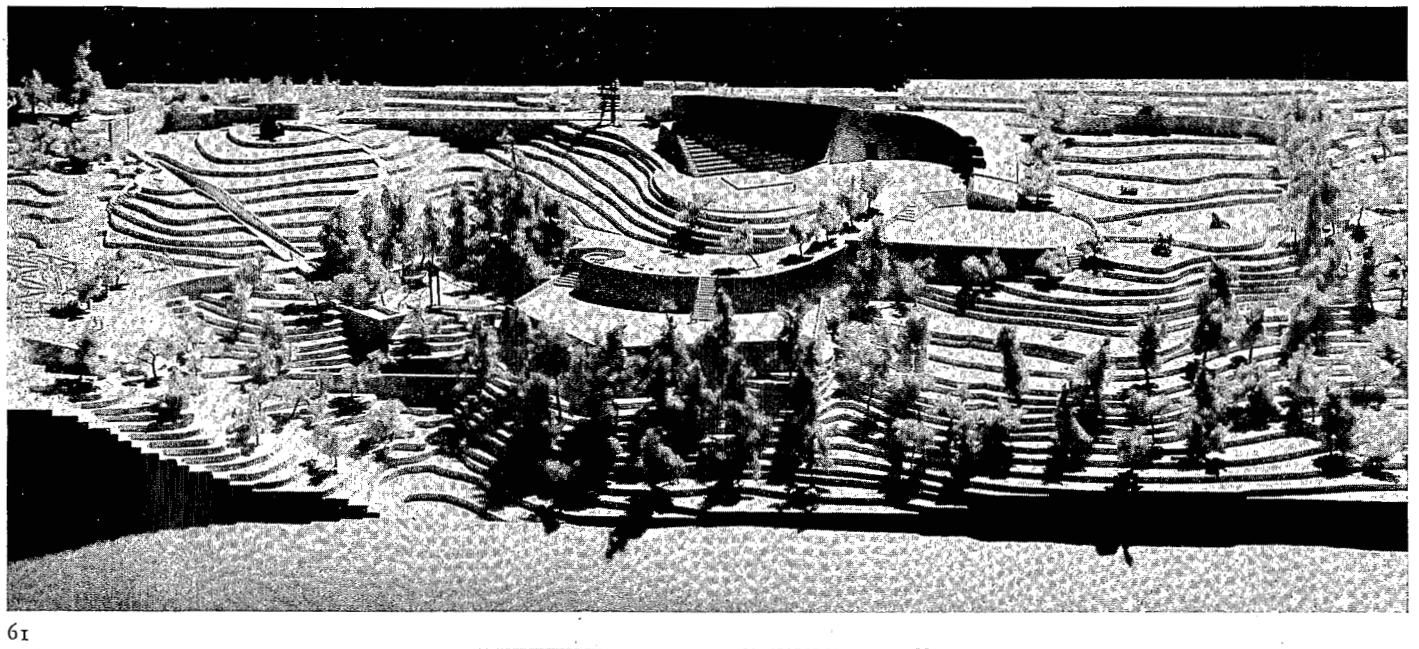


(b)

most of their time during one year to nurse this exhibition through our European museums.' Thus, in the example of Kienholz, the three elements defining a new attitude and approach in museum activity come together: the work of an artist transcending the inherited categories and definitions which habitually define the reality of the 'art-show'; a collaboration between museums to share the costs of what would otherwise be an impossibly expensive undertaking; and the involvement of the artist *in situ* to take and execute the display decisions so that the show itself makes the strongest impact in the different physical and cultural environments of each museum.



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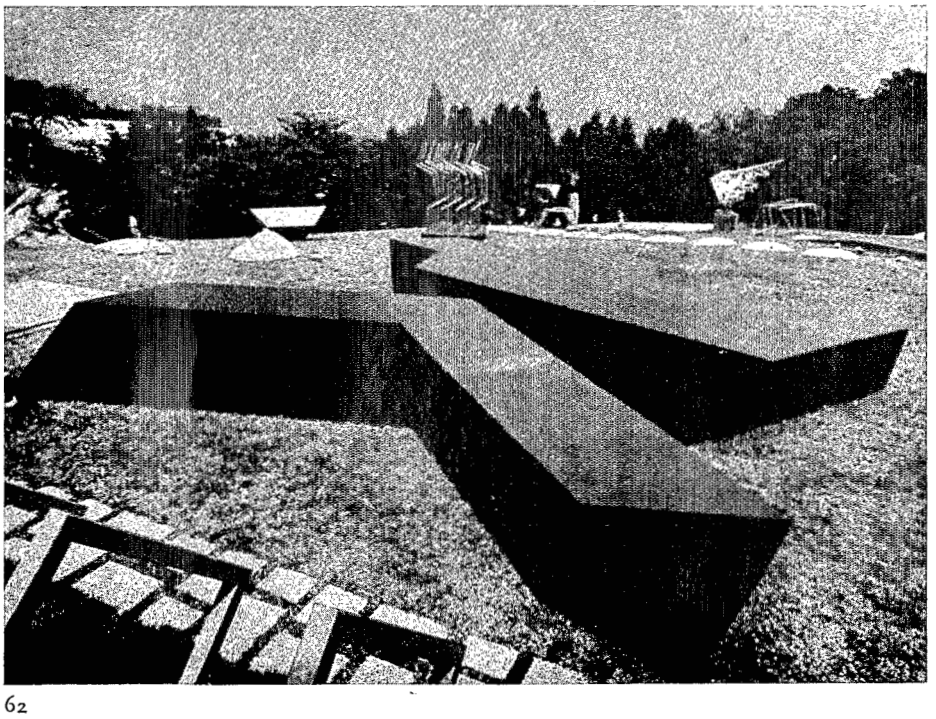


62

60
RIJKSMUSEUM
KRÖLLER-MÜLLER, Otterlo.
(a) The sculpture park; (b) the pavilion in the sculpture park.
Architect: Gerrit Rietveld, 1965.
61
HAKONE OPEN AIR MUSEUM,
Hakone. *Maquette*. Architect:
Bukichi Inoul.
62
HAKONE OPEN AIR MUSEUM,
Hakone. Sculptures in the
garden.

A museum ethic

Hulten's catalogue introduction, although specifically related to Ed Kienholz's work, also provides a definition of the kind of communication—the ethic, one could almost call it—which underlies not just this show, but the whole gesture which many of the museums I have quoted are trying to make in their total programme. It defines an implicit statement which the exhibition as a totality is trying to make to its public:

'The *Tableaux* leave relatively few spectators untouched. They become general because they deal with elements that consciously or unconsciously play important roles in most people's lives. A lot of the material in Kienholz's *Tableaux* belongs to the common unconscious and often relates to experiences from childhood, adolescence and grown-up life that we all have a tendency to suppress. Most [of the *Tableaux*] in one way or another are tragic, usually referring to time or death. Kienholz's *Tableaux* are filled with details, remembered with great precision and great love and sometimes collected with many

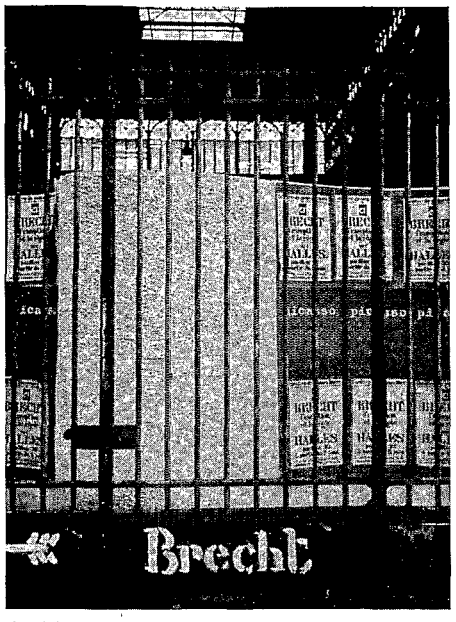
difficulties. On one level this art concerns itself very heavily with Americana and yet in the end these specific references in no way hinder a universal understanding [of] and response to the work. The *Tableaux* are direct, they are not ambiguous, there is little room for interpretation. Especially in the newer work, Kienholz is not concerned with conceptions that the spectator might put into the works. These pieces are precise and strict statements. Many of them are built like traps, a purposely inviting environment that the artist entices the spectator into. Once the spectator is captured, the artist uses every possible means—three-dimensional forms, literary references, colours, sounds, smells—to make his point clear.

'Thus, Kienholz's aesthetic conception differs widely from what has been current for some time, when ambiguity has been one of the key notions of art. His work is not like anything else that is done now, nor for that matter anything that has been done earlier.'

The twin definitions of an enticing or inviting environment in which something deeper can happen to the involved spectator, and the absolute need for precision in the installation and 'tuning up' of the works to the given museum circumstances outlines clearly enough the combination of outward-going openness and a new, unprecedented artistic rigour which certain museums are trying to achieve with all their exhibitions. It is a far cry from the pleasing or expedient arrangement of individual objects which has for so long passed under the phrase 'hanging an exhibition'. The total gesture which is sought for is both social—a means of intervening in the constant flood of warped and tendentious communication which invades us daily—and artistic—the wish to reach the precise arrangement of space, light, sound and mutual interaction which will enable the sum of works comprising the show to establish its own imaginative dimensions and make its most intense impact.

The art of receiving touring exhibitions

In the case of artists like Kienholz, Warhol or Hamilton, the close participation of the artist is essential when the show travels. But—to draw a conclusion to these remarks on shared, travelling exhibitions—there is also an art which the museum director must learn when he receives a touring collective or thematic exhibition, like *Comics*, *Science-Fiction*, or *When Attitudes Become Form*. There is a creative and a bureaucratic way to receive or respond to an exhibition which is touring. The creative museum director will measure up the exhibition he is going to receive against the prevalent artistic and social-cultural context of the city and society in which he is presenting the exhibition. Emphases may need to be changed, sections excluded, local artists working in the same area invited to create works for this specific location of the exhibition. At the ICA in London, for example, when the *Comics* show was taken from Berlin, many items were cut and two important sections—a survey of the British comic and popular illustrated literature, and a section of works made by schoolchildren and inspired by the comics they read—were added, giving the show a further relevance for London. And the *Attitudes* show was supplemented by commissioned works from six British conceptual artists, conceived specifically for the available gallery space, and thus adding to the international language already demonstrated in the show (many of whose works were realized anew by the artists in the London location, and modified accordingly) a carefully thought-out indigenous contribution. This approach—similar to that of the theatre director who tries to infuse his new production of a classic with an idiom in tune with the life of his audience, a 'local habitation and a name' to quote Shakespeare—is a far cry from the assembly-line acceptance of a completed product called 'an exhibition' into a show-place called 'a museum'. It is constantly aware of the fluctuating relationship of energy and attention which makes the artistic encounter happen authentically in given social-cultural circumstances.



63 (a)

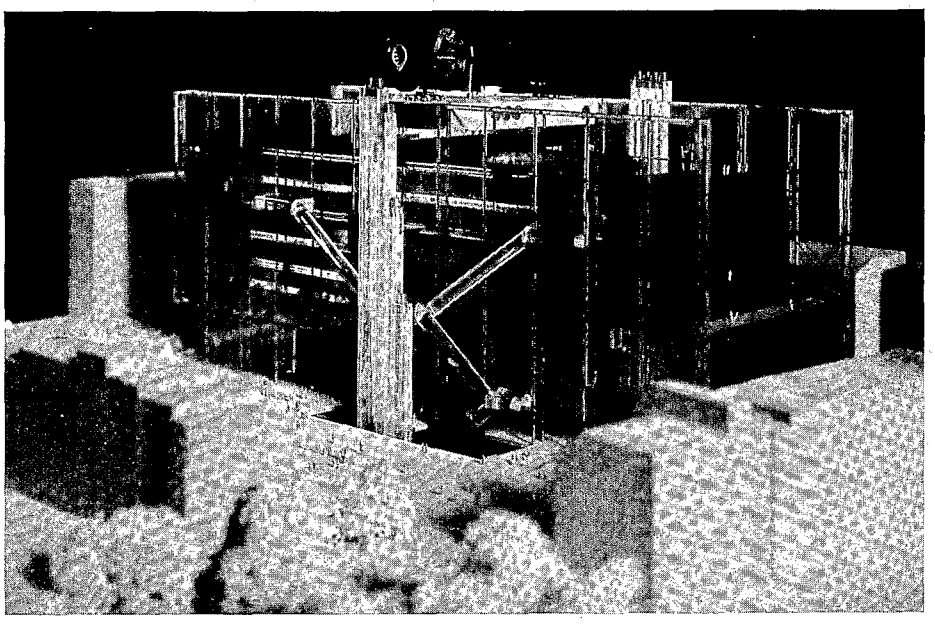
(b)

63
HALLES DE BALTARD, Paris. July 1971: (a) posters announcing a Picasso exhibition and performances of Brecht's plays; (b) roundabouts. The variable spaces of these metallic pavilions offered, during the last few years, the most flexible setting for various events and amusements, expressions of a spontaneous popular culture.

Modern arts centres

Because of the dissolving of categories within each of the modern arts, and the growing cross-fertilization and interchange between the arts today, it is interesting to note that many of the respondents to this *Museum* questionnaire have important sectors devoted to arts other than the visual arts, and in some cases become arts centres equipped to deal with all the arts. It is as if we were seeing a return to an almost etymological definition of the word museum, a house for the Muses. Of course, it has long been common for museums of modern art to run lectures and art films, and to be important publishers in their own right (many catalogues have the status of books, and museums have published posters, prints, and multiples). 'Extra-mural' activities have developed greatly during the past ten years, and it is common for museums like the Musée d'Art Moderne, Paris, or the Moderna Museet, Stockholm, to run happenings, dance performances, modern music, pop and jazz. This is a result of two tendencies: the wish of painters and sculptors to extend their vision into happenings, events, cinema, etc., and the evolution of the modern performing arts (theatre, dance, music) towards breaking out of the conventional proscenium or concert-platform environment for their works. Such tendencies can be seen, on the one hand, in the films of Warhol and the television films of a group of European conceptual artists transmitted by Gerry Schum's Berlin 'television gallery'; and, in the performing arts, in the work of Grotowski's Theatre Laboratory in Poland (which played in both the Stockholm Moderna Museet and ICA, London), Merce Cunningham's Dance Company and Stockhausen's musicians, who have played in museums in Europe and the United States. At such points the museum does become the house of the Muses, a free creative space without conventional expectations, a forum for new forms in the arts, where the profundity of experiment and research which characterizes so much twentieth-century visual art provides a fertile breeding-ground for parallel exploration in other arts.

But while the museums of modern art have opened their arms to many experiments beyond painting and sculpture, there are a number of respondents to the *Museum* questionnaire who have been specifically established as centres for the modern arts, cross-roads institutions where all the modern arts have creative outlets. Two typical examples are the Akademie der Künste, Berlin, and ICA, London. What is interesting about these institutions is that they can turn a whole range of artistic means to explore a theme or subject, and can



64 (a)

64
PLATEAU BEAUBOURG, Paris.
(a) *Maquette*; (b) elevation.
Project by the architects Renzo Piano, Franchini and Richard Rogers and the firm Ove, Arup & Partners. First prize, International Idea Competition, international jury, July 1971. This project is the opposite of a monument. It is an inside and outside information system, totally flexible, conceived for multiple and evolutional programmes of associated organizations: library, design centre, national contemporary art centre and museum of modern art.

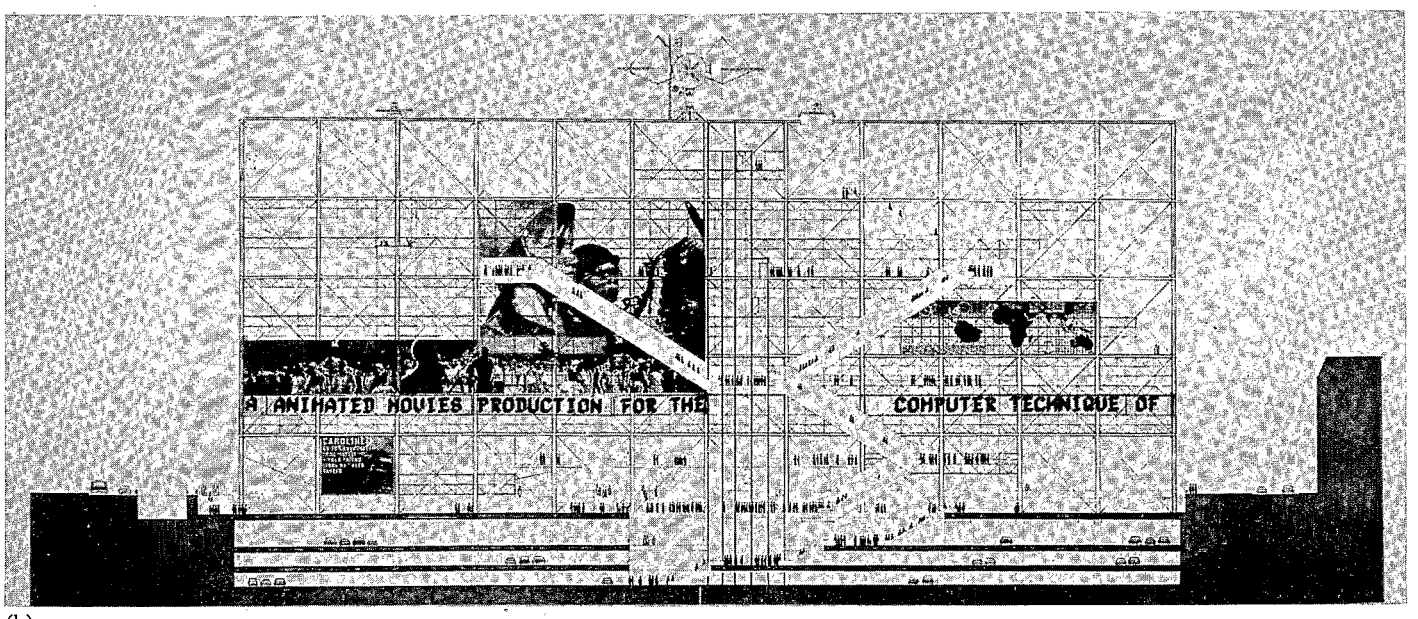
often bring together autonomous developments in different arts which none the less acquire a new meaning when brought into juxtaposition. It is like running a multi-channel television station with all channels operating simultaneously.

The Akademie der Künste has a flexible building capable of functioning both as gallery and performing space. It has five departments, covering art, architecture, music, literature, and performing arts. It is trying to find an adequate twentieth-century version of the eighteenth-century idea of an academy of arts (it was originally formed in 1704) in the challenging situation of a city split by current political divisions, with a vigorous national art and a keen awareness of new developments internationally: 'The Academy does not consider it its function to compete with other, comparable institutions. Rather it aims to act as a catalyst: to take up suggestions and pass them on, to co-operate with other institutes, to encourage initiative. . . . It obviously cannot concern itself with every experiment conducted on the fringes of the art world—this must be left to the smaller galleries and the young theatres, for instance. But when these new developments in art have reached a certain stage, it is interested in collating such experiments and presenting the results to a wider public. Particularly successful and memorable examples were *The Younger Generation—Germany* (1966) and *The Younger Generation—Britain* (1968), when stage performances, poetry readings, concerts and films were presented in conjunction with an art exhibition' (Akademie der Künste, *Present Tasks and Aims*).

The definition of such a centre as a catalyst and the mobilizing of all the different arts to illuminate a theme or the flavour of a nation's arts give some idea of the scope of this arts centre, this modern academy. It can gather together various sources of artistic energy, it can provoke illumination, comparison, disagreement, the critical spirit. The danger of such a programme is, of course, mere accumulation; but the Akademie seems well aware of the critical, self-aware attitude that is necessary in compiling such a programme:

'The lively collaboration between the departments reflects developments in the arts themselves as the sharp dividing lines of the "classical" scheme fade more and more. In 1966 a series of lectures entitled "Limits and Convergencies" sought to interpret these changes.'

Another example of the marshalling of diverse resources to explore a theme—in this case the work of Franz Kafka—was the combination of an intelligently created Kafka exhibition with a colloquium involving both scholars and modern authors in the line of Kafka, with films and theatrical interpretations of Kafka's haunting vision.



(b)

A similar approach was taken by the ICA, London, when it celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of Guillaume Apollinaire's death in 1968. Apollinaire—poet, impresario, soldier, art critic, prophet of the New Spirit—could stand as a kind of patron saint of these multi-purpose centres of modern arts, in which tradition the ICA places itself. 'The ICA is a centre where contact is made between creators and audience, and where painters, sculptors, poets, musicians, writers, actors, dancers, film-makers and philosophers can meet and work under one roof. The ICA is a museum in the true sense: a home for all the muses' (ICA brochure).

Deciding to celebrate Apollinaire, the ICA wished to do so in the most many-faceted spirit, true to the polymorphous talents of Apollinaire himself, who used verbal, visual, dramatic and lyrical means to express a totally modern vision of the world. And the celebration was intended to be, not a tribute to a great dead figure of the past, but a contemporary homage to a creative spirit whose insight and example were felt to be still urgent and relevant today. So the celebration was planned in four parts: a documentary exhibition of photographs and manuscripts (which later toured on its own through Britain); an 'art exhibition' of Apollinaire seen by the artists who were his contemporaries, and of pictures and sculptures he championed; a section of commissioned new works by artists of today who were asked to contribute a work in homage to Apollinaire, or in one of the areas which he opened up, or using one of the new media of today that he might have seized for creative purposes, with his voracious appetite for all that was new; and a newly written play about the man and his work, performed nightly throughout the exhibition's duration. The first two sections might have been mounted in a library or gallery with a wish to commemorate artistic bicentenaries; it was among the newly commissioned works and the play that the element of actuality and combustion with current work in the arts took place, and this could only have happened in an arts centre devoted to the idea of linking past with present in an urgent and sometimes surprising way. Poets and painters made new *calligrammes*; poems by Apolilnaire became springboards for sculptures and verbal-visual objects; the humour and fantasy of the poet provoked artists to go further in their own directions; and the play drew parallels between the situation of the poet in the First World War and that of creative young people faced with current wars, and found a tone of voice that linked this bard with the flood of live poetry-readings and the mantle of poet-prophets like Allen Ginsberg which sweeps the world today, giving a new birth to the poetic power of the word. Thus, a

key figure and influence in the history of modern art was actualized and renewed, and this could only have been achieved by using the total resources of an arts centre. In such a context, the familiar became astonishing, and one could feel again, for example, the full weight of the revolutionary vision embodied in the early Cubist works of Picasso and Juan Gris, the deft insights of Duchamp.

Another interesting section of the programme which the ICA is equipped to mount is a sustained course of lectures dealing with intellectual or social questions which, while not directly related to the apparent concerns of the visual artists, do none the less contribute to articulating a discursive language which relates to many works produced by modern artists and may throw a new light for the public on the nature of these works. Thus, over the past two years ICA has run two long lecture courses on linguistics and ecology. The conceptual and analytical vocabulary which these disciplines provide, their relationship to the semantics of visual art, and to the wider implications of *arte povera* and systems art, have been of interest both to artists and the general public.

The enormous attendance at these lecture-courses has shown that the fully extended museum of modern art may have yet another function to play: that of popular university. The fact that knowledge and information are being provided in a context associated with enjoyment rather than educational advancement may have contributed to the popularity of these events.

'Superfluous' institutions

I have now outlined the profiles of some typical museums of contemporary art, placed in diverse situations and responding to their tasks in diverse ways. This article has not been a statistical analysis of the factual information about the sixty-six museums that replied to the *Museum* questionnaire. Such information is readily available: the questionnaires have been deposited in the Documentation Centre of ICOM at Unesco's Paris Headquarters, where they may be consulted along with a wealth of other information about museum operations. What these remarks have been is a personal response to some of the museums currently trying to define their activity at a time when the goals and strategy of modern art are changing fast and questioning their very foundations, thus obliging the museums of contemporary art to conduct the same process. In the course of this description, I have quoted only some dozen institutions. Omission does not mean reproach or condemnation, but simply that there is a need for further information and experience of the multitude of museums across the world, and that this first summary exploration should be followed up by deeper portrayals, not just of the properties and qualities of a museum which can be measured, but of the museum in motion, what I have tried to call the gesture which the museum makes.

There is no single label for the museum director in this evolving situation. He is at once functionary, middleman, scholar, showman, public servant, social agitator, irrational creator, something of an artist and poet himself. 'Conserver' and 'curator' were the old terms to define museum directors' roles: in the situation of contemporary art museum at this point in social and artistic change, neither label fits. Perhaps 'animator' would be a better title; for this is what the most remarkable directors of museums are doing: animating their centres, going beyond the ideas of property and preservation (as the artists are transcending the ideas of single objects towards thinking about signs, systems and processes); infusing their museums with a quality of productivity, fertile emotional and intellectual exchange, participation by both artists and audience. It may not be too solemn to conclude that these 'superfluous' institutions we call museums of contemporary art are becoming, in their intuitive and complementary ways, examples of the kind of freedom of which we shall have greater and

greater need as the networks of modern industry and communications wrap round our living experience more comprehensively every day.

What I have tried to describe in the examples to which I have responded is a kind of poise, a quality of addressing an audience which is irresistible. I used the word 'superfluous' just now. From the strictly utilitarian point of view, of course all contemporary art museums are superfluous. But this is precisely one of their great qualities: by imparting a sense of fun, of play and of pleasure, they enable us as human beings to learn in the deepest, wisest sense.

So they (or any survey of them) must never become too solemn, too consciously convinced of their own importance, too monolithic and daunting. Let me leave the last word with a modern artist who was also a great theoretician and who tried to describe an appropriate ethic for the modern arts and their channels and institutions of production and distribution. Bertolt Brecht, a playwright, wrote in his *Kleines Organon für das Theater* some thoughts about pleasure and 'superfluity' which can well apply to contemporary art museums. They provide an apt conclusion to a survey which I hope has not been too solemn for its subject. For 'theatre', substitute 'museum' throughout:

'From the first it has been the theatre's business to entertain people, as it also has of all the other arts. It is this business which always gives it its particular dignity; it needs no other passport than fun, but this it has got to have. . . . Not even instruction can be demanded of it: at any rate, no more utilitarian lesson than how to move pleasurably, whether in the physical or spiritual sphere. The theatre must in fact remain something entirely superfluous, though this indeed means that it is the superfluous for which we live.

'Our representations must take second place to what is represented, men's life together in society; and the pleasure felt in their perfection must be converted into the higher pleasure felt when the rules emerging from this life in society are treated as imperfect and provisional. In this way the theatre leaves its spectators productively disposed even after the spectacle is over. . . . Let them here produce their lives in the simplest way; for the simplest way of living is in art.'

We are at a time when museums of contemporary art, operating within physical and financial limitations yet with the potential freedom of full self-awareness, may exemplify and anticipate the life and the society which we do not yet have, but of which we can be encouraged to dream.

Appendix

Questionnaire sent to museums concerned with contemporary art

Préparation d'un numéro spécial de *Museum* sur les problèmes du musée d'art contemporain / Preparation of a special number of *Museum* on the problems of the museum of contemporary art

Questionnaire aux principaux musées d'art contemporain, ou ayant un département d'art contemporain / Questionnaire for the principal museums of contemporary art or those having a contemporary art department

1 Institution

11 *Dénomination et adresse / Name and address*

. . . . . .

12 *Statut / Status*
Public ou privé ? / Public or private?

. . . . . .

13 *Ressources / Resources*
Qui finance le musée (la ville, l'État (si public), association, fondation (si privé)) ? / Who supports the museum (town, state (if public) association, foundation (if private))?

. . . . . .

Outre ses ressources propres, le musée reçoit-il d'autres concours matériels dans un but particulier (achats, organisation d'expositions) ? / Apart from its regular resources, does the museum receive other material aid for specific purposes (purchases, exhibition organizing)?

. . . . . .

14 *Personnel*
Nombre d'employés et caractère de l'emploi (p. ex. directeur, conservateurs, secrétaires, gardiens, aides, etc.) / Number of employees and nature of employment (e.g. director, curators, secretaries, attendants, assistants, etc.)

. . . . . .

Personnel bénévole / Voluntary personnel

. . . . . .

2 Expositions / Exhibitions

21 *Programme*

. . . . . .

22 *Lieu / Place*
(a) Dans le musée / In the museum
(b) A l'extérieur du musée (écoles, rue, usines . . .) / Outside the museum (schools, street, factories . . .)

. . . . . .

23 *Type*
Temporaires / Temporary
Circulantes / Travelling
Kits (prêts aux écoles / loans to schools)

. . . . . .

24 *Statut / Status*
Autorité responsable des expositions / Body responsible for exhibitions

. . . . . .

25 *Expositions importantes au cours des cinq dernières années / Important exhibitions during the last five years*

. . . . . .

26 *Autres réalisations importantes, au cours des cinq dernières années / Other important events during the last five years*

. . . . . .

27 *Expositions importantes, prises d'autres musées, ou reprises par eux / Important exhibitions taken over from, or by, other museums*

. . . . . .

3 Partenaires / Co-operation

31 *Autorité de tutelle / Governing body*
Intervient-elle dans: Le programme d'exposition ? La politique d'achat ? / Does it intervene in: The exhibition programme? Purchasing policy?

. . . . . .

32 *Artistes / Artists*
Leur participation à la vie du musée, sous quelle forme ? / In what way do they participate in the life of the museum?

. . . . . .

Le musée leur offre-t-il des facilités (ateliers, contrats . . .) ? / Does the museum offer facilities (workshops, contracts . . .)?

. . . . . .

33 *Marché d'art / The art market*
Relations avec les galeries / Relations with galleries

. . . . . .

Rôle des trustees / Role of the trustees

. . . . . .

34 *Mass media*: Presse / Press; Radio; Télévision / Television; Cinéma / Cinema

. . . . . .

35 *Public*
Nombre de visiteurs par année depuis 1964 / Number of visitors per year since 1964
Nombre lors d'expositions importantes / Number during important exhibitions

. . . . . .

36 *Éditeurs / Publishers*
Autorisations de reproduction, droits, qualité des illustrations . . . / Authorization to reproduce, copyrights, quality of illustrations

. . . . . .

4 Musée éditeur / Museum publications

Bulletins; Catalogues; Cartes postales / Postcards; Affiches / Posters, etc.

. . . . . .

5 Architecture

51 *Bâtiment / Building*

. . . . . .

52 *Aménagements, installations / Fittings, installations*
Climatisation / Air conditioning; Éclairage contrôlé / Controlled lighting, etc.

. . . . . .

53 *Équipement / Equipment*

. . . . . .

54 *Sécurité / Security*
Vol / Theft; Incendie / Fire . . . . . .

6 Suggestions du correspondant / Additional remarks

. . . . . .

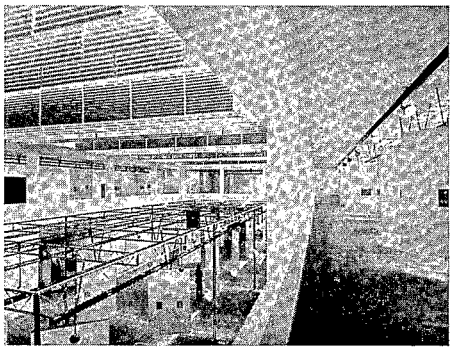
List of consulted[1] museums

Algeria. Musée National des Beaux-Arts, Alger.
Argentina. Museo Instituto Torcuato di Tella, Buenos Aires.
Australia. National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne.
Austria. Museum des 20. Jahrhunderts, Wien.
Belgium. Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten, Antwerpen*; Openluchtmuseum Beeldhouwkunst, Antwerpen (Middleheim)*; Verzamelingen van de Provincie West-Vlaanderen, Brugge; Musée d'Art Moderne, Bruxelles; Musée des Beaux-Arts, Bruxelles; Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts de Belgique, Bruxelles; Palais des Beaux-Arts, Bruxelles; Museum voor Schone Kunsten, Gent*; Musée Provincial Constant Permeke, Jabbeke*; Stedelijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten, Kortrijk; Musée des Beaux-Arts, Liège*; Museum voor Schone Kunsten, Oostende*.
Brazil. Museu de Arte Moderna, Rio de Janeiro*; Museu de Arte Contemporânea da Universidade de São Paulo, São Paulo*; Museu de Arte Moderna, São Paulo.
Canada. Musée d'Art Contemporain, Montréal; National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa*; Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto*; Vancouver Art Gallery, Vancouver*; Winnipeg Art Gallery, Winnipeg*.
Czechoslovakia. Národnl Galerie, Praha*.
Denmark. Louisiana, Humlebaek.
Egypt. Mathaf al-Fann al-Hadeeth, Al-Kahira.
France. Centre National d'Art Contemporain (CNAC), Paris*; Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, Paris; Musée des Arts Décoratifs, Paris; Musée National d'Art Moderne, Paris*; Fondation Marguerite et Aimé Maeght, Saint-Paul-de-Vence*.
Federal Republic of Germany. Neue Galerie, Aachen*; Staatliche Kunsthalle, Baden-Baden*; Stadt Bochum Museum, Bochum*; Kunstverein, Braunschweig; Hessisches Landesmuseum, Darmstadt*; Kunstverein, Darmstadt; Museum am Ostwall, Dortmund; Kunstsammlungen Nordrhein-Westphalen, Düsseldorf*; Kunstverein für die Rheinlande und Westfalen, Düsseldorf*; Museum Folkwang, Essen*; Kunstverein, Freiburg; Kunstverein, Frankfurt am Main*; Kunstverein, Göttingen; Hamburger Kunsthalle, Hamburg*; Kunsthaus, Hamburg*; Kestner-Gesellschaft, Hannover; Kunstverein, Hannover; Niedersächsische Landesgalerie in Landesmuseum, Hannover*; Kunsthalle, Karlsruhe*; Documenta GmbH, Kassel*; Staatliche Kunsthalle, Köln*; Kunstverein, Köln; Wallraf-Richartz Museum, Köln*; Kunstverein, Konstanz*; Kaiser Wilhelm Museum, Krefeld*; Städtisches Museum, Leverkusen; Kunstverein, Ludwigshafen; Städtische Kunsthalle, Mannheim*; Kunstverein, München; Modern Art Museum München*; Städtisches Museum, Münchengladbach; Kunsthalle, Nürnberg; Kunstverein, Passau*; Staatliche Museum, Potsdam*; Kunstverein, Recklinghausen; Kunstverein, Rosenheim; Kunstverein, Schwäbisch Gmünd; Kunstverein, Ulm.
Hong Kong. Museum and Art Gallery, Hong Kong.
India. National Gallery of Modern Art, New Delhi*.
Iraq. Museum of Iraqi Modern Art, Baghdad.
Israel. Muze'on Israel, Jerusalem*; Muze'on Tel Aviv, Tel Aviv.
Italy. Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Moderna, Roma*; Galleria Civica d'Arte Moderna, Torino*.
Japan. The Hakone Open Air Museum, Hakone*; The Kamakura Modern Art Museum, Kamakura; The National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo*.
Mexico. Museo Nacional de Arte Moderna, Mexico.
Netherlands. Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam*; Stedelijk van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven*; Gemeentemuseum 's Gravenhage; Rijksmuseum Kröller-Müller, Otterlo*; Boymans van Beuningen Museum, Rotterdam*; Centraal Museum der Gemeente, Utrecht*.
New Zealand. Auckland City Art Gallery, Auckland.
Norway. Sonja Henie og Nils Onstads Stiftelser, Høvikodden*.
Philippines. Cultural Centre, Manila.
Poland. Muzeum Narodowego, Kraków*; Museum Sztuki, Lódz.
Sweden. Moderna Museet, Stockholm*.
Switzerland. Kunsthalle, Berne*; Kunsthalle, Basel; Kunstmuseum, Basel*; Kunstmuseum, Luzern*; Kunsthaus, Zürich*.
United Kingdom. Institute of Contemporary Arts, London*; Hayward Gallery, London; Tate Gallery, London*.
United State of America. Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago*; Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago*; Contemporary Arts Center, Cincinnati; Museum of Fine Arts, Houston*; Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles*; Jewish Museum, New York; Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Museum of Modern Art, New York; New York Cultural Center, New York; Solomon Guggenheim Museum, New York*; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York*.
Venezuela. Museo de Bellas Artes, Caracas*.
West Berlin. Akademie der Künste, Berlin*; Nationalgalerie, Berlin*.
Yugoslavia. Moderna Galerija, Ljubljana.

1. Museums which replied to the questionnaire are indicated by an asterisk.

Museum notes

The National Museum of Plastic Arts, Montevideo



65

The Uruguayan National Museum of Plastic Arts is housed in a building which was designed at the turn of the century. Thus for some scores of years it reflected the style of its period of museum architecture (borrowed largely from the Renaissance) with long galleries, interior compartmentation, a multiplicity of rooms with fixed concrete partitions, and divorced from the urbanistic context to which it belongs.

The architecture of a museum, as is well known, conditions its life and functioning. Accordingly each room (like a vault in a cemetery) ended by becoming the resting place for immovable family 'dead'. The whole thing resembled a mausoleum.

Towards the middle of 1969 the curatorship was taken over by Angel Kalenberg, a partisan of living, dynamic museum and experimental laboratories in the service of the community. But a change in policy of this kind could not even have been tried without a radical change in the architecture which would constitute the setting.

It was a matter of contriving a single continuous space which would be adjustable to all the needs and inspirations of present-day museology—which would permit the mounting, dismantling and alteration of exhibitions of the most varied types with a great economy of time and money.

For the architectural implementation of these museological objects, recourse was made to the Argentine architect, Clorindo Testa, who is also an artist.

The work was carried out in two stages. First came demolition, consisting in removing superfluous partitions, dividing walls and enclosures in order to lay bare the original structure. By this phase of the work two essential objects were achieved: (a) the spatial unification of the two floors, and (b) spatial continuity on each of them.

Complete flexibility in the system of mounting exhibits was achieved by recourse to three distinct mechanisms.

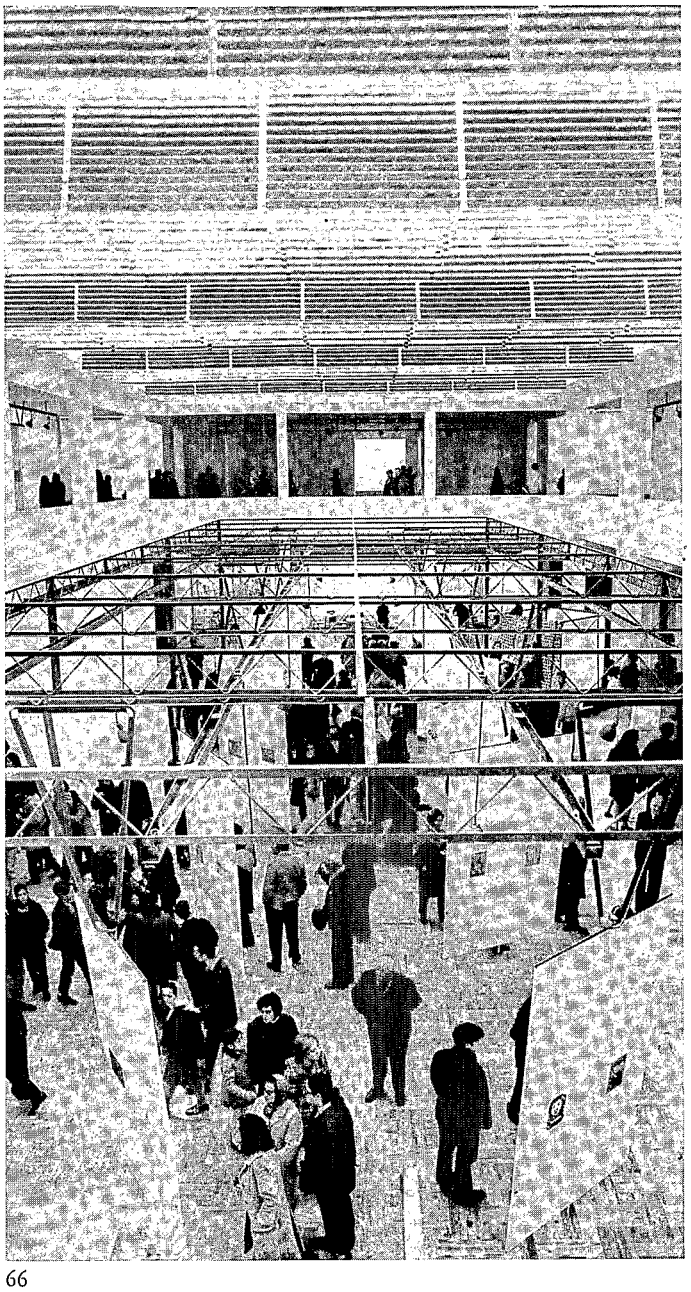
First, in the spaces created by doing away with the separate rooms, in other words, in the spaces with 4.5 metre ceilings, overhead tracks have been installed along which the panels (2.5 by 1.6 metres) are slid. Each panel can be rotated through 360 degrees, which makes it possible to align the panels to form a wall, if needed to create a zigzag circuit, etc. Once positioned, they are locked to the rails.

Second, in the central space (with a 10-metre ceiling height) there is a gantry of trussed metal beams. Exhibit panels and lighting elements can be hung from any of the cross-beams just as they are from the overhead track. The entire structure can be taken down, leaving the ground floor completely unencumbered (Fig. 65, 66).

Lastly, three easily movable skeleton cubes—2 metres square—were constructed consisting of metal frameworks with a fixed floor panel and wheels (Fig. 67). Their function is complementary—in effect they are mass elements used for organizing the spatial aspect of each layout. All faces or some faces of the cubes can be closed in according to the degree of 'through' or blocked vision required.

The preparatory work, dismantling and installation were completed in three months. Execution of the project cost 8 million Uruguayan pesos, approximately U.S.$25,000.

The new museum was opened on 20 August 1970, with a display of 170 works by Paul Klee (Fig. 68, 69). By that time the available equipment included ten 'phono-guides' for hire. The impact on the public justified expectations. Seventy thousand visitors in twenty days, 2,000 copies of the catalogue disposed of (at $2 a piece), 3,200 posters bought, and eighty press notices suggest a positive furore.



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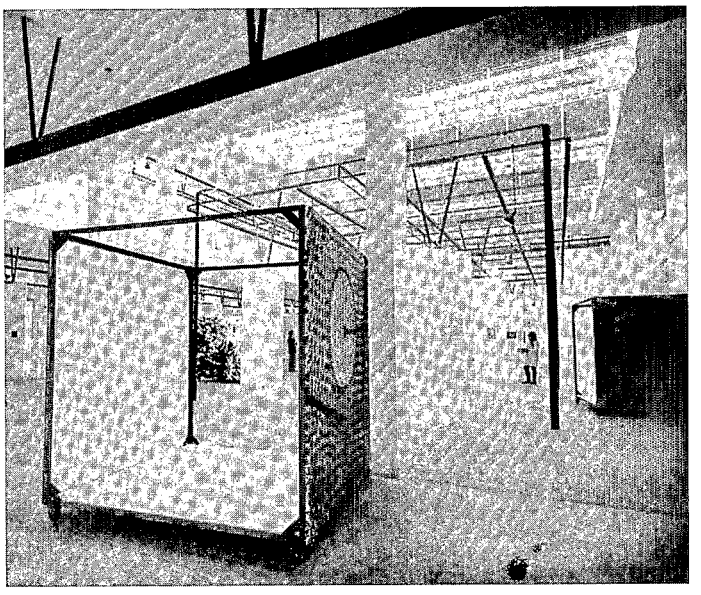
65
Museo Nacional de Artes Plásticas, Montevideo. View from a corner of the upper floor. Note the arrangement of prefabricated industrial asbestos cement elements acting as louvres to control the downward flux of natural light. Note also the spatial continuity between the two floors.

66
Museo Nacional de Artes Plásticas, Montevideo. View of the central structure from above. This is a modular grid resting on eight double T columns and can be completely dismantled. Visually it continues the plane of the upper floor and incorporates its own systems for illumination and mounting panels.

67
Museo Nacional de Artes Plásticas, Montevideo. Ground floor. In the foreground we see one of the cubes; mass elements for organizing the spatial aspect of each layout. Any or all of the faces may be closed in according to the degree of 'through' or blocked vision required. In the photograph two faces are closed with enlargements of details from Klee pictures.

68
Museo Nacional de Artes Plásticas, Montevideo. Entrance of the museum and announcement of the Paul Klee exhibition, August 1970.

69
Museo Nacional de Artes Plásticas, Montevideo. Main façade of the museum, with asbestos-cement cladding which acts as a sun shield.



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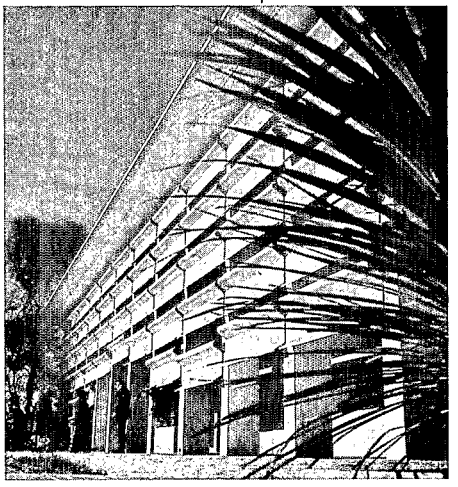

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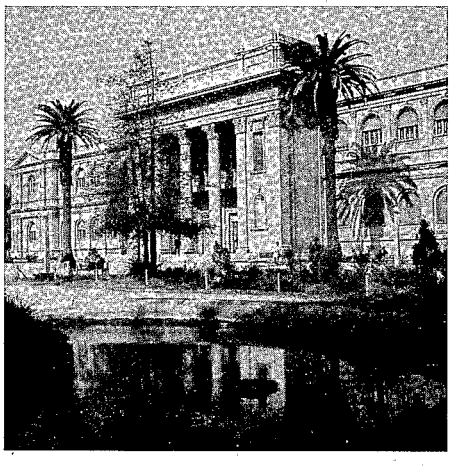
The National Centre of Museology, National Museum of Natural History, Santiago (Chile)



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The need for specialized staff for museums is becoming greater and more urgent in the whole world. A museum is by definition a service to the community and therefore has to give access to a daily increasing number of people and the public itself feels it has a right to major participation in the activities of its museums. Visitors are generally sophisticated, informed of the principal events in the whole world and asking to be kept up to date in everything that happens in the field of arts, sciences and technology; they are exigent from the aesthetic point of view, demanding that the 'merchandise' be presented attractively and they are conscious of their responsibility towards the cultural and scientific patrimony of their nation. Only an efficient and agile service will satisfy them and this service cannot be given without personnel that is duly prepared and specialized.

This personnel has to be created and formed by the museums themselves. Nobody doubts any more that the scientific staff of museums has to be recruited among the graduates of higher education; nevertheless, the personnel at middle level is generally improvised or trained while already working, more often than not without any previous knowledge or experience.

The need for technical and para-scientific personnel led to the passing of Law DFL1309 of 28 February 1968, which created the Centro Nacional de Museología of the Museo Nacional de Historia (Fig. 70), in order to form technicians in museology (*técnicos en museología*).[1]

Objectives. The purpose of the centre is the professional training of taxidermists, collectors, restorers of anthropological material, excavation supervisors, laboratory assistants, assistants for natural-science collections in schools, preparators and conservators of scientific material, officers in charge of museographic documentation, producers of didactic material in natural and anthropological sciences for museums and schools.

Their field of activities lies primarily in museums and a certain emphasis has been given to the needs of regional and provincial museums, whose scientific staff is generally scanty. One of the subjects which is taught in consideration of this necessity is the conservation of natural resources.

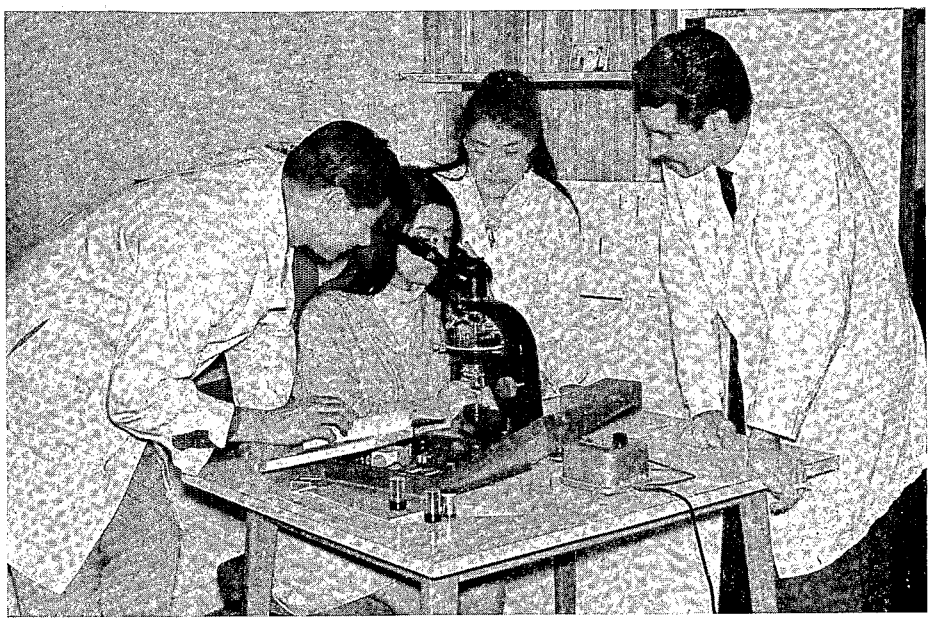
Apart from museums, technicians in museology are qualified in work in scientific laboratories, as collectors for universities and other research establishments—always in the field of natural and anthropological sciences—and in secondary schools in charge of natural-science collections and laboratories.

The third occupational field lies in the production of didactic material. This material is needed by more than half the world's population (more than half is of school age) and must be manufactured with the utmost care so as not to distort the vision of nature which the students will know through it. The technicians in museology are able to produce this type of material in a rigorously scientific way. The production of didactic material is a deeply felt necessity in Chile and Latin America.

Curricula. In order to give the career of technician in museology the support and guarantees of the existing educational legislation, the Centro Nacional de Museología was structured as a professional school, similar to those dependent upon the Dirección de Educación Profesional of the Ministry of Education in Chile. Details are as follows:

1. The study course is of three years' duration.
2. The centre is open to students of all secondary schools recognized by the Ministry of Education who have passed the first year of secondary education.[2]
3. The curriculum is divided into scientific-humanistic and professional studies in a percentage established by law.
4. At the end of the last year of studies, students receive their secondary-school licence which allows them to apply for entry into a university or another establishment of higher studies, and a diploma that accredits them as technicians in museology, signed by the appropriate

1. The National Museum of Natural History is dependent —as are all the State museums— upon the Dirección de Bibliotecas, Archivos y Museos of the Ministry of Education.
2. Secondary education (*educación media*) in Chile has a duration of four years and is preceded by eight years of basic education.



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70
MUSEO NACIONAL DE HISTORIA NATURAL, Santiago (Chile). The museum building. With its 140 years of existence, it is one of the oldest of the New World.

71
MUSEO NACIONAL DE HISTORIA NATURAL, Santiago (Chile). Centro Nacional de Museología. Students during a taxidermy class.

72
MUSEO NACIONAL DE HISTORIA NATURAL, Santiago (Chile). Centro Nacional de Museología. Freeing fossils from their matrix under the supervision of Professor Pedro Hernández.

73
MUSEO NACIONAL DE HISTORIA NATURAL, Santiago (Chil). Centro Nacional de Museología. Studying slides with palaeopalinological samples.

74
MUSEO NACIONAL DE HISTORIA NATURAL, Santiago (Chile). Centro Nacional de Museología. Restoring ethnographic material under the supervision of Professor Mabel Rivera de Bianchi.

authorities of the Ministry of Education. Under this system, the graduates can continue their studies in courses for academic degrees (professor, master, doctor) or enter directly into professional life.

The subjects are distributed in the manner shown in the table.

Subjects[1]	Hours per week		
	First year	Second year	Third year
General plan			
Spanish	2	2	2
History	2	2	2
Natural sciences	5	4	4
Chemistry	–	4	4
Physics	–	4	4
Mathematics	4	4	4
English	3	3	3
Philosophy	–	3	3
Special plan			
Museology	3	2	–
Museographic techniques[2]	2	2	3
Conservation of scientific materials[3]	7	2	–
Drawing	4	–	–
Photography	–	–	3
Earth sciences	–	4	1
Botany	2	2	–
Zoology	2	2	–
Anthropology	2	–	2
Ecology	–	–	4
Biostatistics	3	–	–

1. Modified curriculum.
2. Includes documentation, reproductions, exhibition.
3. Includes taxidermy, other zoological material, microscopy.

The general plan includes the subjects obligatory for all professional schools in Chile; nevertheless, in the Centro Nacional de Museología their contents are adapted to career necessities. The special plan includes the professional subjects, scientific as well as technical; in all of them, greatest emphasis is given to the practical preparation of the students, because we do not pretend to form scientists, but technicians. The curricula of all subjects are oriented towards the fields of museology and museography.

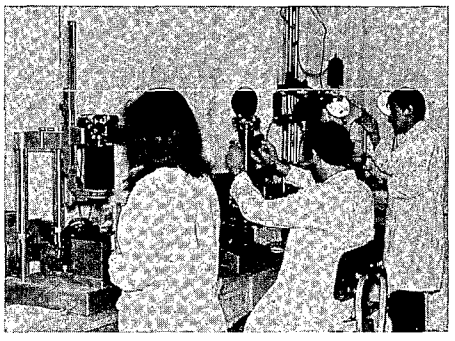
One of the major difficulties is the supply of study texts. For the general plan there is no problem, because official school texts are used, adapted where necessary to the exigencies of the future profession. The difficulties arise with texts for the special plan: besides the lack of complete treatises, the Centro Nacional de Museología suffers from a tragic shortage of specialized literature on museology and museography. The few publications which are accessible are written in foreign languages and must be translated. Each professor has to prepare and draft his own texts and notes for his theoretical and practical classes. They are mimeographed and distributed among the students, as are translations of papers in foreign languages. The procedure is slow and expensive.[1]

Practical work. The authorities of the Centro Nacional de Museología have been most conscious, from its very foundation, that the career of technician in museology is an eminently practical one and that the knowledge given in theory classes must be applied immediately in order to develop the skills of the students, in consulting bibliographies, building, assembling and handling laboratory instruments and equipment (Fig. 71–75), controlling variables, processing biological, geological and cultural materials, carrying out instructions, mounting dioramas, *maquettes* and exhibitions, etc.; they must become familiar with different natural surroundings, apply the knowledge and techniques acquired in the course of their studies, adapt themselves to team-work and develop initiatives when facing new situations and problems.

The practical work includes periods in laboratories, workshops and libraries in the museum and other institutions, excursions for collecting scientific material and visits to museums and other institutions of interest. All the special-plan subjects include them.

The curriculum has been elaborated in

1. We now have in print a manual of museology written on the basis of lectures given by Professor R. H. Singleton and translated into Spanish. A small booklet with instructions on museographic documentation, published originally in French by Yvonne Oddon, has also been translated and will be published by Unesco.



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75
Museo Nacional de Historia Natural, Santiago (Chile). Centro Nacional de Museología. Class of scientific photography.

co-operation with national and international organizations: representatives of the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Agriculture, of the universities, of government-controlled bodies and of the national Chilean ICOM[1] Committee participated in a commission nominated for this purpose.[2] During the three years which have passed since the creation of the centre, we have felt the need to introduce modifications in the curriculum; in the general plan those established by general education laws; in the special plan we had to correct inadequacies which became evident in the course of the first cycle. The modified plan presented here was applied in March 1971.

Staff. The director of the Museo Nacional de Historia Natural is also the director of the Centro Nacional de Museología; he is assisted by a subdirector; the majority of the teachers of the special plan belong to the scientific staff of the museum and where this is not possible, the subjects are taught by university professors or specialists.

International collaboration. Besides the collaboration of the Director of ICOM, the Ministry of Education has engaged the Argentine museologist Mabel Rivera de Bianchi; in 1969 and 1970, the ministry and the British Council made it possible for Professor Singleton to come and lecture on museology for the senior staff of Chilian museums and the students of the Centro Nacional de Museología; one of the results will be the museology manual already referred to. In 1969 we were given a subvention by Unesco (Participation programme) in order to finance the visit of Yvonne Oddon, director of the International Museographical Documentation Centre (Unesco-ICOM) and the acquisition of equipment for handling plastics. Miss Oddon organized a seminar on museographic documentation and on this occasion a small manual with instructions for documentation, of which she is the author, was translated into Spanish.[3]

The first graduates. On 29 December 1970 the graduation ceremony of the first course of technicians in museology took place. A group of sixteen young men and women, who initiated their studies in 1968, is now ready to enter professional life. Three of the graduates already belong to the staff of the museum and we hope that several more will be engaged.

Their occupational field is ample; we calculate that at this moment 300 to 400 professionals of this type are needed in Chile. Competition will also be great, not among the graduates, but among museums and other institutions that are in need of technicians; we fear that it will be difficult for museums to compete with offers from universities and other public or private institutions.

Necessities. We have tried to give the students of the centre as complete as possible a training in the different fields and techniques of museology and to provide them with enough flexibility to enable them to adapt themselves to different types of museums; we had to modify the original programme and, if necessary, will readjust it again until it offers an efficient professional preparation.

It is also essential for us to receive in the future the co-operation of foreign experts, especially in the subjects of taxidermy, reproduction in plastic and conservation.

Another urgent need is to obtain publications, in order to build up a good library with the basic literature on museology and museography, and to publish texts and papers in Spanish.

The majority of the students do not know any museums other than those of Santiago and Chile. They should now travel abroad and be given the chance to work for some time in a modern museum; they need to widen their horizons, to acquire new knowledge and to learn new techniques. It is therefore very important to obtain scholarships for them, but so far we have not been able to discover scholarships for this level; they are abundant for university post-graduates, but lacking for technicians. This is very serious, not only for the field of museology, which interests us directly, but for all technical professions, which—especially in the developing countries—should constitute the broad basis of the occupational pyramid.

Future projects. With the creation of the Centro Nacional de Museología, Chile has incorporated into its educational system a new technical profession at middle level. It is exactly at this level that a great deficit exists in all Latin America and museums in particular are suffering strongly from this lack; the absence of para-scientific staff affects all research activities, obliging investigators to take care themselves of preparatory tasks, to the detriment of research itself; now the technicians in museology can collect scientific material, supervise excavations, embalm animals or preserve them in liquids, prepare insects, restore archaeological and ethnographical objects, handle instruments and other laboratory equipment, produce reproductions, cut and polish minerals, prepare microscope slides, make scientific drawings and photographs, include samples in plastic material and take care of documentation work. They have a basic knowledge in the principal branches of the natural and anthropological sciences, in the conservation of natural resources and the techniques of exhibition. This training makes them valuable collaborators in science museums, research organizations and schools. The enormous field of didactic material is open to them.

It goes without saying that they still lack experience; therefore it is important continuously to offer courses for perfecting their knowledge (in-service training); for that also the assistance of foreign experts is needed as well as the possibility of periods of training in foreign museums. We are fully conscious of these limitations; with this understanding we offer the experiences of the centre to other museums that are interested and at the same time ask them for their co-operation and suggestions.

Grete Mostny

1. The help of the Director of ICOM, Hugues de Varine-Bohan, has been most valuable, partly through his direct collaboration, partly through establishing contacts with distinguished foreign museologists.
2. We are thinking of a future possibility of creating a specialized career of decorators and graphic artists for museums; until this is possible, the curriculum of the Centro Nacional de Museología must prepare its students to depend on their own resources if the need arises.
3. *Chile; Desarrollo de los Museos y Documentación Museográfica,* Paris, Unesco, 1970 (doc. 1896/BMS-RD/CLT).

Picture credits

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