

THE POLITICS OF DISPLAY—ARCHITECTS AND MUSEUMS:

JOHN YEON, A. JAMES SPEYER, AND LINA BO BARDI

by

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by

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The selection, placement, grouping, chromatic selection, and lighting of works of art have an effect on the transmission of art historical and critical knowledge that is, in certain ways, equal to that of labels and other forms of verbal information. Displays of art transform a culture's relationship to art, providing a lens through which interpretation can be evaluated. This study aims to understand installations in art museums by challenging the idea that they are neutral and by examining in a select group of case studies ways in which professionally trained architects have imparted new energy and ideas to art museums through museum displays that they designed and the cultural politics expressed through their installations. By examining three architects, each of whom had different training and cultural-architectural contexts, this dissertation will examine how their work is different than those from various other traditions of museum installation. The focus will be the installation practices of: John Yeon, A. James Speyer, and Lina Bo Bardi. These three figures were chosen because each produced a significant body of well-documented museum installations in their architectural careers. Although John Yeon's fascination with Asian Art and with nature is analogous with Frank Lloyd Wright's, he maintained a distinctive Pacific

Northwest style separate from the prairie style of Wright. A. James Speyer's aesthetics echoed Mies van der Rohe, his mentor. Like Mies, he worked with open spaces and unadulterated materials, but his style was inimitably his own. Bo Bardi, too, adhered to the modernist dictates and worked with vast open spaces, but with a didactic intent. Her anarcho-communist politics were embedded in her museum work. While Yeon and Speyer were wealthy architect-collectors who made installations that suggest private luxury, Bo Bardi's work was highly politicized. Her audience was not connoisseurs, but "the people." Examining Yeon's environmental interests, Speyer's adherence to the International Style, and Bo Bardi's Italian and Brazilian political interests, helps understand how the installation designer's touch is apparent in his or her installation designs.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Art museums collect, study, and interpret. The interpretation includes the display, which is a merging of artworks, the environment, and information.¹ The way a museum chooses to arrange the art sends subliminal messages, and it is the installation and placement that assists in the interpretation of the works of art. The designer's choices and values, including his or her background, enter the dialog between the works of art and their audience. Like artists, good installation designers frequently reference, critique, and borrow from the past. Their aesthetic decisions reflect past interests and experiences and deflect them to the viewers, in turn, adding to the dialog between the viewer and the artwork. Installation designers are seldom examined.

The order in which the works are hung or placed in space, the more technical aspect of installation, is all very much about story telling. In essence, the installation is sense-based and tells a story with the colors of the walls, the display furniture, and all other aspects of the architectural space. Nancy Einreinhofer maintains that the context in which one sees art, "can alter, diminish or intensify the meaning the object carries."² Einreinhofer's assertion prompted the question that is driving this dissertation: How does the creative process of architects who design installations affect the viewer's interpretation of that art; moreover, how does it relate to existing bodies of knowledge about art? This study aims to understand installations in art museums by challenging the idea that they are neutral and by examining a select group of case

¹ David Carrier, *Museum Skepticism A History of the Display of Art in Public Galleries* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2006), 94.

² Nancy Einreinhofer, *The American Art Museum: Elitism and Democracy* (Washington [D.C.]: Leicester University Press, 1997), 83.

studies in which professionally trained architects have imparted new energy and ideas to art museums through museum displays that they designed and the cultural politics expressed through their installations. The talents, training, and education of architects make them particularly capable of creating, designing, and organizing permanent museum installations as they understand the nuances of space. Museum installations maintain an expressive component that engages with the works of art and with the viewer.

This dissertation focuses on the installation practices of three architects: John Yeon, James Speyer, and Lina Bo Bardi. These three figures were chosen because each produced a significant body of well-documented museum installations in their architectural careers. Each also had contrasting roles in the museums for which they designed these installations—two were outside architectural designers employed on a project basis by the museums and the third was a full-time curator at the museum, practicing architecture "on the side." Yeon represents the Arts and Crafts movement's adherence to refined materials and Asian aesthetic principles. Speyer represents the standardized International Style movement where less is considered more, and Bo Bardi's freeing of the art object from the walls contributes to the discussion because it unveils a synthesis of Italian and Brazilian politics. First, a brief history of influential architects who designed museum installations is included in order to present a context for the three case studies. The body of the dissertation is divided into three parts with each section dedicated to a particular architect. This dissertation surveys these individual architects' installation design and evaluates the motivations of both the designers and institutions. The following case studies also analyze the influence that their work has had on the museum world and the public by focusing more on the intervening role of museum installation design in the social process and how it facilitates

interpretation of the artworks. This dissertation draws on archives, images, reviews, and published interviews. Three appendices of images follow the dissertation. Each appendix is devoted to the installation work of an individual case study, offering a more comprehensive visual representation of the architect's museum installation work. Duplicates of some of the images in the dissertation are included and labeled as such in the appendices to provide reference and to assist the reader by not requiring her to flip back and forth through the text.

Working within the same period, each of the architects maintained a distinctive modernist aesthetic in his or her designs. They each created environments that were inviting, and they attempted a visual poetic consistent with their particular modernist aesthetic. Each expressed an almost fanatical devotion to the integrity of the work of art itself. The design of Yeon's Japanese Screen Gallery helped advance our understanding of museum design, as it served as a model for the installation of Japanese art. Speyer's attention to American art and his understanding of European art "helped make Chicago more cosmopolitan."³ In the chapter on Bo Bardi, I show how she influenced architect Zaha Hadid. Indeed, Bo Bardi's design "set a precedent" for museum practice. Rosalind McKeever argues that her has influenced the type of "open" collection displays like the Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts in Norwich (1978) and Louvre-Lens (2012).⁴

Although John Yeon's fascination with Asian Art and with nature is often compared with that of with Frank Lloyd Wright, he maintained a distinctive Pacific Northwest style separate from the prairie style of Wright. James Speyer's aesthetics echoed Mies van der Rohe, his

³ Director of the Art Institute Chicago James Wood was quoted in Alan G. Artner, "Art Curator A. James Speyer," *The Chicago Tribune*, November 11, 1986.

⁴ Rosalind McKeever, *Apollo*, "São Paulo's floating art collection is back," (January 18, 2016), Accessed April 8, 2017, available online: <https://www.apollo-magazine.com/sao-paulos-floating-art-collection-is-back/>

mentor. Like Mies, he worked with open spaces and unadulterated materials, but his style was his own. Bo Bardi worked under Gió Ponti, the renowned Italian architect, designer, writer and curator. Bo Bardi, too, adhered to the modernist dictates and worked with vast open spaces, but with a didactic intent. Her anarcho-communist politics were embedded in her museum work. While Yeon and Speyer were wealthy architect-collectors who made installations that suggest private luxury, Bo Bardi's work was highly politicized. Ideally, members of her audience were not connoisseurs, but "the people."

Many scholars, from various methodological backgrounds, have discussed the installation of art and its effects, but the inquiries have been limited in scope, tend to focus on general issues, and lack focus on specific installation designers. For instance, Neil Harris places museums within our capitalistic society in *Cultural Excursions: Marketing Appetites and Cultural Tastes in Modern America*, where he explains the influence of the World's Fair and department stores on museum display. In contrast, Philip Fisher believes that the "subject" of museums is the comparing and contrasting of art works, rather than the individual artworks themselves. He claims, "the rapid stroll through a museum is an act in deep harmony with the nature of art, that is, art history and the museum itself (not with the individual object, which the museum itself has profoundly hidden in history)."⁵ Carol Duncan's work examines the historical and social conditions that museum "rituals" created. She discusses the trends in installation and how they aid in sacralizing the museum space.⁶ Fisher's idea of museum "subject" and Duncan's

⁵ Philip Fisher, *Making and Effacing Art: Modern American Art in a Culture of Museums*, (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1991), 8-9.

⁶ Carol Duncan, *Civilizing Rituals Inside Public Art Museums*, (London: Routledge, 1995), 8.

scholarship will provide a backdrop for this investigation. Moreover, Peter Vergo lays out two separate types of exhibitions, the "aesthetic" type where "Understanding" is considered "a process of private communion between ourselves and the work of art," and the "contextual exhibitions" that see art as "a token of a particular age, a particular culture, a particular political or social system, as being representative of certain ideas or beliefs."⁷ While many museum scholars offer perceptive interpretations on museum display, they often do so in the confines of a singular attentiveness such as issues confronting ideology, identity, power, and consumerism.⁸ Although many texts contribute significantly, none include a comparative investigation of a select group of architects' work for a focused understanding of influence, inspiration, and effect.

The first case study examines the museum work of John Yeon (1910-1994). Yeon was an architect, environmentalist, highway engineer, art collector, curator and museum designer from Portland, Oregon, who defined the Northwest Regional Style within the Modernist Movement. Yeon was as imaginative in regards to the building's interior as he was to its exterior. His architectural work was considered "emphatically American," having "much more in common with straightforward native building types than with historical 'styles.'"⁹ Like Yeon's early architecture, his museum work exhibits a distinct aesthetic that references the natural environment. Yeon relied on materials for their innate quality and refused to compromise when

⁷ Peter Vergo, "The Reticent Object," *The New Museology*, Ed. Peter Vergo, (London: Reaktion, 1989), 48.

⁸ See Nancy Einreinhofer, *The American Art Museum: Elitism and Democracy*, (Washington [D.C.]: Leicester University Press, 1997), and Ivan Karp, *Museum Frictions: Public Cultures/Global Transformations*, (Chapel Hill: Duke University Press, 2007).

⁹ Museum of Modern Art, *Art in Our Time*, (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1939), 305.

pushed to settle for what he considered inferior materials in his architecture and design.

John Yeon practiced architecture throughout his life although he never finished architectural school nor held an architectural license. In addition to the homes he designed that helped define the Northwestern regional architecture, he created pristine, serene environments for museums in Portland, San Francisco, and Kansas City. The first section examines the biographical and social aspects of Yeon's life, including personal and professional influences and architectural work in order to gain insight into the aesthetic choices made for museum installation design. Foremost, his family enters this discussion because Yeon's privileged upbringing played a crucial role in his unique aesthetic principles, which were tied to the legacy of engaging in environmental politics. The focus will be centered around his early life in Portland, for there he met Harry Wentz, an art teacher at the Portland Art Museum (PAM), who championed the Arts and Craft movement and helped Yeon refine his aesthetics. In the Pacific Northwest, the Arts and Crafts Movement embraced Japanism, and the movement lasted much longer than in any other part of the United States.¹⁰ After the Lewis and Clark exposition (1905), Asian objects flooded the market and sparked the interest of many people in the Pacific Northwest, especially because of the connections to the natural environment. As artists and designers learned more about Japanese culture, they began to copy the underlying design strategies—balance, simplicity, and modularity. Although John Yeon briefly worked in the office of architects Herman Brookman and A.E. Doyle, his style does not reflect these early architectural experiences. Yeon's interest in the environment and his love for Asian art are most

¹⁰ For more on the popularity of the Arts and Crafts Movement in the Pacific Northwest, see Lawrence Krisman and Glenn Mason, *The Arts & Crafts Movement in the Pacific Northwest*, (Portland: Timber Press, 2007).

relevant to this discussion, for this interest surfaces in the installations that he designed for museums.¹¹

Three of Yeon's major museum installations involved Asian art, which Yeon studied and collected. For this reason, this dissertation will focus on examining John Yeon's work in San Francisco for the Avery Brundage collection when it first opened at the M.H. de Young Museum. This work led to other installation jobs at the Nelson-Atkins Museum in Kansas City, where some of his design work remarkably still exists in the Japanese Screen Gallery, the Buddha stairwell, the Chinese Furniture Gallery, and the Chinese Painting Gallery. By relying on historical and visual analysis through archival research, this section looks at the designs of Yeon's museum installations in San Francisco and Kansas City and examines the social, cultural, and political underpinnings of Yeon's museum installation for the M.H. de Young Museum and the Nelson-Atkins Museum in order to gain a better understanding of his aesthetic choices, values, and interests and how those affected the museum community. Although John Yeon has received recognition for his architectural work, conservational efforts, and construction projects,

¹¹ Yeon's museum work includes: *An Exhibition of Photographs of Oregon Scenery and Reproductions of Similar Scenes* at the Portland Art Museum (April-June, 1934); *An Exhibition of Chinese Art held on the opening of the Solomon and Josephine Hirsch Memorial Wing* at the Portland Art Museum (September 15-October 29, 1939); *Samuel H. Kress Collection*, Portland Art Museum (1952); *Permanent Display of the Greek and Silver Collections* at the Portland Art Museum, (1956/7); *100 objects from the Avery Brundage collection of Oriental Art*, San Francisco (1960); *English Miniature Gallery*, Nelson-Atkins (1963); *Avery Brundage Collection* at the M.H. de Young Museum (1966); *Parker-Grant Gallery*, Nelson-Atkins Museum (1971); *Helen Irwin Fagen Galleries*, Legion of Honor (1972); *Kress and Asian Galleries*, Portland Art Museum (1973-1974); *Gallery for Chinese Decorative Arts*, Nelson-Atkins Museum (1973); *Frank G. Crowell Wing* at the Nelson-Atkins Museum, including: *Buddha Stairway*, the *Japanese Screen Gallery*, *Impressionist Painting Gallery* (1976); *Asian Gallery* Portland Art Museum (1974); Portland Art Museum, *John Yeon: Buildings and landscapes* (1977), *Japanese/Asian Collection*, Portland Art Museum, (September 15 to October 23, 1977).

he has received little recognition for his museological work. An image of his Watzek House was included in *Art in Our Time*,¹² the tenth anniversary exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in New York, and it was later included in the MoMA exhibition *Built in USA 1932-1944*. At the time of this dissertation's completion, a retrospective exhibition of Yeon, "Quest for Beauty: The Architecture, Landscapes, and Collections of John Yeon" will open in May 2017, at the Portland Art Museum, and several books on Yeon are currently set for publication.¹³ Yeon's contribution to the cultural inheritance and the development of art need close attention, for his work speaks as much to his time as it does to the art that he was exhibiting.

The second case study is A. James Speyer (1913-1986), teacher, architect, curator, and exhibition designer, whose twenty-five-year commitment to exhibition design at the Art Institute of Chicago (AIC) gained critical acclaim for its rigor and creativity. Born in Pittsburgh, Speyer moved to Chicago in 1939 to become the first graduate student to study architecture under Mies van der Rohe at the Armour Institute of Technology, which merged with the Lewis Institute in 1940, becoming the Illinois Institute of Technology (IIT). Speyer established a private architectural practice in Chicago where many of his modernist homes are along the North Shore, and while running his practice, taught architectural design at IIT. James Speyer gave up his architectural practice in 1961 after the Art Institute of Chicago offered him the curatorship of

¹² Museum of Modern Art, *Art in Our Time*, (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1939), 305.

¹³ "Quest for Beauty: The Architecture, Landscapes, and Collections of John Yeon" May 13 – September 3, 2017 at the Portland Art Museum, *John Yeon: Modern Architecture and Conservation in the Pacific Northwest* by Marc Treib, Professor Emeritus of Architecture at Berkeley, was released in December 2016; *John Yeon Architecture: Building in the Pacific Northwest* by Randy Gragg, Ed., PAM Curator Brian Ferriso wrote the foreword, MoMA Curator Barry Bergdoll, Architect J. M. Cava, and Marc Treib; also *John Yeon Landscape: Design, Conservation, Activism*, Randy Gragg, Ed., is also set to be released mid-2017.

Twentieth Century Art. There, he designed many installations until his death in 1986. This section will begin with his biography, especially his ties to the Museum of Modern Art in New York, because it provides insight into his interests, values, and most importantly, his motivation to move to Chicago and study under Mies van der Rohe. Speyer's education played an integral part of his museum installation designs, for Mies had the most tremendous impact of Speyer's aesthetic choices. A. James Speyer was chosen for this study because he spent 25 years designing installations for the Art Institute's permanent collection and exhibitions, particularly, the American exhibitions, Morton Wing, and the Mies van der Rohe exhibition. Speyer's adherence to the International style and his devotion to Miesian aesthetics contribute to this discussion of installation designers. The International Style epitomizes the modern movement, especially in the United States from 1950 to 1970; therefore, Speyer is important to this discussion.

While at the Art Institute, James Speyer created temporary, non-load-bearing walls that transformed the Morton Wing and Gunsaulus Hall, and he also redesigned and reinstalled the Birch-Bartlett Collection Gallery and the wing above Gunsaulus Hall.¹⁴ In addition to the open, flowing spaces that Speyer created in the museum galleries, the architect/curator played with varying heights, textures, and colors in his designs. Often times, he would hang paintings lower than the normal practice and utilize low platforms to exhibit works of three-dimensional art, revealing the Bauhaus aesthetic that Mies demonstrated. Other than a catalogue that accompanied a 1997-1998 exhibition devoted to James Speyer's work held at The Arts Club of Chicago, Carnegie Museum of Art, The Heinz Architectural Center, and the National Technical

¹⁴ John Vinci, *A. James Speyer*, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1997), 4.

University of Athens, School of Architecture, currently, there is no extensive academic scholarship dedicated to his accomplishments.¹⁵

The final case study will focus on the permanent installation and the first exhibition that Lina Bo Bardi designed for the Museum of Art São Paulo (MASP) on Paulista Avenue. Lina Bo Bardi was an Italian-trained architect whose career flourished in Brazil, where she helped form the Museum of Art São Paulo with her husband, Pietro Maria Bardi, for the media magnate Assis Chateaubriand. For the MASP, she created politically charged museum installations. This section will explore Bo Bardi's architectural education, personal and professional influences, and museological work. To begin, Bo Bardi's education in Rome and later her early professional career as an architectural journalist in Milan will be discussed in order to acquaint the reader with Italian Rationalism and the cultural politics of Italy during the war years. Most important to the discussion will be the museological work of Italian architect Franco Albini whose installations influenced Bo Bardi's work at the MASP in Brazil. Next, this chapter will investigate Bo Bardi's work in Brazil, focusing on the MASP, its formation, and the philosophical and political underpinnings of Bo Bardi's museum installations. By concentrating on the inaugural permanent installation of the MASP and its accompanying exhibition, this dissertation will explore the social, cultural, and political aspects of Bo Bardi's museum installation for the MASP in order to expose her aesthetic choices, values, motivations, and how those impacted ideas for museum display.

In order to better understand the installation, Bo Bardi's other installation designs and her

¹⁵ In a brief essay, Maura Lucking discusses Speyer's work in "At Home in the Museum: James Speyer's domestication of the Modern Exhibition" for the Minnesota Society of Architectural Historians.

Italian sources, principally Franco Albini, are examined. Coming from Mussolini's wartime Italy to Brazil, Bo Bardi saw museums as sterile, daunting and undemocratic. Like Le Corbusier, she sought to alter the nature of architecture and by doing so, hoped to change the cultural status of the institution. For Bo Bardi, the museum exercised an undeniable power over the cultural inheritance as well as over the development of art. Whereas John Yeon and James Speyer viewed museal work as positive, acknowledging aesthetic quality and establishing institutional authority, Lina Bo Bardi saw it as negative, adapting aesthetic directives and creating isolative institutions, so she worked within the system to prompt societal change.

Bo Bardi designed not only the installation for the MASP, but also the building. She created an open interior space within the museum, which she filled with artworks displayed on large panes of glass anchored by concrete blocks. Each work stands as an independent object with the label placed on the back of the glass support. For Bo Bardi, the museum is primarily a space for human interaction. She allowed the audience to freely make their own judgments without obvious mediation. Until recently, little was known in North America about Lina Bo Bardi's museum work although she worked as an architect, designer, illustrator, editor, and curator. Now there are several scholarly works in English (although most are in Portuguese and Spanish) devoted to her architectural designs in her adopted country Brazil, but none in the United States deal extensively or exclusively with her gallery installations while comparing those to other architect/designers. In 2014, an English translation by architectural historian Cathrine Veikos of Bo Bardi's architectural theory, *The Theory of Architectural Practice* was published by Routledge. Shortly after Bo Bardi's death, her installations, including the glass and concrete

mounts, were removed for alterations to the São Paulo Art Museum.¹⁶ Several exhibitions celebrated Bo Bardi's hundredth birthday (December 5, 2014) throughout Europe and the Americas. The Architekturmuseum der TU München at the Pinakothek der Moderne presented *Lina Bo Bardi 100-Brazil's Alternative Path to Modernism* (November 14, 2014-February 22, 2015). Around the same time, *Lina Bo Bardi in Italy- "All I wanted was to have History"* (December 19, 2014-March 15, 2015) appeared at the MAXXI Architecture-Archives Center in Rome and then at the Portaluppi Foundation in Milan. In addition, MoMA curator Barry Bergdoll included Bo Bardi in the exhibition *Latin America in Construction: Architecture 1955–1980* (March 29–July 19, 2015), a revisiting of the subject 60 years after the museum's landmark exhibition, *Latin American Architecture since 1945* (1955). Lina Bo Bardi's designs were included in *Moderno: Design for Living in Brazil, Mexico, and Venezuela, 1940-1978*, an exhibition held first at the Americas Society, New York (February 11 - May 16, 2015), and then at the Blanton Museum of Art in Austin (October 11, 2015 – January 17, 2016). Years later, after a tremendous amount of public outcry and a new museum director, São Paulo based architectural group, Metro recreated more than a hundred of Bo Bardi's glass easels, which were re-created and installed on the second floor of the MASP, beginning December 11, 2015. With the new installation, a new book, *Concreto e cristal: o acervo do MASP nos cavaletes de Lina Bo Bardi= concrete and crystal: MASP's collection on Lina Bo Bardi's easels* by Adriano Pedrosa, Luiza

¹⁶ Soon after the glass easels were removed in 1996, there was a public outcry for their return. November 2014, Adriano Pedrosa took over as the artistic director for São Paulo Museum of Art and immediately “to reinstate elements of Bo Bardi’s original ideas that were based on the democratisation for showing and viewing art and architecture, which he believes have been rendered opaque over the years.” See Camila Belchior, “A conversation with Adriano Pedrosa,” *Ocula*, (April 11, 2015), (Accessed January 10, 2017), available online at: <https://ocula.com/magazine/conversations/adriano-pedrosa/>

Proença, the Museu de Arte de São Paulo, and Assis Chateaubriand, devoted solely to Bo Bardi's installation at the MASP was published in Brazil to celebrate the reinstallation of Bo Bardi's design.¹⁷

This dissertation considers the role that architects played in museum installation design. Basing its conclusions on the designer's social, cultural, and political concerns, this project aims to assist in the understanding of the histories, theories, and skills involved in museum work—arguing that architectural training and practice created installations utterly distinct from those of installation designers with no architectural training. Yeon, Speyer, and Bo Bardi created museum displays that put works of art in the proper context architecturally. Each of these exhibition designs require both formal and aesthetic analysis in order to understand the architects' aesthetic choices, values, and motivations and the effects these have on ideas of museum art history.

¹⁷ Some other exhibitions led up to Lina Bo Bardi's centenary of her birth. These include: *the 12th International Architecture Exhibition of the Venice Biennale* (2010); *Lina Bo Bardi: Together* (organized by the British Council, London, 2012, and traveled to Vienna, Basel, Paris, Stockholm, Amsterdam, Berlin, Milan, Treviso, and Chicago in 2013-2015); *The insides are on the outside* (Instituto Lina Bo Bardi e P.M. Bardi, São Paulo, 2012-2013); *Maneiras de expor—Arquitetura expositiva de Lina Bo Bardi* (Museu da Casa Brasileira, São Paulo, 2014); *Lina gráfica* (Sesc, São Paulo, 2014); *A arquitetura política de Lina Bo Bardi* (Sesc, São Paulo, 2014); and *Lina Bo Bardi and 3 sites—Lina Bo Bardi* (Zürich, Switzerland, 2014).

CHAPTER 2

MUSEUM DESIGNERS

The majority of museum scholarship has neglected the role of modernist display in favor of the study of the architecture of museum buildings themselves. There is ample research that discusses the building's mass and exterior, including a wide range of scholarship focusing on the museums designed by architects such as: Frank Lloyd Wright, Mies van der Rohe, Le Corbusier, Frank Gehry, Louis Kahn, and I.M. Pei, among others. Yet, one rarely encounters in the extensive museum literature an extended analysis of installation design.¹⁸ This is true in spite of the fact that many major modernist architects had an interest in the arts and designed installations for museum exhibitions. Museum scholar Suzanne MacLeod agrees that museum architecture should be understood as more than the building. In order to "begin to understand museum architecture," she writes, scholars must focus their attention not only on the social, cultural, political aspects of the museum, but also "the motives of the individuals involved in the

¹⁸ There are some discussions of architects and art installation. To begin, Bavarian architect, Leo von Klenze designed and installed galleries of ancient art. Released March 2016, and published by Deutscher Kunstverlag, *Leo von Klenze: Führer zu seinen Bauten* by Adrian von Buttlar is the first book in English about Klenze although the work does not deal extensively with installation. Another Bavarian architect, Gottfried Semper, was also an art critic who wrote about the relationship between art and architecture and design in his pamphlet *Wissenschaft, Industrie, und Kunst (Science, Industry, and Art)*. Sparked by the 1851 Exhibition in the Crystal Palace, Semper wrote an aesthetic critique of industrialization and sought to unite art with industry. Eds. Philip Rylands and Susan Davidson, *Peggy Guggenheim & Frederick Kiesler: The Story of Art of This Century*, (New York: Guggenheim Museum Publications, 2004), is a collection of essays that reconstructs, evaluates, interprets, and analyzes architect Frederick Kiesler's installations for Peggy Guggenheim's New York art gallery, *Art of This Century*. The exhibition *Friedrich Kiesler: Life Visions* (June 15 – October 2, 2016) at Vienna's Museum of Applied Art deals with Kiesler's installation design for Peggy Guggenheim's *Art of This Century* gallery.

production of museum space at specific historical moments.”¹⁹ Museum architecture has expanded to include not only the, "the layout of functions in space," but also "the layout of collections in space.”²⁰ This dissertation is an attempt to correct that deficiency by devoting extensive analysis to three important architects whose work dominated American museum installation practice in the post-WWII period. John Yeon, James Speyer, and Lina Bo Bardi practiced architecture, but what sets them apart as museum designers is the way they deal with museum installation as architecture. These architects should be seen in the light of the larger context of architects working on museum installation, beginning with Frank Lloyd Wright, Le Corbusier, and Mies van der Rohe.

Frank Lloyd Wright

Frank Lloyd Wright once claimed that “the space within the building is the reality of the building.”²¹ Indeed, Wright understood the importance of the interior of architecture. Wright not only oversaw the installation of art in the residential homes that he designed and built, but he designed numerous art installations over the span of his long career as an architect. Wright’s installation designs were organic, like his architecture. Wright first mentioned the term ‘organic architecture’ in a commentary for *Architectural Record* in August 1914. He wrote that “the ideal of an organic architecture... is a sentient, rational building that would owe its ‘style’ to the

¹⁹ Suzanne MacLeod, *Reshaping Museum Space architecture, design, exhibitions*, (London: Routledge, 2005), 20.

²⁰ MacLeod, *Reshaping Museum Space*, 21.

²¹ Paul Goldberger, “ARCHITECTURE VIEW: Wright Seen Anew as an Architect of Thoughts,” *New York Times* (February, 7, 1988), discusses the 1988 Frank Lloyd Wright exhibition at the Dallas Museum of Art and the Trammell Crow Center Pavilion where the wall texts were all Frank Lloyd Wright’s own words. Accessed September 6, 2016, <http://www.nytimes.com/1988/02/07/arts/architecture-view-wright-seen-anew-as-an-architect-of-thoughts.html>

integrity with which it was individually fashioned to serve its particular purpose—a ‘thinking’ as well as ‘feeling’ process.” For him, organic architecture was in harmony with humanity and nature. It was an individual style. Although attempting to define organic architecture can be problematic since there are many different interpretations of the term, we can decipher principles in Wright’s work to better understand his style. Most notably, organic architecture is straightforward because its composition and design were distinct. For Wright, “The highest form of simplicity is not simple in the sense that the infant intelligence is simple—nor, for that matter, the side of a barn. Simplicity in art is a synthetic positive quality in which we may see evidence of mind, breadth of scheme, wealth of detail and withal a sense of completeness found in a tree or flower.”²² Moreover, Wright preferred to use simple materials. Materials were used in a way that enhanced their essential character and elevated their specific color, texture, and strength. Material was not masquerading as another. For Wright, the building was a manifestation of the nature of the materials employed. Wright began by designing spaces for displaying works of art for both the Art Institute and The Arts Club in Chicago.

Wright was captivated by Japanese architecture and art, especially prints, so much so that the architect embarked on his first voyage to Japan on February 21, 1905. Shortly before his departure, he had loaned a Japanese print for Frederick W. Gookin's exhibition in the Caxton club rooms at the Fine Arts Building in Chicago.²³ Wright started amassing a collection of Japanese prints while he was in Japan. The following year, his collection of Hiroshige prints was

²² Edgar Kaufman and Bea Raeburn, *Frank Lloyd Wright: Writings and Buildings* (Cleveland: The World Publishing Company, 1969), page unavailable.

²³ This exhibition consisted of sixty works by the artist Suzuki Haruriobu (February 4, 1905). Julia Meech-Pekarik, *Frank Lloyd Wright and the Art of Japan: The Architect’s Other Passion*, (New York: Harry S. Abrams, 2001), 40.

exhibited at the Art Institute in Chicago.²⁴ Former curator of Japanese art at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York Julia Meech-Pekarik correctly points out that "the prints were densely crowded," and the installation lacked the "distinctive elegance" of his later displays, but "his use of narrow, vertical print pillars (named for their display location in Japanese houses) as framing and decorative accents is already apparent."²⁵

Wright was included in the Twentieth Annual Exhibition of the Chicago Architectural Club at the Art Institute.²⁶ There, Wright exhibited art glass, lamps, architectural drawings, models, and furniture in a style similar to his design for the Japanese print exhibition (fig. 2.1). He hung the prints low by suspending them from wires that were attached to low horizontal partitions. Two years later, Wright designed and installed a massive loan exhibition, again at the Art Institute of Chicago, titled *Japanese Color Prints, C. Buckingham, F.W. Gookin, Frank Lloyd Wright, J.C. Webster, and J. H. Wrenn Collections*.²⁷ Wright had loaned over 200 prints from his collection for this exhibition, which had 659 prints displayed throughout six galleries. The design was in harmony with the architect's "Prairie Style" (fig. 2.2).

Wright covered horizontal panels in gray-pinkish paper, attached them along the walls, and hung the matted prints in vertical, unfinished chestnut frames from green cables that were attached at the top molding of the panels. The display also included long horizontal panels that served as room dividers. These horizontal panels were suspended above the ground by a pair of vertical pedestals on each side. Wright placed pots of azaleas and Japanese bonsai trees on top of

²⁴ March 29 – April 18, 1906

²⁵ Julia Meech-Pekarik, "Frank Lloyd Wright and Japanese Prints," *Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin*, New Series, Vol. 40, no. 2, (Autumn, 1982), 52.

²⁶ April 1907

²⁷ March 5-25, 1908

these pedestals and hung vertical prints on the pedestals (fig. 2.4). He used the horizontal panels to hang the other prints (figs. 2.3-2.4). In addition, the architect had designed a three-foot-tall mahogany Japanese print stand with a small protruding ledge for holding flower arrangements to showcase vertical prints. Meech-Pekarik argues that not providing mattes for the prints displayed on these print stands was an intentional move on Wright's part, for he wanted to enhance those prints that had faded color.²⁸ Indeed, Wright included every aspect of the museum in his design. All of the tradition elements in architecture—walls, floors, ceilings—were included in the design along with the furniture, pedestals, mattes, and frames.



2.1. Frank Lloyd Wright, installation design, Twentieth Annual Exhibition of the Chicago Architectural Club at the Art Institute. "Exhibition of Frank Lloyd Wright's work at the Art Institute of Chicago," 1907, Photo Credit: Henry Fuermann and Sons, 8 by 9 1/2 black and white photograph, s# 0080.25.0115, accessed March 24, 2016, available on-line at: <http://www.steinerag.com/flw/Books/a0302.htm>

²⁸ Meech-Pekarik, *Frank Lloyd Wright and the Art of Japan*, 52.



Figure 2.2. Art Institute of Chicago, Museum patrons in the *Surimono* galleries with Frank Lloyd Wright designed print stands in the exhibition of Japanese Prints designed by Wright (1908). Frank Lloyd Wright, Japanese Print from Julia Meech, *Frank Lloyd Wright and the art of Japan: the architect's other passion*, p. 102.



Figure 2.3. *Japanese Color Prints*, C. Buckingham, F.W. Gookin, Frank Lloyd Wright, J.C. Webster, and J. H. Wrenn Collections, Art Institute Chicago, (Mar. 5-Mar. 25, 1908), designed by Wright, accessed September 18, 2016, Photo 1, available online at: http://www.artic.edu/sites/default/files/libraries/pubs/1908/AIC1908Japanese_Photo_1.jpg



Figure 2.4. *Japanese Color Prints, C. Buckingham, F.W. Gookin, Frank Lloyd Wright, J.C. Webster, and J. H. Wrenn Collections*, Art Institute Chicago, (Mar. 5-Mar. 25, 1908) designed by Wright, accessed September 18, 2016, Photo 2, available online at: http://www.artic.edu/sites/default/files/libraries/pubs/1908/AIC1908Japanese_Photo_1.jpg

Three years after the Japanese loan exhibition, Frank Lloyd Wright installed another exhibition at the Art Institute. However, this time, Wright was showcasing his own work. In 1914 at the *Twenty-Seventh Annual Exhibition of the Chicago Architectural Club*, Wright showed his architectural work along five Japanese print stands of different sizes that displayed Japanese prints from Wright's own private collection. Edgar Kaufmann wrote of the exhibition, "drawings, photographs, and models of his work were rather casually assembled, suggesting a pell-mell of creative activity."²⁹ Wright's installation included a model of Midway Gardens,

²⁹ Edgar Kaufmann, Jr., "Frank Lloyd Wright's Architecture Exhibited: A Commentary by Edgar Kaufmann, Jr.," *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin*, New Series, vol. 40, no. 2

models by Alfonso Iannelli (1888-1965), children's toy blocks, and photographs in the foreground (fig. 2.5).³⁰

Wright's installation, *Work of Frank Lloyd Wright: exhibit confined to work done since spring of 1911*, caused a stir among his contemporaries, who believed that Wright was shown favoritism. The *Record Herald* quoted another architect who was exhibiting his work, on April 9, 1914, the day before the exhibit opened to the public, he claimed, "A great deal of unfairness and unethical dealings has marred the exhibition this year. A small group has been able to manipulate things so that wealthy architects have been shown a marked preference over their less fortunate craftsman. It is not putting it too strongly to say that the Chicago Architectural Club sold out to Wright." Wright responded to the accusations in his usual bombastic fashion: "Let them talk. Let them say what they will. Let them resurrect all the old scandal of the past three years. What do I care. I have three walls for my work. I'm erecting the Imperial Hotel at Tokio and I'm doing other big work in the world—both the scandal and what I am doing artistically will bring us greater crowds. Let them talk, let them talk."³¹

(Autumn, 1982), 4-5. Also, FN in Julia Meech-Pekarik, *Frank Lloyd Wright and the Art of Japan*, 106 and 278.

³⁰ In the background, we can see the plans, elevation, and perspective of Wright's design for the Imperial Hotel in Tokyo. Meech informs us that the two stands that are on the left "hold standard vertical ōban prints, both Hiroshige landscapes; the one facing us is Inside Kameido Tenjin Shrine from the series One Hundred Views of Famous Places in Edo." Meech continues, "Elevated at the center is a small stand with Katsukawa-school actor print in vertical hosoban format, its projecting ledge supporting a flower vase. In the center middle ground is a very tall, narrow stand with a pillar print by Koryūsai." Julia Meech-Pekarik, *Frank Lloyd Wright and the Art of Japan*, 106.

³¹ Florence Patton, "Architects Quit Big Exhibit," *Chicago American*, (9 April, 1914), home edition, section I, p. I, FN in Julia Meech, *Frank Lloyd Wright and the Art of Japan*, 110 and 278.



Figure 2.5. Installation designed by Frank Lloyd Wright, 1914 Exhibition of Wright's work since 1911, Art Institute of Chicago, Julia Meech, *Frank Lloyd Wright and the art of Japan: the architect's other passion*, p. 107.

Wright also showed his collection of Japanese prints at the Arts Club of Chicago in the Fine Arts building, where Wright had an office. The Arts Club was formed in 1916 in order to promote fellowship among artists and art appreciators, to advocate quality craftsmanship, and to promote and support exhibitions. Frank Lloyd Wright designed the installation for the exhibition *Antique Colour Prints from the Collection of Frank Lloyd Wright*.³² The exhibition showcased 241 Japanese prints in four separate rooms of the Arts Club.³³ Meech writes that this exhibition was when Wright was "reaching his peak as the preeminent dealer of Japanese prints in America."³⁴ At the Arts Club, like in 1908 exhibition at the Art Institute, Wright presents the

³² November 12-December 15, 1917

³³ Half of the prints that were on display were Hiroshige, sixteen of the prints were Katsukawa Shunshō, fifteen, mainly pillar prints, were by Koryūsai. Utamaro was also represented by fifteen prints; and eleven were from Kiyonaga.

³⁴ Julia Meech, *Frank Lloyd Wright and the Art of Japan*, 114.

prints in groups (figs. 2.1-2.4, 2.8) and includes greenery, mainly placing a potted plant on top of a pedestal (figs. 2.1- 2.2, 2.4 -2.7). Frank Lloyd Wright tightly grouped the prints within the viewer's vision field, which allows a break, or pause, in between groups. Wright built a virtual window, allowing the viewer to gaze out of the gallery space and enter another world.



Figure 2.6. Frank Lloyd Wright installation design, Arts Club, Fine Arts Building, Chicago (1917) from *Frank Lloyd Wright and the Art of Japan* by Julia Meech, p.119.



Figure 2.7. Frank Lloyd Wright installation, entrance to the Club Room at the Arts Club, Fine Arts Building, Chicago (1917) from *Frank Lloyd Wright and the Art of Japan* by Julia Meech, p.116.



Figure 2.8. Installation of Japanese Prints at the Art Club, Fine Arts Building in Chicago, installation designed by Wright (1917) from *Frank Lloyd Wright and the Art of Japan* by Julia Meech, p.115.

The only museum that Wright designed was the Guggenheim museum (1943-1959) in New York. Although he did not oversee the actual installation of the artworks, this museum requires attention, for Wright revolutionized the museum world with his design (fig. 2.9). What is most remarkable about the building is how it guides the viewer's path down a spiraling ramp. With the ramp, Frank Lloyd Wright integrated movement (i.e. traffic flow) with the exhibition of art works. Based on the design of the parking garage ramp,³⁵ Wright envisioned for the visitor to enter an atrium court, go up the elevator, and follow the spiral down.³⁶



Figure 2.9. Guggenheim Museum, Opening Day, New York, October 21, 1959, accessed August 26, 2016, available online at: <https://www.guggenheim.org/history/architecture>

Atop the inverted spiral building, Wright designed a multi-pane glass dome that provided

³⁵ Joseph M. Siry, “Wright’s Guggenheim Museum and Later Modernist Architecture,” in *The Guggenheim Frank Lloyd Wright and the Making of the Modern Museum*, (New York: Guggenheim Museum, 2009), 40-41.

³⁶ Richard Meier disapproves of Wright’s design for the Guggenheim. Meier wrote, ‘the ramp is made to double as a gallery, inducing a propelling motion that is inappropriate to contemplative viewing. The sloping floor plane, ceilings, and walls not only are uncomfortable but, by surpressing the right-angle datum, make the display of paintings especially difficult. Ibid., 60.

natural light throughout the museum (fig. 2.10). In addition, skylights above the walls along the spiral were included to add additional natural light (fig. 2.11). Instead of standard, fixed artificial light, the architect had planned for the artworks "to be seen in normal, naturally-changing light." According to Wright, "if only the light be sufficient enough to reveal the painting these changes of light are natural to the gamut of painting as to all other objets d'art and thus most interesting to the studious observer."³⁷ For Wright, his glass dome provided "three-dimensional light," instead of the "two-dimensional" fixed, artificial light.³⁸ Lighting is essential to museum design. With natural light, the paintings change with the weather. Colors, shades, and tones all change with different types of light and affect how the viewer perceives the works of art.



Figure 2.10. View of central skylight, 1990, Guggenheim Museum, New York, in *The Guggenheim Frank Lloyd Wright and the making of the modern museum*, p. 11.

³⁷ Frank Lloyd Wright, "Light," correspondence from the architect with the Guggenheim Museum, dated May 16, 1958, in *The Guggenheim Museum Architect: Frank Lloyd Wright*, (New York: Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation and Horizon Press, 1960), 23.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

Wright had designed the gallery walls along the spiraling promenade to slant outward. He wrote:

As planned, in the easy downward drift of the viewer on the giant spiral, pictures are not to be seen bolt-upright as though painted on the wall behind them. Gently inclined, faced slightly upward to the viewer and to the light in accord with the upward sweep of the spiral, the painting themselves are emphasized as features in themselves and are not hung 'square' but gracefully yield to movement as set up by these slightly curving massive walls.³⁹

Unlike most museums, the paintings and other two-dimensional works were not hung directly on the Guggenheim walls. Instead, the works of art were attached to protruding rods that secured the works and presented the works slanted, facing upward (fig. 2.12).⁴⁰

³⁹ “An Experiment in the Third-Dimension,” in *The Guggenheim Museum Architect: Frank Lloyd Wright*, 19.

⁴⁰ The rod display system was not designed by Frank Lloyd Wright, but instead, James Johnson Sweeney. Sweeney was appointed director of the Guggenheim in 1952, after the ousting of founding director, Hilla Rebay, and he immediately made drastic changes to Wright’s design for the Guggenheim. Paul Goldberger explains some of the changes that Sweeney made: “Sweeney painted the interior white, instead of the ivory that Wright had wanted; rather than hang the paintings directly on the backward-sloping walls, where Wright wanted them to appear as if they were on artists’ easels, he installed them upright, on metal rods projecting from the walls. Over the years, the building has been pushed and pulled in all kinds of directions, rarely to its benefit. Taliesin Associated Architects, the inheritors of Wright’s practice, put up a garish addition behind the museum; later, it was demolished to make way for a limestone slab by Gwathmey Siegel, and a bookstore was stuck in the open space beside the rotunda.” (See Paul Goldberger, “Spiralling Upward Celebrating fifty years of Frank Lloyd Wright’s Guggenheim,” *New Yorker*, [May 25, 2009] accessed October 26, 2016, available online: <http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2009/05/25/spiralling-upward>). For more on how Sweeney, not Frank Lloyd Wright, designed the rod display technique and made other changes to Wright’s design, including the lighting. (See Francine Snyder, FINDINGS, “The Lighting of a Great Museum,” [November 6, 2014] accessed October 1, 2016, available online: <https://www.guggenheim.org/blogs/findings/lighting-great-museum>), see also “Artists’ protest letter to James Johnson Sweeney, New York, N.Y., 1956,” at the *Archives of American Art* website for an understanding as to why Sweeney made changes, accessed October 26, 2016, available online: <http://www.aaa.si.edu/collections/items/detail/artists-protest-letter--to-james-johnson-sweeney-new-york-ny-9963>. It is also worth mentioning that Fredrick Kiesler installed works in a similar manner for the 1942 installation for Peggy Guggenheim’s New York gallery, *Art of This Century*.



Figure 2.11. View of ramp gallery, Inaugural exhibition, 1959, Guggenheim Museum, New York, in *The Guggenheim Frank Lloyd Wright and the making of the modern museum*.

Neil Levine explains how Frank Lloyd Wright held to four ideas (central court, top down circulation system, openness, and the ramp) that did not change during the design process. Levine writes, "the gallery ramp itself was designed so as to integrate into a single structural form all requirements of display, with the result that the building as a whole becomes the expanded frame for the works of art, each thus 'framed' by its *environment*," as Wright put it.⁴¹

⁴¹ Neil Levine, "Competing Visions of the Modern Art Museum and the Lasting Significance of Wright's Guggenheim," in *The Guggenheim Frank Lloyd Wright and the Making of the Modern Museum*, 84-85.



Figure 2.12. Installation of rods for hanging works of art in the ramp galleries, Guggenheim Museum, New York, 1959, in *The Guggenheim Frank Lloyd Wright and the making of the modern museum*, p. 104.

In a letter to S.R. Guggenheim, dated August 14, 1946, Wright gives insight to his ideas for the Guggenheim Museum. He wrote:

To understand the situation as it exists in the scheme for the Guggenheim Memorial all you have to do is imagine clean beautiful surfaces throughout the building, all beautifully proportioned to human scale. These surfaces are all lighted from above with any degree of daylight (or artificial light from the same source) that the curator or the artist himself may happen to desire. The atmosphere of great harmonious simplicity wherein human proportions are maintained in relation to the picture is characteristic of your building. Opportunities for individual taste in presentation are so varied and so advantageous that were I to make a specific model for you you should tell me in detail how you feel about the picture to be shown ... how important you regard the picture as a feature of the exhibition or perhaps the building itself, etc., etc.

I assure you that anything you desired to happen could happen. Background space could be apportioned and light slanted, strengthened or dimmed to any desired degree. Frames and glass would only be necessary evils because of perfect air-conditioning, etc. But if you liked them for certain designs which may have been painted with them in mind--you could have them, as a matter of course.

The basic for all picture-presentation in your memorial-building is to provide perfect plasticity of presentation. Adaptability and wide range for the individual taste of the exhibitor whoever he or she might be is perfectly provided for and established by the architecture itself.

All this has been so carefully considered in this building that the whole interior would add up to a reposeful place in which the paintings would be seen to better advantage than they have ever been seen.⁴²

⁴² From a letter to S.R. Guggenheim, August 14, 1946. *The Guggenheim Museum Frank Lloyd Wright*, (New York: The Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation and Horizon Press, 1960), 15-16.

Wright's designs denote rational and proportional ideals with their consistency and regularity. As for mentioned by Wright himself, the surfaces in the Guggenheim were "all beautifully proportioned to human scale."⁴³ His work borrows from Eastern design principles in how it demonstrates clean lines, simplicity, and open spaces. Although Wright worked with spaces that flowed from one room to the next, he tended to categorize works into groups and subgroups in his installation designs. Works were tightly packed together and organized by artist, genre or school. Lighting was natural if possible, and when artificial lighting was called for, Wright avoided dramatic spot-lighting. His early designs at the AIC eliminated didactic labels, creating an atmosphere that joined the work of art, the space, and the viewer without a third-party forcing any sort of ideology, lessons, or dogma upon the viewer. Open space was a constant theme in the architecture and museum installations that Wright designed, and his open space would be one of the main characteristics that would inspire Mies van der Rohe and many other European architects.

Le Corbusier

By the time that Le Corbusier's first museum project was built in India (1956), the architect had shown interest and worked on museum projects for over 25 years. His projects, some built and many never built, include Mundaneum, Geneva (1929); Museum for Contemporary Art, Paris (1931); Museum for Unlimited Growth, Skikda (former Phillipperville), Algeria (1939); Civic Center, Saint-Dié, France (1945); Ahmedabad, India, the first project to be

⁴³ Frank Lloyd Wright, Henry Berg, and the Solomon Guggenheim Foundation, *The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York: Frank Lloyd Wright architect*, (New York: The Solomon Guggenheim Foundation, 1975), Accessed October 26, 2016, available online: https://archive.org/stream/solomonrg00wrig/solomonrg00wrig_djvu.txt

built (1952-56); the National Museum of Western Art in Tokyo (1959); International Art Center at Erlenbach, Frankfurt (1963); Chandigarh, India (1964-68); and the Museum of the 20th Century, Nanterre, France (1965). Three of the projects were built: Ahmedabad, Tokyo, and Chandigarh; however, all of them held to the same principle, in one way or another, of an endless museum.

Frank Lloyd Wright was not the first architect to design a guided path. Architectural historian Beatriz Colomina shows how Le Corbusier transformed the traditional museum space into an "endless museum," "a length, a wall continuously folding upon itself."⁴⁴ Colomina points to the Maison La Roche-Jeanneret in Paris (1923) and argues that "the museum obsession started with a house."⁴⁵ To begin, Raoul La Roche, a prominent Swiss banker, hired Le Corbusier and Amédée Ozenfant to purchase Cubist works on his behalf; however, in the end, La Roche included works by Le Corbusier and Amédée Ozenfant in his collection and had a house built for the collection after Le Corbusier pressed him. "La Roche, when you have a fine collection like yours, you should also have a house built worthy of it."⁴⁶ Le Corbusier first designed the promenade for the La Roche house, and the paintings were hung per a specific order along the promenade. Colomina explains, "The architecture was meant to guide the visitor past the paintings in a way that – conveniently for Le Corbusier – demonstrated the triumph of Purism over Cubism."⁴⁷ Here, the building guides the visitor through art. Le Corbusier writes:

⁴⁴ Beatriz Colomina, "The Endless Museum: Le Corbusier and Mies van der Rohe," *Log*, No. 15 (Winter, 2009), 56-58.

⁴⁵ Colomina, 58.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 59.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 60.

Arab architecture gives us a precious lesson. It is appreciated by walking, on foot; it is by walking, by moving, that one sees the order of the architecture developing. It is a principle contrary to that of baroque architecture, which is conceived on paper, around a fixed theoretical point. I prefer the lessons of Arab architecture ... In this house [Villa Savoye] it is a question of real architectural promenade, offering constantly changing views, unexpected, sometimes astonishing.⁴⁸

Le Corbusier later stressed the importance of the promenade in a 1942 lecture to architecture students: 'Architecture can be classified as dead or living by the degree to which the rule of sequential movement has been ignored or, instead, brilliantly observed.'⁴⁹ Indeed, sequential movement is a vital component of museum display. Nonetheless, the link between modernist houses and museums cannot be overlooked, for, as Beatriz Colomina explains with the case of the La Roche house, "domesticity is the real source of modernity in museums,"⁵⁰ meaning that museum design and installation design came from how works of art were first arranged in the home.

For Le Corbusier, the viewer must follow along a path with restricted views. His first museum project, the World Museum, was placed in the center of the Mundaneum (1929), a utopian project meant to serve as a hub for intellectuals (fig. 2.13). The complex, named by Belgian industrialist Paul Otlet, included a museum, university, library, stadium, and gardens. Le Corbusier designed a pyramid-shaped museum with a squared spiral staircase as the central point of the Mundaneum. The square spiral was a gallery that would exhibit works that guided the viewer throughout history. "Visitors would take an elevator to the top of the pyramid (the beginning of civilization) and walk down the spiral ramp until reaching the ground: the

⁴⁸ Ibid., 61.

⁴⁹ Richard A. Etlin, *Frank Lloyd Wright and Le Corbusier*, (Manchester: Manchester Univ. Press, 1994), 112-113.

⁵⁰ Colomina, 55.

present day.”⁵¹ Although never built, the museum at the Mundaneum marked the beginning of Le Corbusier's interest in museum design where the architect's concern was presenting works of art within a guided and unlimited path. The outer walls for the galleries were designed to be movable in order to allow for expanded space. Art was linear; thus, the proper way for one to view art was controlled by the architect.

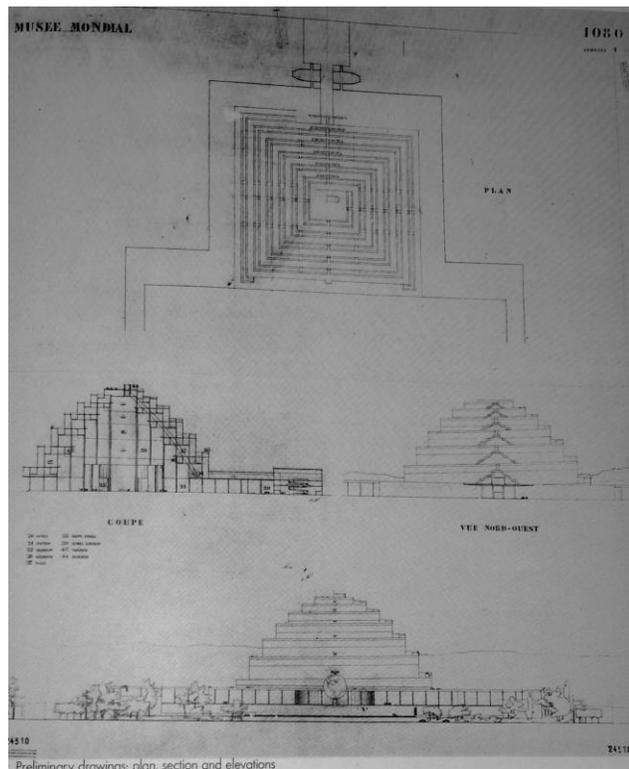


Figure 2.13. Le Corbusier Preliminary drawings: plan, section, and elevations for World Museum 1929 Geneva Project from Michael Graves, *Le Corbusier Selected Drawings*, (New York: Rizzoli, 1981), 57.

⁵¹ Colomina, 56.

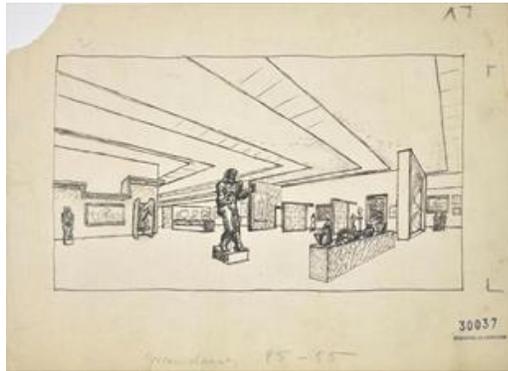


Figure 2.14. Musée d'Art contemporain, Paris, 1931, © FLC/ADAGP

Next, Le Corbusier flattened out the spiral in his plan for the Museum of Contemporary Art in Paris. The museum is shaped by a boundless wall that unravels like a flattened squared spiral. The idea was for the space to grow along with the collection; according to Le Corbusier, donors should also donate the wall space for their paintings (fig. 2.14). Since the museum would be in constant construction, Le Corbusier had planned for the museum visitors to enter the museum through a tunnel that they would access through a gate in the surrounding wall. In a letter from Le Corbusier to M. Zervos, in an edition of "Cahiers d'art," Le Corbusier wrote:

Let me tell you about my contribution to the idea of the creation of a museum of modern art for Paris. Here, in preliminary sketches, is the image of a serene conception. It is a means for bringing about, in Paris, the construction of a museum under conditions which are not arbitrary, but, on the contrary, follow natural laws of growth in the order in which organic life is manifested: an element capable of being added to harmoniously, the idea of the ensemble having preceded the idea of the individual part. The museum can be started without money; truly, the first hall can be built for 100 000 francs. It can be continued by one, two or four new halls, during the following months or two or four years afterwards, as desired. The museum has no façade; the visitor will never see a façade; he will only see the interior of the museum. One enters the heart of the museum by means of an underground passage and the wall opening for the entrance door would, once the museum has reached its full magnificent size, comprise the 9000th meter of the total developed length of the museum.⁵²

⁵² Le Corbusier Foundation website, Musée d'Art contemporain, Paris, France, 1931, Extract from a letter from Le Corbusier to M. Zervos, in an edition of "Cahiers d'art," accessed October 27, 2016, available at:

Unlike the natural lighting that Frank Lloyd Wright saw as ideal, Le Corbusier's "closed environment" allowed for 'theoretically perfect lighting.' Le Corbusier planned to run lay lights along the galleries because according to him, this sort of lighting would be shadowless and glare-free.⁵³

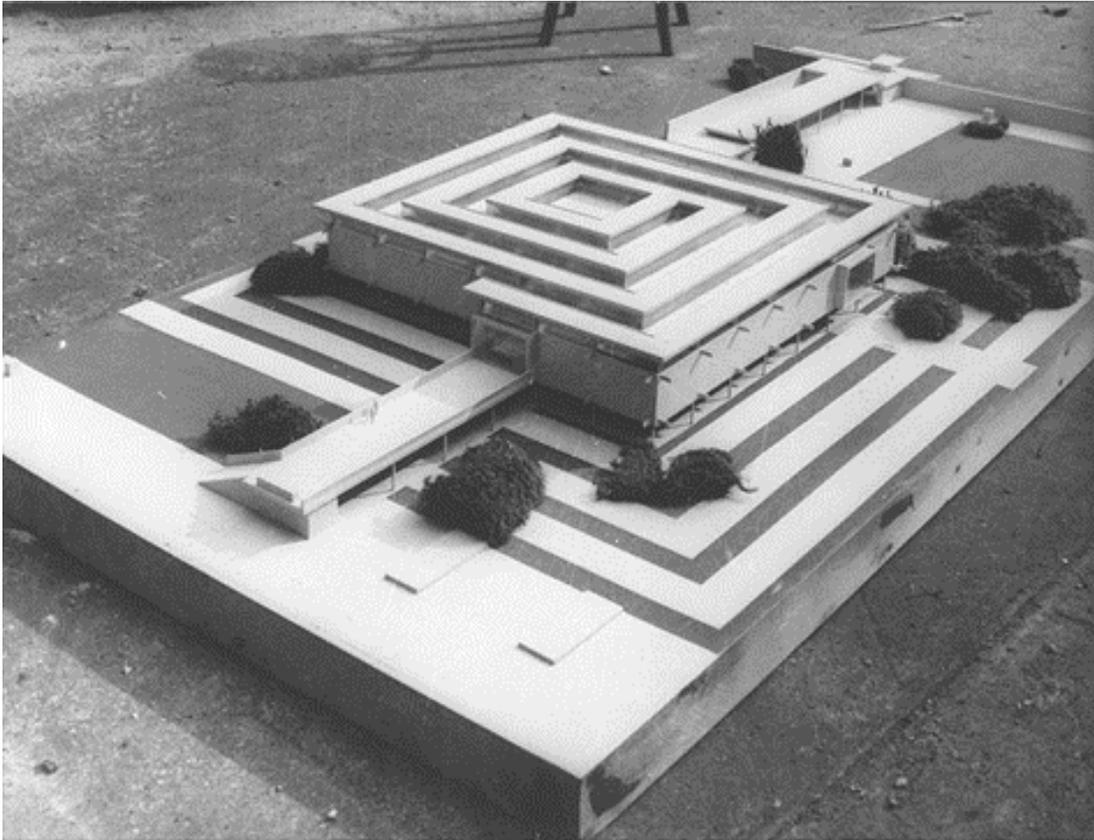


Figure 2.15. 1939 Le Corbusier Study for "Museum of Unlimited Expansion" © FLC-ADAGP

http://www.fondationlecorbusier.fr/corbuweb/morpheus.aspx?sysId=13&IrisObjectId=5652&sysLanguage=en-en&itemPos=129&itemSort=en-en_sort_string1%20&itemCount=215&sysParentName=&sysParentId=65

⁵³ Neil Levine, "Competing Visions of the Modern Art Museum and the Lasting Significance of Wright's Guggenheim," *The Guggenheim Frank Lloyd Wright and the Making of the Modern Museum*, (New York: Guggenheim Press, 2009), 74.

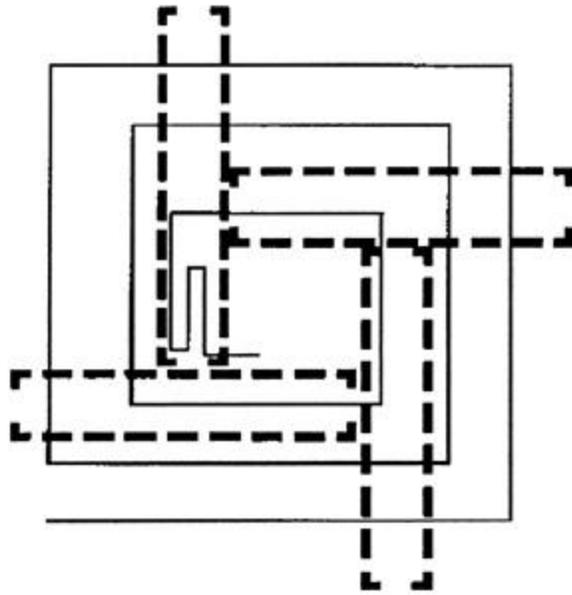


Figure 2.16. Museum of Unlimited Growth, plan diagram depicting the swastika shape, from Anthony Moulis, "Forms and techniques," *history arc*, 14, no.4 (2010): 322.

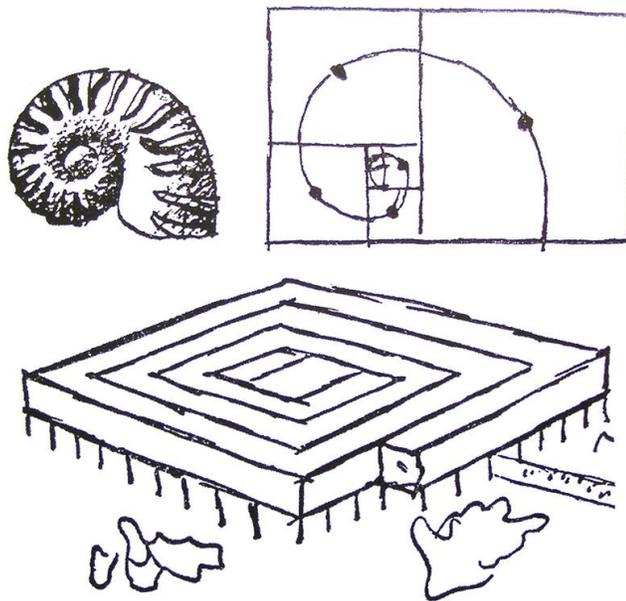


Figure 2.17. Sketch, Le Corbusier, Museum of Unlimited Growth © FLC-ADAGP

In 1939, Le Corbusier allowed a less restrictive path with his idea for The Museum for Unlimited Growth (figs. 2.15-2.17). Instead of a spiral, he designed a swastika shape. The straight lines of the swastika made it possible for the partitions to be moved. Le Corbusier wrote about the swastika pattern, “The means of orienting one’s self in the museum is provided by the rooms at half height which form a swastika; every time a visitor, in the course of his wanderings, finds himself under a lowered ceiling he will see, on one side, an exit to the garden, and on the opposite side, the way to the central hall.”⁵⁴ Anthony Moulis writes that Le Corbusier’s swastika pattern was based on “earlier spiral schemes for the Bata Exposition Pavilion (1935) and the Centre of Contemporary Aesthetics (1936).”⁵⁵ The exterior of the museum is, according to Le Corbusier, ‘the temporary facades destined to become interior partitions.’⁵⁶ Stanislaus von Moos describes the museum as: “a cube standing on supports with an entrance from below into the midpoint of the structure, from which the rooms spin out in an endless spiral.”⁵⁷ The architect

⁵⁴ Le Corbusier, *Oeuvre Complète 1938-1946*, 16, referenced in Anthony Moulis, “Forms and techniques: Le Corbusier, the spiral plan and diagram architecture,” *history arq*, 14, no. 4 (2010), 322.

⁵⁵ In “Le Corbusier's Horizon: Technique and the architectural plan,” *Architectural Theory Review* (2003): 132-144,

Antony Moulis discussed the “political and symbolic overtones of the swastika.” Referencing Jan Birksted, *Le Corbusier and the Occult*, pages 303–07, he wrote: “Le Corbusier’s use of a swastika pattern at this point in the twentieth century has political and symbolic overtones that are at least problematic. While reference to the swastika may raise pertinent issues about the architect’s ambiguous wartime alliances or the more arcane origins of its form, it is also evident, in the context of the present discussion, that Le Corbusier’s calling up of the swastika pattern is in some sense incidental to the formal investigations in plan out of which it emerges – investigations that precede its eventual consolidation or ‘discovery’ as a plan image. Here we might note a distinction between a formal planimetric approach (a desire for the patterning of plans) and Le Corbusier’s strategy of symbol making, which, as Birksted notes, is a means of both promoting his architecture and an obfuscation of any particular meaning.” *Ibid.*, Moulis, 322.

⁵⁶ Colomina, 57.

⁵⁷ Stanislaus von Moos, *Le Corbusier: Elements of a Synthesis*, (Rotterdam: 010

also included an ever expanding museum in his town plan for Saint-Dié in 1945.

Le Corbusier's first built museum project was in Ahmedabad, India (1952-1956). The director claimed that the mission of the museum was, "to bring about the active participation of the people ... instead of encouraging mere irresponsible contemplation of rare luxury objects torn from their contexts ... The objects will appear not in mere isolation but as reality - against ... the pattern of culture that produces the artifacts."⁵⁸ Three years later, Japanese architects Maekawa and Sakakura, former employees for Le Corbusier in Paris from 1928 to 1931, built his design for the National Museum of Western Art in Tokyo. His final museum project was in construction from 1964 to 1968, in Chandigarh. Although three of Le Corbusier's museums were built: Ahmedabad, Tokyo, and Chandigarh, none of the three were built for unlimited growth; however, as von Moos points out, "the nature of the brick joints on the exterior walls suggests the non-structural and thus flexible character of the wall partitions."⁵⁹

Le Corbusier never completely abandoned the endless museum. In his plans for the International Art Center at Erlenbach, he includes the 'endless' project and proposed the project in his book, *Le Musée du XXe siècle*.⁶⁰ Le Corbusier's final project after the museum in Chandigarh was completed was the Museum of the 20th Century. The project was commissioned by André Malraux, France's Minister of Culture, and the site, against Le Corbusier's will, was Nanterre. Le Corbusier had always wanted to build a museum in Paris within proximity to the Grand Palais. His dream was to build a 20th century museum "set on 10-meter (or higher) *pilotis*

Publishers, 2009), 125.

⁵⁸ Colomina, 57.

⁵⁹ Von Moos, *Le Corbusier*, 125.

⁶⁰ Colomina, 58.

above the street and squares of Paris.”⁶¹ The Museum of the 20-th Century was never realized. Le Corbusier died in the midst of working on the project, and although his colleague André Wogenscky continued working on it after Le Corbusier's death, the project eventually died too.

Le Corbusier’s high-modern designs sought to improve the quality of life for all types of citizens. The architect was concerned with museum display in a linear, geometric manner. For Le Corbusier, the standard for his museum installation designs was one of “expandability.” As Neil Levine stated, Le Corbusier was obsessed “with standardization as the basis for expandability.”⁶² Years before Frank Lloyd Wright designed the inverted spiral, Le Corbusier’s idea was to control the visitors' path through the museum by using architecture to guide their way. There were no rooms; instead, flexible, movable walls, proper lighting, and room for expansions were all issues that the architect had thought through. For Le Corbusier, his museum designs were a “curator's paradise,” that allowed “life [and] mobility instead of [the] ankylosis and hopeless fixity.”⁶³ This approach is not only similar to Frank Lloyd Wright's design for the spiraling promenade at the Guggenheim in New York, but it relates to ideas exposed by other modernist architects, specifically, Friedrich Kiesler’s concept of an “Endless House.”⁶⁴

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Neil Levine, “Competing Visions of the Modern Art Museum and the Latest Significance of Wright’s Guggenheim,” 80.

⁶³ Le Corbusier and Jeannerete, “Pour la création a Paris d'un Musée,” footnote in Levine, *The Guggenheim Frank Lloyd Wright and the Making of the Modern Museum*, 74.

⁶⁴ Dieter Bogner, *Friedrich Kiesler, 1890-1965: inside the Endless House: 12. Dezember 1997 bis 1. März 1998, Historisches Museum der Stadt Wien*, (Cologne: Böhlau Verlag Wien, 1997), 20, quotes Kiesler’s 1925 manifesto, where Kiesler explains the Endless House: “We will have no more walls, armories for body and soul, nor armored civilization: with or without ornament. We want: 1. Transformation of the surrounding area of space into cities. 2. Liberation from the ground abolition of the static axis. 3. No walls, no foundations. 4. A system of spans (tension) in free space. 5. Creation of new kinds of living, and through them, the demands which will remould society.”

Ludwig Mies van der Rohe

In contrast to both Frank Lloyd Wright and Le Corbusier, Ludwig Mies van der Rohe did not control the viewer's path with a spiraling promenade. Instead, van der Rohe's architectural work encompassed highly refined materials set in open, flowing spaces. In his museum display designs, Mies presents artworks within a more open viewing space, allowing visitors to create their own paths. He stated, "Architecture epitomises the human being's spatial confrontation with his environment; it expresses how he asserts himself in it and how he manages to master it."⁶⁵

Although not all of his projects for museums and exhibitions were realized, they show an interest in what Mies viewed as the proper display of both art and of architecture and how one moves about it. His projects include: the German section of the International Exposition at Barcelona (1929); the Berlin Building Exhibition (1931); the Circulating Exhibition (1939); Kaufmann Department Store Displays (1941); the Museum for a Small City (1942); the Renaissance Society Exhibition (1946); the Museum of Modern Art Exhibition (1947); The Arts Club of Chicago (1948-1951); Cullinan Wing Addition, Houston Museum of Fine Arts (1954); the National Arts Club (1955); Exhibition Panels for the Houston Museum of Fine Arts (1957); the George Schaefer Museum (1960-1963); the National Gallery in Berlin (1962-1968); the Berlin Exhibition (1968-1969); and the Brown Pavilion, Houston Museum of Fine Arts (1974).

Mies van der Rohe's first encounter with display began in 1921, two years after he returned to Berlin from an army conscription. From 1921-1925, he joined the November Group, a modern art organization, and organized the architectural exhibitions for the Große Berliner

⁶⁵ Quote from Mies van der Rohe, "Lugwig Mies ven der Rohe," published on bauhaus-online.de, accessed September 2, 2016, article available at: <http://bauhaus-online.de/atlas/personen/ludwig-mies-van-der-rohe>

Kunstaussstellung (great Berlin art exhibition).⁶⁶ From 1926-1932, Mies served as the vice-president of Deutscher Werkbund (German Work Federation), the dominant European influence for quality design. In 1927, as vice-president of Deutscher Werkbund, Mies oversaw the Werkbund's Die Wohnung (The Flat) exhibition. During this time, he met Lilly Reich, an interior designer who curated the modern furnishings part of the exhibition. The two worked together on the Silk exhibition, *Exposition de la Môme* (1927), creating partitions by draping black, red and orange velvet and black, silver, and lemon-yellow silk.⁶⁷

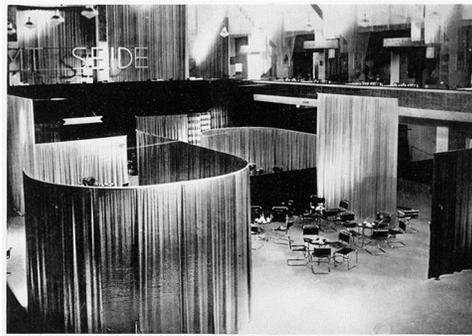


Figure 2.18. installation design by Mies and Reich, *Silk exhibit*, Berlin, 1927, accessed December 21, 2016, available on the public domain at: <http://socks-studio.com/2016/02/29/cafe-samt-seide-by-ludwig-mies-van-der-rohe-and-lilly-reich-1927/>

Mies had been commissioned by Verein deutscher Seidenwebereien (German Society of Silk Weavers) to design the installation for the German silk industry (fig. 2.18). German curator and art scholar Christiane Lange describes the exposition:

⁶⁶ from Mies van der Rohe, “Ludwig Mies van der Rohe,” accessed September 2, 2016, published on bauhaus-online.de, article available at: <http://bauhaus-online.de/atlas/personen/ludwig-mies-van-der-rohe>

⁶⁷ Philip Johnson, *Mies van der Rohe*, (New York: MoMA, 1947), 50. Accessed September 21, 2016, Available online: http://www.moma.org/d/c/exhibition_catalogues/W1siZiIsIjMwMDA2MjA1NSJdLFsicCIsmVuY292ZXIiLCJ3d3cubW9tYS5vcmcvY2FsZW5kYXIVZXXhoaWJpdGlvbnMvMjczNCIsImh0dHA6Ly93d3cubW9tYS5vcmcvY2FsZW5kYXIVZXXhoaWJpdGlvbnMvMjczND9sb2NhbGU9ZW4iLCJpIi1d.pdf?sha=04970be3a4db6357

Mies and Reich designed the exhibition stand as an open area divided and structured only by lengths of fabric. Panels of silk and velvet were suspended like curtains from steel pipes at different heights, forming different zones. Just as in the glass room, the German glass industry's showroom at the Werkbund Exhibition in Stuttgart 1927, Mies and Reich also used the material being exhibited as an element defining the exhibition space. The stand also functioned as a café, which the architects furnished with cantilever chairs and tubular-steel chairs that Mies had only recently developed. The Samt & Seide café took up a section at the end of the exhibition hall and covered a total area of 300 m², while also running beneath the surrounding galleries and extending into individual exhibition booths, where rolls of velvet and silk and other fabrics were presented.⁶⁸

Mies van der Rohe worked directly with Lilly Reich overseeing the planning of exhibitions as artistic directors for the German portion of the World Exhibition (1929) in Barcelona. In the catalogue for a Mies retrospective at the Art Institute of Chicago in 1968, A. James Speyer wrote that Mies and Reich “developed a way of using furniture nearly forty years ago which is at the base of our ideas today.” Speyer explained how Mies’ designs, which remain in production today as they did in Speyer’s day, are “considered contemporary in their usage, and show that the importance of Mies’ furniture does not rely alone on structural invention, but on beauty of line and form which places it with the finest furniture designs in history.”⁶⁹

In 1930 Mies directed the Bauhaus in Dessau, and in 1932, he served as the director in Berlin until the fall of 1933 when the Nazis closed the school within a year after it had opened at its new location. Soon after, Mies escaped to the United States to work as the director of the School of Architecture at the Armour Institute of Technology in Chicago in 1938. From December 15, 1938 to January 15, 1939, he exhibited his work for the Art Institute of Chicago

⁶⁸ Christiane Lange, “Café Samt & Seide, 1927, Ludwig Mies van der Rohe and Lilly Reich Cafe Samt & Seide, Die Mode der Dame, Berlin 1927,” *Projekt MIK*, 2011, accessed September 21, 2016, available online

http://www.projektmik.com/artist_info_en.php?SID=6ISBqfr1qLTD&aid=12&aname=

⁶⁹ A. James Speyer, *Mies van der Rohe*, (Chicago: The AIC, 1968), 106.

(fig. 2.19). *Architecture by Ludwig Mies van der Rohe* was comprised of large photostats, photographs, and models and represented some of the architect's best work from the time, including the Glass Skyscraper (1922), Concrete Office Building (1923), Hubbe House (1935), Barcelona Pavilion (1928-29), and Tugendhat House (1928-30).⁷⁰ In addition, recent students' works from the Armour Institute were included in the exhibition. Mies curated and designed the exhibition which traveled to numerous universities and museums throughout the United States.⁷¹



Figure 2.19. Mies van der Rohe, installation, *Architecture by Ludwig Mies van der Rohe* (Dec. 15, 1938-Jan. 15, 1939, Pauline Saliga and Robert V. Sharp, "From the Hand of Mies: Architectural Sketches from the Collection of A. James Speyer," *Art Institute of Chicago Museum Studies*, Vol. 21, No. 1, Notable Acquisitions at the Art Institute of Chicago (1995), figure 3, 59.

Mies not only designed exhibitions, but he was a collector himself, owning over 40 works, including Klee, Schwitters, Picasso, Kandinsky, and Beckmann. He also designed homes

⁷⁰ Pauline Saliga and Robert V. Sharp, "From the Hand of Mies: Architectural Sketches from the Collection of A. James Speyer," *Art Institute of Chicago Museum Studies*, vol. 21, no. 1, Notable Acquisitions at The Art Institute of Chicago (1995), 58.

⁷¹ Pauline Saliga and Robert V. Sharp, "From the Hand of Mies: Architectural Sketches from the Collection of A. James Speyer," 57-58.

for several important collectors, including Hugo Perls, Helene Müller, and Hermann Lange.⁷² Moreover, it was the American art collector, Helen Resor, who commissioned Mies in 1937 to design a vacation home near Jackson Hole, Wyoming, and it was Resor herself who personally escorted Mies from overseas on his first visit to the United States. Although the Resor house was never built, his project for *Architectural Forum*, *Museum for a Small City* (1942), was based on the Resor commission and consisted of a collage with accompanying text for the magazine (fig. 2.20).⁷³

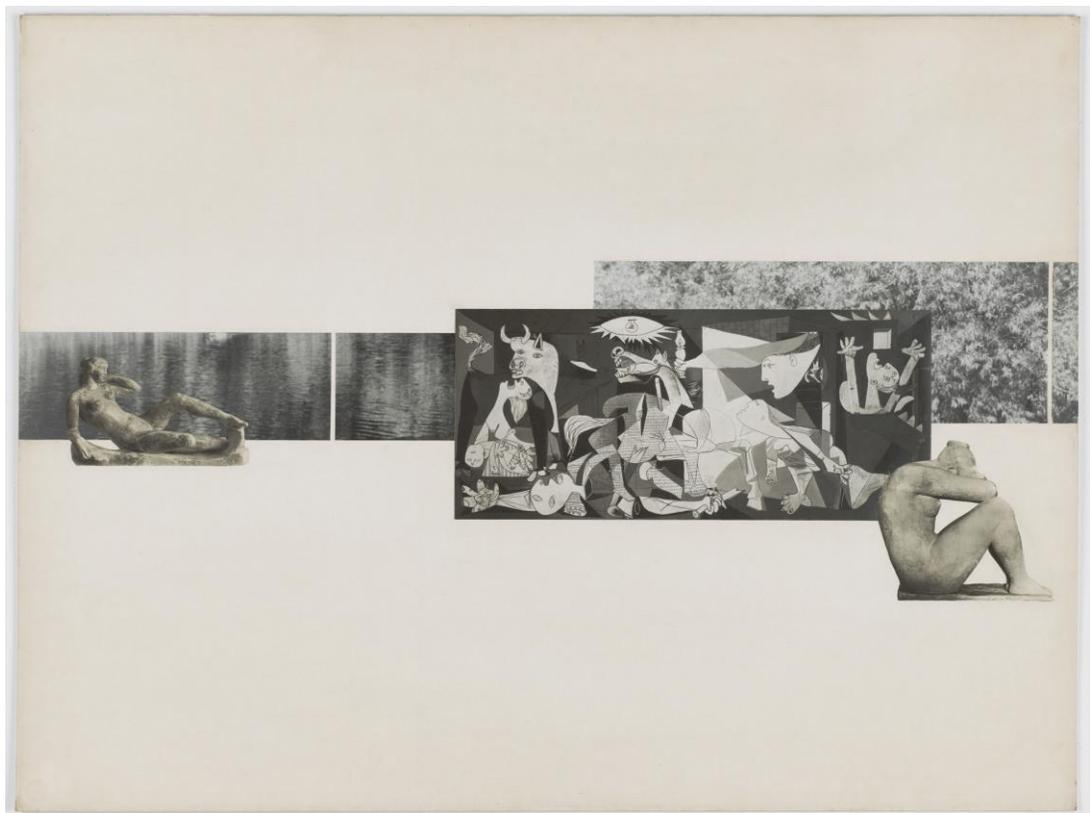


Figure 2.20. Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, *Museum for a Small City Project*, Interior perspective 1941-43, *Museum for a Small City Project*, Interior perspective 1941-43, MoMA, Mies van der Rohe Archives, © 2016 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn

⁷² Beatriz Colomina, “The Endless Museum: Le Corbusier and Mies van der Rohe,” *Log*, No. 15 (Winter, 2009), 61-62.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 63.

The project set forth a design for a museum exhibition that encompasses the spaces that distinguish Mies van der Rohe's aesthetic. The collage depicts a museum which is shaped by the paintings and sculptures, showing Mies van der Rohe's preference for exhibiting paintings and sculptures alongside one another. The above figure depicts three artworks that appear to be floating in space: Pablo Picasso's *Guernica* (1937) flanked by Aristide Maillol's sculptures, *Monument to Paul Cézanne* (1912–25, left) and *Night* (1909, right). The Museum of Modern Art currently states that the "artworks are architectural elements, creating the spatial divisions that organize the vast space of the museum," confirming "in the almost aggressive frontality of the scene, the space of the museum is evoked entirely through the vertical orientation of these flat pictorial elements on the page. *Guernica's* disquieting narrative stages its own disruption toward the center of the frame."⁷⁴ Indeed, Mies used the artworks as architectural components in *Museum for a Small City Project*. Mies writes in the text: "In this project the barrier between the art work and the living community is erased by a garden approach for the display of sculpture. Interior sculpture enjoys an equal spatial freedom, because the open plan permits them to be seen against the surrounding hills. The architectural space thus achieved becomes a defining rather than confining space." As for the installation of artworks, "small pictures would be exhibited on free-standing walls,"⁷⁵ and the larger, mural-size paintings would "become an element in space against a changing background."⁷⁶ Beatriz Colomina shows that the traditional

⁷⁴ MoMA, online catalogue entry, accessed September 19, 2016, available at: <http://www.moma.org/collection/works/757?locale=en>

⁷⁵ "New buildings for 194X," *Architectural Forum* 78 (May 1943), 84, footnote in Neil Levine, "Competing Visions of the Modern Art Museum and the Lasting Significance of Wright's Guggenheim," *The Guggenheim Frank Lloyd Wright and the Making of the Modern Museum*, 79.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

architectural elements, "floors, walls, ceilings, and columns – are barely delineated or simply invisible ... The works on exhibit become the real architecture that is occupied."⁷⁷ In sharp contrast to Le Corbusier's museum, Mies radicalized the museum world by designing transparent spaces that included the outside, natural world.



Figure 2.21. Mies van der Rohe *The Architecture of Mies van der Rohe* exhibition at MoMA, (September 16, 1947–January 25, 1948), installation by Mies, installation view available on public domain, accessed December 27, 2016, MoMA website: <https://www.moma.org/calendar/exhibitions/2734?locale=en>

⁷⁷ Beatriz Colomina, "The Endless Museum: Le Corbusier and Mies van der Rohe," 65.

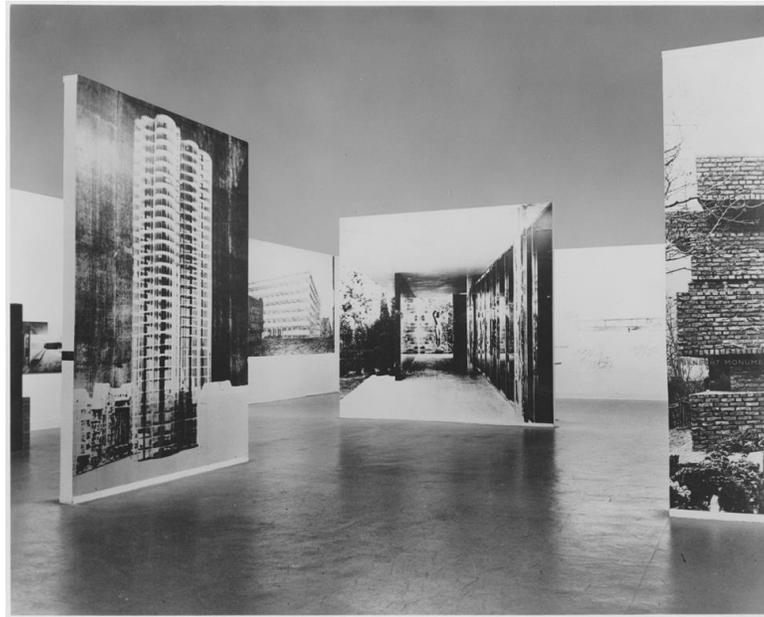


Figure 2.22. Mies van der Rohe *The Architecture of Mies van der Rohe* exhibition at MoMA, (September 16, 1947–January 25, 1948) installation by Mies, installation view available on public domain, accessed December 27, 2016, MoMA website: <https://www.moma.org/calendar/exhibitions/2734?locale=en>

The Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in New York held a retrospective for Mies, *The Architecture of Mies van der Rohe* (September 17–November 23, 1947). Philip Johnson, head of the architectural department, did not curate the exhibition; instead, Mies designed and installed the exhibition, which contained photo-murals, plans, drawings, models, and furniture (figs. 2.21–2.22). The third floor galleries of the MoMA had been converted into one large space for the exhibition. Mies installed the large photo-murals on free-standing walls and the side and rear walls of the third floor galleries. American architect and designer, Charles Eames praised the installation design in *Arts and Architecture*, writing, “Certainly it is the experience of walking through the space and seeing others move through it that is the high point of the exhibition.”⁷⁸

⁷⁸ Charles Eames, *Art and Architecture*, (December 1947), quoted in Franz Schulze, *Mies van der Rohe: A Critical Biography*, (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1985), 236.

The trustees for the Museum of Fine Art in Houston (MFAH) commissioned Mies to design a master plan in 1953, which included Cullinan Hall (built in 1958) and Brown Pavilion (built in 1974). Cullinan Hall was a thirty-foot-high, ten-thousand-square-foot space that featured a glass curtain wall supported by white painted steel. Originally, Mies van der Rohe had planned to exhibit small pictures on free-standing movable walls. However, James Johnson Sweeney, the director of the MFAH (and former director of the Guggenheim), discarded these walls for his suspension method that he devised with Tom Deer, Museum of Fine Arts building superintendent, where the paintings hung from nylon wires suspended from the ceiling.⁷⁹ Mies designed the installation of the inaugural exhibition for Cullinan Hall. *The Human Image* (9 October, 1958- 23 November, 1958) was curated by Lee Malone; however, the construction of the installation was designed by Mies. Artist Soulages told Anne Holmes, the Fine Arts Editor for the *Houston Chronicle*, that Cullinan Hall was “the most perfect spatial setting [the painting] had ever seen.”⁸⁰

In the installation by Mies, *Six Master Paintings, Two Glasses, One Sculpture* (March 20-April 15, 1963), the artworks seem dwarfed by the space (fig. 2.23). Here, the museum visitor was not offered a guided path; instead, she, too, along with the works of art, was overtaken by the vast space. Walls offer people a physical manifestation of grounding. As we will see with Lina Bo Bardi, without walls, the visitors and works of art are “free.” Mies worked on the design for the Brown Pavilion between 1965 and 1968. The larger Brown Pavilion enveloped Cullinan

⁷⁹ Marcia Brennan, “Illuminating the Void, Displaying the Vision: On the Romanesque Church, the Modern Museum, and Pierre Soulages' Abstract Art,” *RES: Anthropology and Aesthetics* No. 52, *Museums: Crossing Boundaries* (Autumn, 2007), 120-121.

⁸⁰ Brennan, “Illuminating the Void,” 125.

Hall and echoed its elegant curved, glass and steel facade and open exhibition space. Franz Schulze writes that it was at the Museum of Fine Arts Houston that Mies “proposed exhibiting works by placing sculpture informally among paintings that were hung on panels suspended by wires from the ceiling.”⁸¹ The heavy sculptures offered the grounding that was missing from the gallery.

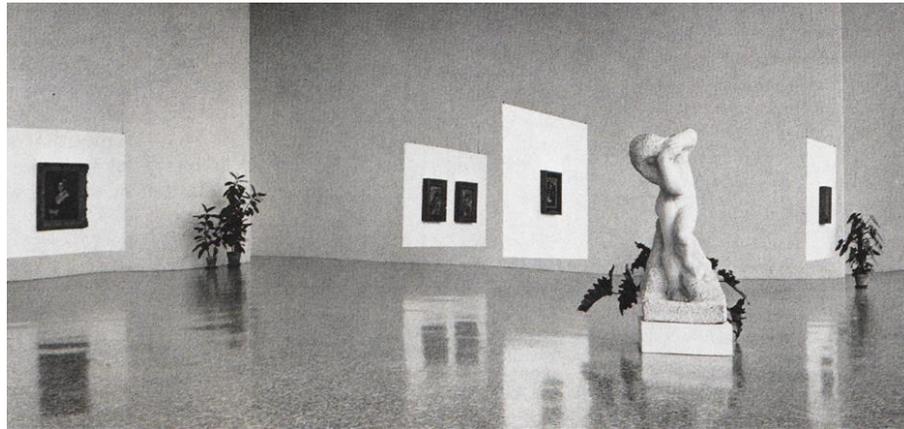


Figure 2.23. Installation by Mies, *Six Master Paintings, Two Glasses, One Sculpture* (March 20-April 15, 1963), Cullinan Hall, Museum of Fine Art Houston, taken from Franz Schulze, *Mies Van der Rohe A Critical Biography*, 300.

The additions to the MFAH and the New National Gallery in Berlin are the architect’s only museums. His 1943 idea for a museum was fully realized with the New National Gallery in Berlin (1963-68) (figs. 2.24-2.26). Here, Mies included Sweeney's suspension system for the inaugural exhibition of Piet Mondrian's paintings (fig. 2.25). Detlef Mertins points out that van der Rohe's gallery was met with sharp criticism for the space's "functional problems." Mertins writes: "Dwarfing most paintings and sculpture, this space was colossal in scale, almost entirely open, without walls for mounting art, and was enclosed completely in glass, letting light and

⁸¹ Franz Schulz, *Mies van der Rohe a Critical Biography*, 300.

views stream in unless the curtains were drawn.”⁸² Mertins correctly points out how the enormous spaces that Mies created for viewing works of art robbed the viewer of an intimacy with the works. In the case of his built museums, although elegant and impressive, these spaces were not the most ideal setting for viewing works of art.

Although the spaces submerged the works, Mies van der Rohe designed clear and simple installations. Modern materials like industrial steel and large-pane glass helped Mies van der Rohe create a minimal support for the museum, and helped Mies define the International Style as the freedom of open space. Spaces were delineated as lines, forms, and planes, hence, the adage “less is more.” His structural order was, indeed, more simplistic than Wright’s. Mies van der Rohe translated Frank Lloyd Wright’s language of old and new materials, color, and form into his own style, and in doing so, he created spaces that opened outward, instead of pulling one inward. Whereas Le Corbusier created spaces that avoided direct sunlight, Mies created the opposite with his reliance on glass and steel. Mies van der Rohe’s designs could be described as elitist because of the elegant materials that he relied on; however, he is a more nuanced and complicated architect when we consider his plan for a Museum for a Small City, which was a transparent, populist project.

Wright was the first to break away from the Victorian compartmental style and form open spaces although his spaces were consistently relative to the human body. Materials were pure and simplistic. Le Corbusier wanted a more controlled environment, relying on concrete to create an inward space and focusing on artificial lighting for optical control. In contrast, Mies

⁸² Detlef Mertins, “Mies’s New National Gallery: Empty and Full,” in Paula Marincola, *What makes a great exhibition?* (Philadelphia: Philadelphia Exhibitions Initiative, Philadelphia Center for Arts and Heritage, 2006), 1552 and 1559, Kindle.

represents the International Style, opening the space to the outdoor environment and relying on elegant materials. Miesian spaces were more open than both Wright and Le Corbusier's spaces.



Figure 2.24. New National Gallery in Berlin (1963-68), courtesy of Art Institute Chicago archives, Mies van der Rohe, James Speyer curatorial collection

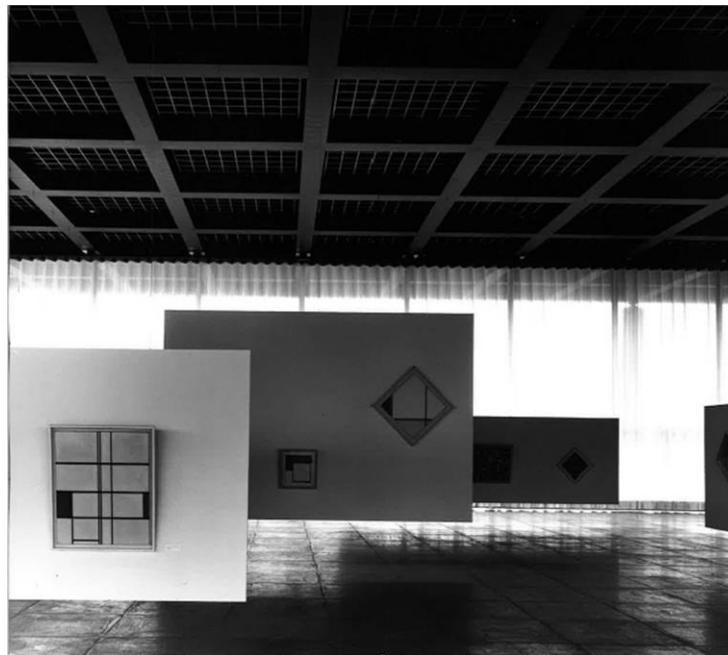


Figure 2.25. Mondrian Installation, Mies van der Rohe, New National Gallery in Berlin, courtesy of the Art Institute Chicago archives, James Speyer Curatorial Collection



Figure 2.26. Suspended walls, New National Gallery in Berlin, courtesy of the Art Institute Chicago archives, James Speyer Curatorial Collection

CHAPTER 3

JOHN YEON: NORTHWESTERN MODERNISM

John Yeon epitomizes the Arts and Crafts movement's adherence to refined materials and Asian aesthetics. Open, contemplative, tranquil, serene settings crafted from pure materials: this is the type of environment that Yeon created for museums. Yeon's museum work is characterized by soft, pure, clear, subtle light, open spaces, plain walls, framed structures, horizontal planes, all which also define Japanese design. Suburb craftsmanship and an overall simplicity of design form Yeon's predominantly modernist aesthetic; in turn, Yeon's aesthetic helped shape and define the Northwest Regional Style.

Background

Yeon was born in Portland, Oregon, in a family home located in north Portland right before the Willamette and Columbia rivers meet, out on what is now known as Mock's Crest, a peninsula named after his maternal family. Yeon lived in the family home until his early thirties. Yeon's mother, Elizabeth Mock Yeon, was an amateur artist who came from a prominent Portland family, and his father, Jean Baptiste Yeon (later to become John B. Yeon), was a former lumberman who became wealthy by investing in real estate. Yeon's mother introduced Yeon, Jr. to art at the Portland Art Museum. The Yeon the elder taught his son how to respect and support the environment and the community.

Before Elizabeth Mock married and started a family, she was a painter who had studied at the Portland Academy. Elizabeth Mock's paintings decorated her parent's home, large oils in gilded frames, some of still lifes and some copies of other paintings. Yeon remembered seeing landscapes hanging on his grandmother Baba's walls, like paintings of Rooster Rock and

Yellowstone. He also remembered seeing copies of *The Time for the Indian Maiden to Come Down and Wash Her Feet* and *Kiss of the Dying Day from the Peak of Mount Hood*.⁸³ Yeon did not credit his mother for exposing him to the arts; instead, he claimed that she was only interested in art before she had married. "She was just raising children. And there was no intellectual nourishment from that source."⁸⁴ However, he admitted later in an interview that she took him to art classes at the Portland Museum, so, in a way, Mrs. Yeon tried to cultivate an artistic sensibility in her son.⁸⁵

Yeon Sr.'s work on the Columbia River Highway had a tremendous impact on his son's interests and work. Yeon's father, a French Canadian, had left Ontario to begin a career as a lumberman. He began working in Ohio in 1882 and later moved to Portland in 1885.⁸⁶ He began by working in logging camps, and by the time Yeon, his eldest son, was born, he was completely out of the lumber business, having invested in real estate. Encouraged by his in-laws, the Mocks, in 1911, the elder Yeon had built the tallest building in Portland on the corner of SW 5th and Adler, the Yeon building, because, according to the local newspaper, he wanted to "help Portland by appearing as well as possible."⁸⁷ However, his Columbia River Highway project

⁸³ Oral history interview with John Yeon, interview by Marian Kolisch, 1982 December 14-1983 January 10, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ *Who's Who in the Northwest A Biographical Dictionary of Notable Living Men and Women of the Northwest*, Vol. 1, (Portland: Western Press Association, 1911), page unavailable, accessed January 12, 2014, available online at: <https://books.google.com/books?id=gcAUAAAAYAAJ&pg=PT71&lpg=PT71&dq=%22elizabeth+h+mock%22+portland&source=bl&ots=0IsvBqS9ld&sig=KUchqfR0yp71hqk3YQqrG4PGPJE&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0CEUQ6AEwB2oVChMIrDrvrPCxwIVxjQ-Ch1SIAJL#v=onepage&q=%22elizabeth%20mock%22%20portland&f=false>

⁸⁷ Peg Willis, *Building the Columbia River Highway: They Said It Couldn't Be Done*, (Charleston: The History Press, 2014), 62. Also, *The Oregonian*, (August 21, 1910), quoted in

was what gave him the most pride. Per Yeon, "it absorbed him." This project connected Portland to Mt. Hood; it was deemed "the road from the Garden of Eden ... to the Temple of Nature." Yeon explained that before his father's highway project, there were not any public roads in Oregon.⁸⁸ The younger Yeon would carry on his father's legacy.

Through his father's conservation work, Yeon had grown to know and respect the Oregon landscape at an early age, and he too, would strive to preserve and protect parts of Oregon. Indeed, his fascination and love for the wilderness of Oregon stemmed from his upbringing. Yeon's father was responsible for appointing Edgar Lazarus, architect, to oversee the construction of the Vista House, where, at the opening ceremony, the young 7-year-old Yeon was responsible for "carrying the tail of the flag." As a child, Yeon and his three siblings, "accompanied their father on trips around Oregon, developing an appreciation for the wild loveliness of the landscape from an early age." Moreover, "John later recalled being awed by the 'fantastic beauty' of the still-underdeveloped Oregon Coast, and appalled by the sight of a section of the Coast Range that had been rapidly logged to supply spruce wood to build airplanes during World War I."⁸⁹ Indeed, Yeon was devoted to the landscape, and this would "thereafter be one of the defining characteristics of Yeon's work and life."⁹⁰ This dedication to the

Bradley Maule, "Knowing Your Skyline: 1911's Yeon Building," *Portland Architecture Blog*, accessed August 24, 2015, online at: <http://chatterbox.typepad.com/portlandarchitecture/2011/10/knowning-your-skyline-1911s-yeon-building.html>

⁸⁸ Oral history interview with John Yeon.

⁸⁹ Mindy Moreland, "Spirit of Place: John Yeon and the Making of Oregon's Architecture," *Oregon Quarterly*, published on the University of Oregon website, accessed September 12, 2015, available at: <http://oregonquarterly.com/spirit-of-place-john-yeon-and-the-making-of-oregons-architecture>

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

environment would later surface in Yeon's museum installations.

Yeon had claimed:

I can't explain why I was such a sucker for landscape, but it's been a great interest in my life, in particular the Oregon landscape. I suppose just because I was born here. It's what I knew early on. I early on was interested in architecture which would fit that unique landscape that I liked so much. And I remember going on those trips to Europe-- the things that impressed me most were things that I felt would work in Oregon. Not copied, but would suggest solutions for Oregon. And, of course there are different parts of Oregon. The east and west are very different. Along with all that was my interest in saving the landscape, which was being brutalized at such a rapid stage when I was young.⁹¹

Yeon's father and family connections influenced his career path. His father's death halted his studies soon after he started college in 1929. He stated: "I was only at Stanford one quarter and my father died. ...I came back at the time of his death and never went back to Stanford." Shortly after his father's death, Yeon spent time with his mother traveling abroad and returned to Portland with a deep interest in architecture.⁹² Julius Meier, president of Meier & Frank, a Portland department store, was a close friend of Yeon's father and executor of his will. Meier secured a job for Yeon after his father had died with the New York architects Young, Moskowitz and Rosenbloom, who had all worked on the Meier & Frank store. Yeon moved to New York, worked for the architectural firm, and attended Columbia during the evenings although the university life was not for Yeon. Yeon claimed:

Columbia was excruciatingly boring. I had to take courses on, you know, how to put water tanks on top of buildings in New York and so on...Instead of night school, I met fascinating people and that interrupted my formal education. [But] I was impatient, terribly impatient. I had all kinds of things I wanted to accomplish that more formal education wouldn't allow.⁹³

⁹¹ Oral history interview with John Yeon.

⁹² Meredith L. Clausen, *Pietro Belluschi Modern American Architect*, (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1994), 48.

⁹³ Oral history interview with John Yeon.

Yeon returned to Portland during Julius Meier's gubernatorial campaign, and governor Meier (1931-1935) appointed Yeon, at the age of twenty-one, to the State Park Commission where he carried on his father's work, and along with future client, Aubrey Watzek, he set out to build the Columbia Highway.

Yeon did not approach development haphazardly; instead, he carefully thought about how the structure would work within the landscape and protect the environment. He supported conservation just as much as building. For instance, Yeon had taken out a loan in order to buy land that was threatened by development. Randy Gragg, Director of the John Yeon Center at the University of Oregon, explains:

...his first public act of conservation was around Chapman Point, which was threatened with development. If you're standing at Ecola State Park and looking south toward Cannon Beach and Haystack Rock, Chapman Point is the little spit of land that's between you and Haystack Rock. It's one of the great vistas of the Oregon Coast and Yeon took out a loan and bought the land when he was 21 years old. He held it for the rest of his life.⁹⁴

During the Depression, Yeon remembers "roads were being built and virgin areas were being opened up and messed up at a great rate." Roosevelt's programs served as the catalyst for the planning of the Northwest region and helped fuel Yeon's environmental campaigns. Yeon remembered, "It caught on like a prairie fire then, and I got sucked into that. And it just took all of my time and energies. I think the reason there was such enthusiasm for it is that people saw it as an open sesame for public funds, because early on, there'd be no public works projects except

⁹⁴ Caleb Yarian, "News Articles and Thoughts Design Questions with Randy Gragg," *Design Week Portland*, accessed 9-2-2015, available online: <http://designweekportland.tumblr.com/post/97062583914/design-questions-with-randy-gragg-randy-gragg-is>

as recommended through the planning process.”⁹⁵ The highway was built during the war, after Yeon's campaign. When Yeon was in his early twenties, he served on various committees, including the State Park Committee, the Conservation Society, City Club committee, and the Columbia Gorge Commission, and fought passionately for the Olympic National and the North Cascades National Park.⁹⁶ Throughout his lifetime, Yeon financed personal conservation efforts.

Randy Gragg explains that after he bought Chapman Point:

the state highway engineer wanted to blow away Neahkahnie mountain for the first coastal highway and Yeon developed an alternative scheme that would preserve the mountain. The state highway engineer had no interest in it ... So the curves around Neahkahnie mountain are the work of John Yeon ... He was appointed by Governor Julius Meier to chair the natural resources committee for this Gorge planning project and wrote this visionary document of how the Gorge should be managed for scenic vistas. You can see the first outlines of what is now the scenic area ... He was a lifelong Gorge preservationist and was relentless. The Columbia Gorge was a very, very central part of his world. He wanted it to be a national park but lost that battle, and was deeply unhappy with the way the preservation effort actually turned out, even though he played a pivotal role in it. But he was a perfectionist. In the '60s, buying the piece of land that he ultimately sculpted into the Shire was another act of preservation. It's directly across from Multnomah Falls and was threatened with development, which would have just completely changed the experience of the falls.⁹⁷

Gragg claims Yeon was constantly battling Washington, mainly because in southern Washington there was not any interest in the “scenic value” of the Gorge. Gragg explains that Yeon “always described the northern side of the river as the ‘orphan that Washington has abandoned but Oregon can't adopt,’ so it was this act of just claiming it and turning it into, you know, basically

⁹⁵ Oral History Interview With John Yeon.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Caleb Yarian, “News Articles and Thoughts Design Questions with Randy Gragg.” *Design Week Portland*, (Accessed January 10, 2017) <http://designweekportland.tumblr.com/post/97062583914/design-questions-with-randy-gragg-randy-gragg-is>

a perfect rendition of his idea of what a landscape should be about.”⁹⁸ Yeon's love for Oregon, definitely, shaped his aesthetics. Yeon witnessed the beauty and the destruction of the landscape of Oregon as a young boy. He developed a devotion to nature, carrying on his father's legacy by making those concerns for the environment his own. His passion for the land and conservation dovetailed with his love for art.

Yeon first met Harry Wentz when he had worked as an office boy for A.E. Doyle, "Portland's most important architect."⁹⁹ Wentz began to teach for the museum in 1910, when the school was only in its second year. He taught life drawing, composition, and watercolor classes until 1941, and is remembered as "an inspiring teacher and man of rare personal integrity," who "played a major role in shaping the artistic values and philosophy of a whole generation of young artists and architects in the Portland community."¹⁰⁰ Wentz's composition class influenced Yeon, specifically in how Yeon would later combine modern design with a devotion to craftsmanship and to materials, much like those who had been participating in the Arts and Crafts movement. The composition class that Wentz taught at the Portland Art Museum is best understood as a design class. Students learned about line, shape, form, color, space, and how those and the other elements of design worked together with balance, movement, repetition, emphasis, unity, and the

⁹⁸ Caleb Yarian, "News Articles and Thoughts Design Questions with Randy Gragg." *Design Week Portland*, (Accessed January 10, 2017)

⁹⁹ Wentz had studied art in New York at the Art Students' League and at Columbia's Teachers' College, and he had traveled throughout Europe. He was teaching at the East Side High School in Portland when Anna Belle Crocker, the Portland Art Museum curator and director of the Art School at the museum, offered him a teaching job at the Portland Art Museum School. Philip Niles, *Beauty of the City A.E. Doyle Portland's Architect*, (Corvallis: Oregon State University Press, 2008), vii.

¹⁰⁰ Meredith L. Clausen, *Pietro Belluschi Modern American Architect*, Cambridge: MIT Press, 1994, p. 44.

other principles to create a strong composition. Wentz advocated the collaboration between the fine arts and the crafts. In the interest of the Arts and Crafts movement, he had previously taught high-school manual arts and had also worked as a woodcarver and, most importantly, as an interior designer. He led artist critiques and discussions for Portland artists during the 1920s at the Portland Art Museum.¹⁰¹

Asian art had been introduced to the Northwest region through the Lewis and Clark Centennial and American Pacific Exposition and Oriental Fair held in Portland in 1905. Since then, Northwestern artists were particularly drawn to Asian and Impressionist art because many of those works depicted landscapes and scenery that recalled the Oregonian landscape. Thus, just as Texas Impressionist were painting bluebonnets, the Northwestern school artist were painting what they saw.¹⁰²

In Wentz's paintings, the subject matter consisted of coastal and mountain scenes, still lifes, and botanicals. His compositions followed the Impressionists by favoring quick brush strokes over academic detail, light captured by use of color rather than shadow, and painting en plein air instead of the studio. Moreover, like the impressionists, Wentz's compositions resemble Japanese prints in how the artist relied on asymmetrical compositions with flat planes of color

¹⁰¹ Patrick A. Forester, ““Art Feeling Grows” in Oregon: The Portland Art Association, 1892-1932,” *Dissertation and Theses*, Paper 220. Portland State University, 88.

¹⁰² At the time of this dissertation, there is currently not a single scholarly work that focuses on Harry Wentz, or his concept of composition. However, John Impert attempts an initial, albeit brief analysis of the Northwest Impressionist school in his dissertation, and since Wentz is mentioned (although not discussed) in Impert's investigation, one can draw on generalities of composition from the Northwest Impressionists to better understand Wentz's paintings. Impert argues that what set the Northwest Impressionist apart from other American Impressionists was their depiction of a single mountain, dense forest, or atmospheric mist for subject. John E. Impert, “Hidden in Plain Sight: Northwest Impressionism 1910-1935,” *Dissertation*, University of Washington, 2012.

and contrasting intricate patterns. For instance, Wentz's quick brush-strokes in the Portland Museum of Art's *Sand Dune, Neah-kah-nie* (1914) certainly places the artist within the impressionist school (fig. 3.1). Yeon remembered that Wentz would assign compositions for homework to help students articulate their visual vocabularies, and the following week, when the students returned, he would discuss and critique the work by "putting his hands over parts of it and explaining that this didn't work or that did."¹⁰³ Wentz taught his students how to develop a discerning eye.¹⁰⁴ Wentz's compositions, his approach to design, is key to understanding the influence he had on Yeon, especially with how Yeon relied on the compositional principles of contrast, rhythm, balance, and unity.

Certainly, the collection of Asian art at the Portland Art Museum influenced both Wentz and then, Yeon. For instance, both men made references to Asian art in the buildings they designed. Clausen writes about "Wentz's high horizon lines, mountain rocks, structuring of planes in depth with a foreground, middle ground, and far distance, his brush-strokes, his subdued palette with its subtle gradations of tone, all bear evidence of Oriental painting." And Yeon also structured planes in a similar manner and shared a similar palette. In addition, both

¹⁰³ Wentz drew upon the museum's collection and would show reproductions of works ranging from "ancient Egyptian to Chinese to modern Impressionists." Oral History Interview with John Yeon.

¹⁰⁴ Meredith Clausen further explains: "Wentz was deliberately ecumenical in his artistic judgment, open to what he deemed inherent quality or a fresh vision regardless of style. His approach was intuitive, a result of looking at and experiencing art rather than of formal schooling. Growing up amid Oregon's natural beauty and returning to it after studying abroad, Wentz was particularly sensitive to the aesthetic properties of the natural landscape. His watercolors and oils were typically of the mountains, seacoast, Columbia Gorge, farms, and small towns of Oregon. Composition was his greatest strength. "The Oregon Artist," *Journal of the Museum Art School*, (Portland, fall 1955), fn. In Meredith L. Clausen, *Pietro Belluschi Modern American Architect*, 44.

men collected Asian art; Yeon mainly sought out objects, whereas, Wentz collected Japanese prints.¹⁰⁵ Indeed, the shared characteristics between the Arts and Crafts movement and, for instance, characteristics of Japanese design, like its relationship between the crafts and fine arts, emphasis on craftsmanship, and distinction in local culture, appealed to both Wentz and Yeon.¹⁰⁶

Wentz helped Yeon view architecture as an artist would.¹⁰⁷ Yeon spent time touring Oregon with Wentz, fellow architect Pietro Belluschi, and other friends from the Doyle office. They would hike, climb, sketch, and paint the Oregon wilderness.¹⁰⁸ When Doyle agreed to co-design a house with and for Wentz at Neahkahnie, Yeon and Belluschi went to Neahkahnie and sketched the home and "really absorbed the ideas." (fig. 3.2)¹⁰⁹ According to Randy Gragg:

They were both heavily influenced by the director of the museum school, Harry Wentz who had commissioned and basically co-designed a house with the architect Albert E. Doyle, this gem of a house at Neahkahnie that is unlike any beach house that had come before it. It was very Japanese, very minimalist, an artist's loft in the form of a house. And they went out there and drew together all the time and really absorbed the ideas. Wentz was kind of a philosopher and modernism was in the air. But there was also this sense of an emergent regional modernism.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁵ "The Oregon Artist," *Journal of the Museum Art School*, (Portland), fall 1955, fn. In Meredith L. Clausen, 44-45.

¹⁰⁶ Patricia J. Graham discusses ten characteristics of Japanese design in the chapter "Design in Japanese Culture: Ten Key Characteristics" in *Japanese Design Art, Aesthetics & Culture*, (Tokyo: Tuttle, 2014), Loc 1278, Kindle.

¹⁰⁷ Meredith Clausen writes that Wentz was aesthetically conscious, for he "saw how architectural forms could be organized, balanced harmoniously, how they could fit in and become an integral part of the setting." Not only did Wentz influence John Yeon's interest in art, but his composition class also influenced Yeon's architecture and his compositions for museum installations. Clausen writes, "Wentz was interested in the unity of formal elements, in structurally integrating buildings and landscape--the flat planes, pitched roofs, vertical chimney shafts of the one with the rocky outcrops, sloped mountains, and tall upright trees of the other." Yeon would later incorporate these same elements in his architectural designs. Clausen, 44-45.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 45.

¹⁰⁹ Caleb Yarian, "News Articles and Thoughts Design Questions with Randy Gragg."

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, Caleb Yarian.



Figure 3.1. Henry Frederick Wentz, Sand Dune, Neah-kah-nie, 1914, oil on canvas board, Gift of a group headed by Mrs. H. C. Wortman: George Good, John J. Edwards, Mary Frances Isom, the Art Class, Mrs. Theresa Jackson, Albert E. Doyle, T. L. Eliot, H. C. Wortman, Henrietta H. Failing, Anna B. Crocker, the Architectural Class, Elizabeth Cadwell, no known copyright restrictions, 15.5, accessed December 27, 2016, <http://portlandartmuseum.us/mwebcgi/mweb.exe?request=record;id=32019;type=101>



Figure 3.2. Wentz Studio, Neahkahnie, Oregon, "Wentz Studio S - Manzanita Oregon," Photo Credit: Ian Poellet, licensed under CC BY-SA 4.0 via Commons, accessed December 27, 2016 https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Wentz_Studio_S_-_Manzanita_Oregon.jpg#/media/File:Wentz_Studio_S_-_Manzanita_Oregon.jpg

Aubrey Watzek was a friend of Yeon. Watzek, an attorney who had attended Yale and Harvard and moved to Portland in 1919, had made his wealth in the lumber industry. He was director of the U.S. National Bank in Oregon, a very prominent figure, who served on the Board of Directors of the Commonwealth Trust, the Portland Symphony, and the Portland Art Museum.¹¹¹ Watzek also served on the board of the State Park Commission with Yeon, and the two would go hiking and climbing. Yeon recalled, "He liked to go mountain climbing, so I joined forces with him and we explored. I got to many places I wouldn't have otherwise found. We climbed anything in sight-- Mount Hood and Mount Rainier and Mount Olympus and Mount Shuksan and Garibaldi in Canada."¹¹² Without a commission, Yeon, handed over plans when his friend Watzek wanted to build a house. The Watzek House was designed in 1936 and completed in 1937 (fig. 3.3). Its photograph made Yeon famous for representing Northwest Regional style in the *Art in Progress: 15th Anniversary Exhibitions: Built in the U.S.A.* (May 24–October 22, 1944) exhibition and catalogue for the Museum of Art in New York (fig. 3.4).¹¹³ The Watzek is now listed on the National Register of Historic Places and designated a National Historic Landmark.

¹¹¹ Meredith L. Clausen, 90.

¹¹² *Oral History Interview with John Yeon.*

¹¹³ See Elizabeth Mock, Ed., *Built in the USA: 1932-1944*, New York: MoMA, 1944, 41 and 124. *Built in the USA* was the second out of four exhibitions at the MoMA that Yeon's work was exhibited. Three images of the Watzek House were also shown in *The Wooden House in America* (September 9-30, 1941), John Yeon's plywood home in Eureka California was shown in the exhibition designed by Janet Henrich O'Connell at the MoMA titled *If you Want to Build a House* (January 8-30, 1946), the Visitor's Information Center (1949) in Portland was included in the MoMA exhibition *Built in the USA* (January 20-March 15, 1953).

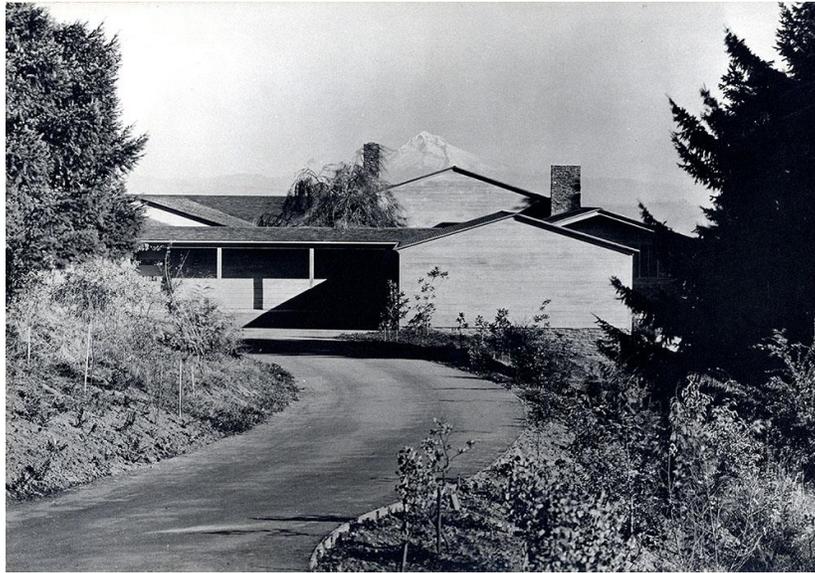


Figure 3.3. Watzek House as it appeared in the MoMA publication, *Art in Progress: 15th Anniversary Exhibitions: Built in the U.S.A.* (May 24–October 22, 1944), University of Oregon, John Yeon Center for Architecture and the Landscape, public domain "Watzek House," Photo Credit: Jeremy Bittermann, accessed December 21, 2016, <http://yeoncenter.uoregon.edu/our-locations/the-watzek-house/>



Figure 3.4. MoMA, *Art in Progress 15th Anniversary Exhibitions: Built in the USA* (May 24–October 22, 1944), John Yeon Watzek House, Far right, three pictures, installation view, public domain

Yeon's fascination with Asian Art and with nature is analogous with Frank Lloyd Wright's interests although Yeon maintained and defined a distinctive Pacific Northwest Regional style separate from the prairie style of Wright. Like Wright's approach to the natural environment, The Pacific Northwest Regional style acknowledges the Oregon climate and the area's wood supply. The Pacific Northwest Regional style is deliberate in how it exhibits "broad, overhanging gables or hipped roofs covered with shingles, often with broken or asymmetrical slopes, non-academic forms and details, asymmetrical open floor plans, large glass windows of various shapes, wood frame-construction with unfinished and unpainted siding of native woods, and integration of structures and environment."¹¹⁴

As will be shown in his letters, none of his aesthetic choices came easy; instead, Yeon painstakingly worked through every design decision, weighing its aesthetic and stylistic merits. Yeon claimed regional architecture "does not happen simply, automatically, or unself-consciously as it once did. If it happens at all, it results from deliberate aesthetic resistance to ubiquitous popular fashions. It will be done by people and for people who love landscapes and are literate in architecture...It is my belief that significant regional architecture will be an act of will, an act of taste, a response triggered by an appreciation of nature."¹¹⁵ Yeon's analysis of regional architecture is methodological and detailed. Furthermore, one can surmise Yeon's approach to museum design from his remark about regional architecture. Yeon's design were unique and personal, not fashionable.

¹¹⁴ Rosalind Clark, *Oregon Style Architecture from 1840 to the 1950s*, (Portland: Professional Book Center, 1983), 215.

¹¹⁵ "About John Yeon," University of Oregon, A&AA School of Architecture and Allied Arts, accessed February 2, 2015, available online: <http://aaa.uoregon.edu/yeon/about>

In 1939, the Museum of Modern Art considered his architecture "emphatically American," having "much more in common with straightforward native building types than with historical 'styles.'"¹¹⁶ Meredith Clausen, in her book on Pietro Belluschi explained Yeon's notion of regional architecture:

Yeon sought a regional architecture, but from a perspective differing radically from Belluschi's. Yeon saw Northwest architecture not as a matter of local building materials or climatic conditions, factors he thought obvious, but as a deliberate aesthetic choice of forms sympathetic to the landscape, architectural forms that visually merged with the lines and planes of the natural terrain. His design approach was that of a landscape painter--like Cezanne with his sliding, dissolving planes, or the Chinese landscapists--but now working in three-dimensional space, imagining how the building would fit visually, compositionally into the whole.¹¹⁷

Yeon went on to design more homes, "but became disenchanted with residential architecture."¹¹⁸ As Gragg points out, "The other side of his aesthetic was really immersed in art. He was a collector from very early on, had great museum connections and was part of that world."¹¹⁹ The following will discuss "the other side" of Yeon's aesthetic.

Asian Aesthetics

Yeon used the word "fraternization" when referring to modern design, meaning that one could embrace modern design and at the same time, "can have a very separate but no less intense enthusiasm for the work of the past."¹²⁰ Yeon managed to merge design concepts from "the past" with his modern installation design. Kevin Nute shows in his exhibition at the School of

¹¹⁶ Museum of Modern Art, *Art in Our Time*, (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1939), 305.

¹¹⁷ Meredith Clausen, *Pietro Belluschi*, 95.

¹¹⁸ Caleb Yarian, "News Articles and Thoughts Design Questions with Randy Gragg."

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, Caleb Yarian.

¹²⁰ John Yeon, typed essay on design throughout the ages, 24, JY Museum Work, Watzek House Archives.

Architecture and Allied Arts at the University of Oregon, and in the accompanying catalogue, *The Mirror and the Frame: John Yeon and the Landscape Art of China and Japan*, that the way in which Yeon situated his architecture within the landscape parallels Asian art.¹²¹ In a similar fashion, he incorporates elements of Japanese and Chinese aesthetics into his modern installation designs. Yeon's interest in Asian art, combined with his love for Oregonian landscape and its conservation, shaped his design decisions. His personal taste in art and his conservation work is important to a discussion about the architect's designs for museums because there is a correlation between the two. To begin, Yeon's architecture echoed Asian art. For instance, like Frank Lloyd Wright, Yeon positioned his homes within the landscape. The home did not sit on the top of a hill; rather, his homes were *of* the hill, situated within the landscape much like the landscapes found in Japanese prints. Furthermore, Yeon created "views" with his installations. Like looking out of a window to the outside landscape, the art works were framed within the viewer's optical framework. Also, there is a serenity found in Yeon's museum installations, and this fabricated serene environment follows the same tranquility of Yeon's conservation efforts.

Considering how Yeon shaped and sculpted different landscapes helps to understand why his conservation work is important to understanding his overall oeuvre. For example, Yeon purchased the Shire, a 75-acre waterfront property, in 1965 to save it from development (fig. 3.5). The property was later donated to the University of Oregon and is today an integral part of the university's architectural program, touting it as "a carefully designed landscape with a sculpted lawn, a series of meadows, wetlands, vista points, river bays, and walking paths which

¹²¹ Kevin Nute, *The Mirror and the frame: John Yeon and the landscape art of China and Japan*, (Eugene: School of Architecture and Allied Arts University of Oregon, 2010),

Yeon created over a 25-year period.” The Shire is in the middle of the Columbia River Gorge, directly across from Multnomah Falls. Today, the Shire operates as a center for Pacific Northwest landscape studies. Most importantly, Yeon treats the creations of Culture in the same way as he treats creations of Nature—one which needs to be preserved. Yeon approaches museum installation with the same preservationist’s instinct.



Figure 3.5. *The Shire*, University of Oregon, public domain, accessed December 1, 2016, https://aaa.uoregon.edu/sites/aaa1.uoregon.edu/files/images/news/2013/theshire_sm.jpg

Yeon designed installations for the Portland Art Museum (PAM) in the thirties. In the beginning, the Portland Museum "was a very advanced and courageous place," according to Yeon, it was more “than most museums.”¹²² From his installation work at the PAM and onward, he chose an aesthetic display over an ethnographic or scenographic one. At the same time that his mentor, Harry Wentz, installed the new Hirsch wing of the Portland Art Museum, Yeon curated and installed “an exhibition representative of the great periods of Chinese art,” one which “supplemented the Museum’s collection and brought out many fine pieces from local

¹²² Oral history interview with John Yeon.

collectors.”¹²³ In the *Exhibition of Chinese Art* (1939), Yeon claimed that the objects were selected "for their artistic interest rather than for their archaeological sequence or significance alone.”¹²⁴ Above all, Yeon preferred Asian Art because, according to him, "Modern life has produced a thirst for contacts with serene philosophies, gentleness, humane wisdom, sensitive imaginations, those qualities of life which the Chinese race has excelled all others.”¹²⁵

Therefore, naturally, after Yeon stopped building, he carried on not only the environmental campaigns that were so personal to him, but he also focused his architectural career on designing installations for museums. Much like his architecture, his museum work exhibits a distinct aesthetic that references a natural, tranquil, and serene environment, which is remarkably like those found in Eastern art.

The Brundage Collection, San Francisco

"This vast aesthetic feast

Must first have taken form

In some artistic vision ...”¹²⁶

In 1959, Avery Brundage, a wealthy Chicago industrialist, former Olympian and president of the International Olympic Committee, donated 5,000 works from his vast collection

¹²³ *Portland Art Association's President's Report, 1939*, Portland Art Museum Library Archives.

¹²⁴ John Yeon, "Introduction," *An Exhibition of Chinese Art held on the opening of the Solomon and Josephine Hirsch Memorial Wing*, (Sept. 15-Oct. 29, 1939), Portland Art Museum. From the John Yeon Folder, Portland Art Museum Archives, Portland, Oregon.

¹²⁵ John Yeon, "Introduction," *An Exhibition of Chinese Art held on the opening of the Solomon and Josephine Hirsch Memorial Wing*, (Sept. 15-Oct. 29, 1939), Portland Art Museum. From the John Yeon Folder, Portland Art Museum Archives, Portland, Oregon.

¹²⁶ Bertha Alling Benedict, *Fragments of Imperial Time*, poem dedicated to the Avery Brundage Collection of Oriental Art, Box AB 61, Miscellaneous Undated and Assorted Papers, Folder 9, Asian Art Museum of San Francisco Archives.

of Asian art to San Francisco on the stipulation that the city provide a museum to house the collection. Since the voters of San Francisco would ultimately decide whether the city would fund a museum, Brundage organized an exhibition to showcase the artworks. In 1960, Yeon designed and oversaw the earliest installation, with the help of his close friend Laurence Sickman (fig. 3.6).¹²⁷ Yeon's design for the 1960 Brundage collection exhibition communicated a minimal aesthetic, modern and inspired by Japanese design principles like subtlety, irregularity, and simplicity. Low painted platforms displayed a single screen, a vase or two, a box or a statue. The art works were given ample space. Avery Brundage appreciated Yeon's design work to such a great degree that he wrote, "Needless to say I was greatly impressed not only with the enthusiasm of the 4000 citizens of San Francisco who attended the preview of '100 objects from the Avery Brundage collection of Oriental Art,' but also by the attractive installation. ... This exhibition serves a good purpose in that it gives everyone an opportunity to study color schemes, lighting and the other details of the display which will be so important in the permanent exhibition provided the results on June 7th are favorable."¹²⁸ On June 7, 1960, San Franciscans passed the \$2,725,000 bond, which granted the collection a permanent home in San Francisco.

Brundage chose architect Gardner Dailey to design the addition to the museum and Yeon to design the installation of the collection. Brundage had asked Yeon in 1965 to design the installation because "the temporary exhibition which was so hurriedly assembled" by Yeon and

¹²⁷ "New Wing for Asian Art to Double De Young Museum Size," Press Release, p. 2, AB Box 51, AB Collection- Grand Opening of New Wing 1966 Clippings and Invitations-Chron, Folder 4, Asian Art Museum of San Francisco Archives.

¹²⁸ Letter from Avery Brundage to Col. Ian Macalpine, dated May 13, 1960, JY Museum Work, Watzek House Archives.

Sickman was "such a great success."¹²⁹ Brundage claimed that Yeon's "knowledge of and interest in Oriental art," combined with his "fine artistic sensitivity" would produce an attractive display for the Brundage collection.¹³⁰ Initially, Yeon did not want to take on the project because it did not allow enough preparatory and planning time for Yeon's high standards. Yet, Yeon expressed interest in the job by writing about how he would design the installation for Brundage's collection. Yeon wrote: "As it is, the flow of spaces through the galleries seems very successful and the bays and eddies have agreeable variety from intimate enclosures to lengthy vistas. The monumental entrance court may turn out to be very handsome but I am inclined to resent the space it usurps from the display of the collection. I doubt that it will ever be a good exhibition space." Yeon's communication with Brundage about the installation of the collection shows that the architect thought through his designs thoroughly. Moreover, Yeon showed that he composed space and that the flow of space was important to his composition. He felt "anxiety" that the objects be handled with the upmost respect and that the installation appear "as beautiful as possible." Mainly, Yeon wanted an aesthetic installation that would not trump the artworks. He wrote that the installation "itself be as invisible or as inconspicuous as possible."¹³¹ Within less than six months before the opening, Yeon agreed to design the installation for the Brundage Collection in the new wing.

¹²⁹ Letter from Avery Brundage to John Yeon, dated December 4, 1965, JY Museum Work, Watzek House Archives.

¹³⁰ Ibid, Letter from Avery Brundage to John Yeon.

¹³¹ Letter from John Yeon to Avery Brundage, dated December 29, 1965, JY Museum Work, Watzek House Archives.



Figure 3.6. *100 objects from the Avery Brundage collection of Oriental Art*, (1960), courtesy of the Asian Art Museum, San Francisco

The new wing at the M.H. de Young Memorial Museum in Golden Gate Park opened on June 10, 1966. At the dedication, Brundage declared, "In presenting this collection to San Francisco my hope is that, together with the facilities of the region's great universities, it will help San Francisco and the Bay Area become one of the world's greatest centers of Oriental culture."¹³² At the time of the opening, the collection consisted of mainly Chinese works, along

¹³² "Museum History," Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, accessed September 3, 2015, website: <http://www.asianart.org/about/history>

with 500 Japanese, 300 Korean, and the remainder from south-east Asia and India. A two-week symposium introduced leading scholars with a focus on Asian art to the Brundage collection at its new location in Golden Gate Park on August 28, 1966. Only one fifth of the enormous collection was on display at the opening. The museum planned to rotate the works in order to present the entire collection to the public within the first three years after opening.¹³³ However, before then, the San Francisco voters passed another bond issue, and the Brundage collection had separated from the de Young and became the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco in 1969.¹³⁴ Thus, Yeon's design at the M.H. de Young Memorial Museum lasted for only a few years.

In 1966, the new 100,000 square feet space addition to the de Young Museum had doubled the museum's size. The architecture of the addition matched the existing building. On one side of the addition, visitors could look out the windows to Golden Gate Park, and on the other side, they could glance through a 14 by 12 feet floor to ceiling window to view the Park's Japanese Tea Garden (fig. 3.7).¹³⁵ The visitors entered through the main door of the museum and turned left to enter the central court of the Brundage wing and its twenty-two surrounding galleries.¹³⁶ They found themselves in "a lofty, skylighted central court, graced by a black marble lotus leaf fountain," with two levels of galleries surrounding the court. Chinese works

¹³³ Michael Sullivan, "The Avery Brundage Collection in San Francisco," *The Burlington Magazine*, Apr., 1967, 197.

¹³⁴ Stephen Little, "René-Yvon Lefebvre d'Argencé," *Artibus Asiae*, 57, no. 3/4 (1997): 371.

¹³⁵ "New Wing for Asian Art to Double De Young Museum Size," Press Release, AB. In Box 51, AB Collection- Grand Opening of New Wing 1966 Clippings and Invitations-Chron, Folder 4, Asian Art Museum of San Francisco Archives.

¹³⁶ Alfred Frankenstein, "Oriental Art-the New Wing," *S.F. Sunday Examiner & Chronicle*, Art Section, Sunday, June 5, 1966. In Publicity Folder 14, Box AB 64, Asian Art Museum of San Francisco Archives.

were installed on the bottom floor, and the remaining works from Japan, Korea, Nepal, Tibet, Afghanistan, Thailand, Cambodia, Persia, and the ancient civilizations of the Annamese and Khmers were on the second level.¹³⁷



Figure 3.7. Brundage Collection, M.H. de Young Memorial Museum, view of Japanese Tea Garden, Golden Gate Park (1966), courtesy of the Asian Art Museum, San Francisco

Yeon's plan for the interior design was one of "oriental tranquility."¹³⁸ The space was open and free-flowing, void of doorways. Yeon composed a subtle palette of silvery atmospheric

¹³⁷ "Brundage Wing is Ready," *S.F. Examiner*, Friday, May 13, 1966. From Box AB 64, Publicity 1966, Folder 14, Asian Art Museum of San Francisco Archives.

¹³⁸ "New Wing for Asian Art to Double De Young Museum Size," Press Release, p. 2, AB Box 51, AB Collection- Grand Opening of New Wing 1966, Clippings and Invitations-Chron, Folder 4, Asian Art Museum of San Francisco Archives.

blue-green-celadon grays for the paint of the galleries in order to produce a gentle atmosphere and did not rely on overtly dramatic lighting for illuminating the works. The museum's architect, Gardner Dailey, had installed recessed lighting. Yeon did not spot light the works, except for the ones that needed strong light to bring out the subtleties. The lighting was diffused either by focusing it on the wall above the artworks, or by directing it towards the floor. Large works stood freely in the space and were sometimes framed by baffles or propped up by platforms. Smaller works were arranged in cases that were built into the walls or freestanding. Jack R. McGregor, director of the de Young museum designed the freestanding cases.¹³⁹ Other than the cases that McGregor designed, Yeon oversaw the display.

Yeon's installation for the Avery Brundage wing at the de Young was applauded by most of the press, mainly for its spaciousness and lighting (fig. 3.8). Alfred Frankenstein wrote for the *San Francisco Examiner & Chronicle*, "Clarity' is the foremost word that comes to mind when one attempts to describe this new wing ... John Yeon, who planned the installation, [has] obviously aimed above everything at providing each object with the maximum space and light. Nothing is crowded, nothing is cluttered; everything stands easily visible, either at close quarters or in grandly scaled surroundings."¹⁴⁰

Frankenstein continues to praise Yeon for the installation and the lighting. Frankenstein wrote, "The installation, with its infinitely varied and subtly adjusted lighting, is itself ample adornment for the building quit apart from the interest and value of the objects displayed." Joan

¹³⁹ Frankenstein, "Oriental Art- the New Wing"

¹⁴⁰ Frankenstein, "Oriental Art- the New Wing," *S.F. Sunday Examiner & Chronicle*, Art Section, Sunday, June 5, 1966. In Publicity Folder 14, Box AB 64, Asian Art Museum of San Francisco Archives.

White, society editor, wrote that the lighting "takes perfect care to put the art objects themselves into the caress of a light that is pure, clear, and never harsh." According to White, "Only a few objects have received some special artful elaboration of highlight and shadow, to bring out their visual character with unusual intensity" (fig. 3.9) White correctly pointed out that "scenic dramatization and decoration or period backgrounds have been avoided."¹⁴¹ Publicly, Avery Brundage praised Yeon's installation. At the opening on June 10, he proclaimed, "The results speak for themselves." "The museum is ideal in certain respects for a background to the collection ... and the arrangements only add to the beauty."¹⁴² White, seemed to understand what Yeon was attempting to do with the installation. She hinted at an Eastern aesthetic when she wrote that the inside of the wing, "with a bare, rigid hint of Japanese feeling--is simply in the extreme."¹⁴³

Similar to Japanese interior design, the galleries were open, tranquil, and serene. Yeon incorporated Eastern aesthetic principles into the design for the display of the collection. The traditional Japanese idea of interior design in regards to space was a mind-set that saw space as "open," not empty. For instance, before Western influence, Japanese rooms were empty and void of furniture. From a Buddhist perspective, "space is an entity with four dimensions;" therefore, for the Buddhist mind, space "does not need to be filled up to be functional or useful."¹⁴⁴ Yeon

¹⁴¹ Joan White, "Wonders of Orient Unveiled at Elegant Brundage Ball," *Women Today San Francisco Examiner*, June 12, 1966. From Box AB 64, Publicity 1966, Folder 14, Asian Art Museum of San Francisco Archives.

¹⁴² Kent Kay, "Cultural Bridge to Orient Brundage Wing Preview," June 11, 1966, from Box AB 64, Publicity 1966, Folder 14, Asian Art Museum of San Francisco Archives.

¹⁴³ Joan White, "Wonders of Orient Unveiled at Elegant Brundage Ball," from Box AB 64, Publicity 1966, Folder 14, Asian Art Museum of San Francisco Archives.

¹⁴⁴ Boye Lafayette De Mente, *Elements of Japanese Design*, (Tokyo: Tuttle, 2006), loc. 758, Kindle.

was inspired by these aesthetic principles and arranged the collection with ample space in between the artworks, so the installation did not appear cluttered, confusing, or overwhelming.



Figure 3.8. Brundage Collection, M.H. de Young Memorial Museum, view of installation by John Yeon (1966), courtesy of the Asian Art Museum, San Francisco



Figure 3.9. Brundage Collection, M.H. de Young Memorial Museum, cases designed by Jack R. McGregor, installation by John Yeon (1966), courtesy of the Asian Art Museum, San Francisco

Yeon also did not include didactic labels for the works. He chose to include minimal information to facilitate an aesthetic display, one in which the artworks could speak for themselves. Of course, this choice did not go without criticism. Guy Wright of the *Examiner* wrote, "You can spend a lot of time at the Brundage just wondering what the devil you're staring at, because there is often no label to tell you." The small cards that offered some identification (material, region, date) were not enough for Wright: "That sort of identification may suffice for artifacts about which there is considerable public knowledge. It isn't enough for a collection of Oriental art-- not in this country. Most of us Americans are woefully ignorant about the Orient, having obtained most of our information from Charlie Chan movies. But we know the Orient is

having a rebirth of importance.” Wright claimed, “We are willing to learn, and the Brundage collection could be a highly effective way to fire our curiosity and increase our knowledge. But the lack of effective labeling renders this invaluable sample of the East unnecessarily inscrutable.”¹⁴⁵ Yeon took an aesthetic approach to the installation, for he wanted “to highlight art objects themselves, and subdue distracting backgrounds.”¹⁴⁶ Labels would distract from the art and interfere with the overall design of the installation. Moreover, they would also contradict what Brundage wanted for the display of his collection. Brundage wrote: “It has always been my idea to have an artistic art and not an archaeological museum and I have confined my purchases to objects with at least some esthetic appeal. With this in mind I also have sought variety in shape, size, color and material. Cabinets in our house where pieces are displayed and even drawers in my Netsuke cabinets have always been arranged to make a picture in themselves.”¹⁴⁷ Not only did Yeon prefer an aesthetic display, but as he had mentioned in the letter, Avery Brundage did as well.

Yeon used baffles, partitions, and screens to “control the visitors’ viewing area.”¹⁴⁸ For the platforms that displayed the screens, Yeon was following the design tradition of *tokonoma* (床の間), a type of Japanese interior design. In a letter to Brundage about the design of the installation, he wrote, “This permits the sculpture to relate to these bays the way a painter does in *tokonama*, so that it is in good scale with the enframement even though only a minor incident in

¹⁴⁵ Guy Wright, “Oriental Art Needs ID’s,” *S.F. Examiner*, Dec. 8, 1966, Box AB 51, AB Collection Grand Opening of New Wing correspondence-chron. (congrats and ack.) Folder 5, Asian Art Museum of San Francisco Archives.

¹⁴⁶ “Brundage Wing is Read,” *S.F. Examiner*.

¹⁴⁷ Letter to John Yeon from Avery Brundage, dates July 1, 1966, John Yeon (correspondence with Avery Brundage), 1966, Nelson-Atkins Museum Archives.

¹⁴⁸ “Brundage Wing is Ready.”

relation to the room.”¹⁴⁹ The *tokonoma* was an alcove in traditional Japanese homes that was specifically designed to display art and intended to serve as the focal point of a room. Custom dictates that one displays a scroll, flower arrangement, or art object in this designated space. Although Yeon did not display scrolls on the platforms, he installed objects of art and vases, which was a nod to the custom of including a flower arrangement (fig. 3.10). More than likely, Yeon decided to display screens instead of scrolls because of the larger scale.

Clearly, Yeon was not interested in creating a period room, but rather, he was paying homage to the culture by referencing the traditional Japanese custom of display in the *tokonoma*. Eastern Asian architectural historian, Gunter Nitschke explains: "The toko-no-ma is at once a spatial and an aesthetic concept, and furthermore [has] an important social connotation in Japanese life. Classically it constitutes the unifying focus between host and guest, through an act of creation on the part of the host and an act of appreciation on the part of the guest.”¹⁵⁰ The *tokonoma*, which can be translated as "the place of honor," developed from the alters that displayed Shinto and Buddhist offerings.¹⁵¹ The *tokonoma* was recessed with a raised base, traditionally made of a smooth grain wood or lacquered. *Tokonoma* had been interpreted by American museums from as early as 1909, when the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston was giving "special distinction" to some of the objects by exhibiting them in a *tokonoma* that was

¹⁴⁹ Letter to Avery Brundage from John Yeon, dates July 12, 1966, John Yeon (correspondence with Avery Brundage), 1966, Nelson-Atkins Museum Archives.

¹⁵⁰ Gunter Nitschke, From KJ 8, "MA, Place, Space, Void," *Kyoto Journal*, (September 10, 1988), Accessed October 15, 2016, available online: http://www.kyotojournal.org/the-journal/culture-arts/ma-place-space-void/#_ftn1

¹⁵¹ Boye Lafayette De Mente, *Elements of Japanese Design*, (Tokyo: Tuttle, 2006), 102, loc. 1277, Kindle.

"suggestive" of Chinese or Japanese interior design.¹⁵²



Figure 3.10. John Yeon's version of the *tokonoma*, Brundage collection installation, (1966), courtesy of the Asian Art Museum, San Francisco

On July 1, 1966, Brundage wrote a letter to Yeon in which he questioned the installations at the new Asian galleries at the de Young. The collection had been installed, and Brundage wrote to express his disappointment in the display. He expressed to Yeon that the entrance was "austere, dismal, cold and incomplete." To fix that, Brundage thought that a monumental sculpture would help to fill the large space, but after searching, he could not find one. Brundage also adds that the works in the gallery were "too small and out of scale." He claimed, "The resulting impression is that of an unfinished, inadequate and incomplete area."¹⁵³ For Brundage, the display gave the impression that he did not have enough works in his collection, so he

¹⁵² Department of Chinese and Japanese Art, *Museum of Fine Arts Bulletin*, 7, no. 40/42, *The New Museum* (Dec., 1909): 56.

¹⁵³ Letter to John Yeon from Avery Brundage, dates July 1, 1966, John Yeon (correspondence with Avery Brundage), 1966, Nelson-Atkins Museum Archives.

asserted: “You have certainly tried and done as well as anyone with the objects at hand, but I am sure you are not happy with the result. I would much rather have nothing at all in this space.”¹⁵⁴ Avery Brundage suggested that the color scheme should be changed in the entrance hall. He also made some other suggestions like inserting more of the freestanding cases, or lining up more wall cases, or lining up Japanese screens along the wall in order to complete the space. Yeon held to his aesthetic principles in his reply to Brundage. His letter offers a glimpse into the architect's aesthetic choices and values, as well as his motivations. Yeon defends his design for the installation and explains the reasons for the choices that he made. He wrote, "I think this is the right way to use this room, i.e.: relating to the bays. To try to relate the room as a whole with Asian art would be very, very wrong. I am glad that the search for an Asian colossus failed. The attempt to find a big thing for a big space would have resulted in all manner of incongruities as the price of presumed proper fit.”¹⁵⁵ Although Yeon was not trying to create a period room, he wanted to be true to the traditional way that one would view these works in the East. For Yeon, a colossal work would never be seen in a large room; therefore, placing a large sculpture in the court would have been completely inappropriate. He continued his defense:

There is no architectural space vaguely like that of the court in all the traditional buildings of Asia. There are large sculptures in caves and temples, but they exist in an ambiance very different than that of the court. Large figures in temples are glimpsed through a forest of wood columns in dim light amidst the clutter of temple paraphernalia. To put such a large sculpture in the clean-cut daylighted court would be a mistaken attempt to match scale with scale while ignoring all other appropriate relationships. Cruelty to the object would result in such an alien exposure. The room would be a flop as a housing for some dominant object.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵⁵ Letter to John Yeon from Avery Brundage, dates July 1, 1966, John Yeon (correspondence with Avery Brundage), 1966, Nelson-Atkins Museum Archives

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

Regarding Brundage's suggestion of having nothing in the space, Yeon refused to even argue that point. He replied, "I simply cannot follow the argument that since the sculptures are too small and too few, they should therefore be removed entirely. This seems to me to be carrying the modern adage 'less is more' somewhat to extremes." Then Yeon addressed Brundage's idea of lining up Japanese screens along the wall to complete the space by asking, "Emptied of sculptures with screens mounted on the walls as Europeans would use tapestries or murals?" That was an absurd idea as far as Yeon was concerned. It would completely dishonor the works; moreover, it would negate their true purpose and value in Japanese culture. Yeon claimed, "I like Japanese screens. I can hardly imagine them displayed less sympathetically than as a series of flat murals around a two-story court." Traditional Japanese screens functioned as an architectural element. Not only did they showcase beautiful depicted scenes, but more practically, they divided rooms.

Concerning Brundage's suggestion that more freestanding cases, or wall cases be included in the court, Yeon did not agree. Instead, he saw the space as an architect would. He did not want to deny the architecture of the addition to the de Young, and thought that Brundage's suggestion would "seriously injure" the architecture. Yeon wrote, "Emptied and with cases built against the walls? I think the special cases on the balcony are an architectural improvement to an area unsuitable for other uses. I cannot visualize a similar advantage downstairs. Filling the space between the columns with cases would seriously injure the architecture for no good purpose."¹⁵⁷ Then Yeon defended his choice of color.

¹⁵⁷ Letter to John Yeon from Avery Brundage, dates July 1, 1966.

Color? There is danger here in destroying very special qualities of the court without substituting successful alternatives. The court depends to a degree not generally realized upon its almost monochrome coloring for its subtlety and serenity. It is luminous, airy, silvery space. The architecture, though retrained, is not particularly subtle in detail, but becomes so because of the lack of sharp contrast in colors. Injudicious introduction of color could make the court quickly crude and cheap. I tried to use the glazed Ming green and yellow dogs, which I like, in the court. The colors fought with the silvery scheme as though silver had been red. They drained more subtle colors from everything else within sight. On the other hand, when the two large sumi landscape paintings were hanging on the walls the court never looked better. They, and the colors of the court, fortified each other. Whether such paintings would be safe in that much light is another matter ... Grays and silver tones are as much a definite color scheme as reds and greens. Some people can see no colors on the inside of a seashell, only on the outside of a Christmas tree ball. I don't think you are one of these. The grisaille or sumi color sense of the court contributes importantly to its distinction, its gentility, and it would take no more than a coat of paint to turn it into a big commonplace room. If something festive or spectacular is wanted, that's the way to do it.¹⁵⁸

In the letter, Yeon shows that his aesthetic choices were inspired by the cultures in which the objects were created. His design for the Brundage installation was modern and original. In both the images and through the response to Brundage, one can see how Yeon was both aesthetically and stylistically aware of what the overall ambiance should be.

What is most remarkable about the Brundage installation is Yeon's use of empty space. In addition to the enormous collection that Yeon had at his disposal, Brundage was actively searching for large sculptures to add to the installation. Still, Yeon only showed one sixth of the collection and dismissed Brundage's idea of adding a large-scale work to the installation, claiming that it would be cruel to "match scale with scale." Yeon presented the collection uncluttered, in open space, and by doing so, he allowed an interval, or pause between the works of art. Indeed, this view of space is depicted in the Japanese concept of *Ma*.

Ma translates as "an interval in time and/or space" and "describes the partiality in

¹⁵⁸ Letter to John Yeon from Avery Brundage, dates July 1, 1966.

Japanese design for empty spaces, vagueness, abstraction, asymmetrical balance, and irregularity.”¹⁵⁹ Alen Fletcher captures this notion of space in *The Art of Looking Sideways*.

Fletcher writes:

Space is substance. Cézanne painted and modeled space. Giacometti sculpted by taking the fat off space. Mallarmé conceived poems with absences as well as words. Ralph Richardson asserted that acting lay in pauses... Isaac Stern described music as "that little bit between each note - silences which give the form"... The Japanese have a word (*ma*) for this interval which gives shape to the whole. In the West we have neither word nor term. A serious omission.¹⁶⁰

Indeed, space was substance for Yeon. Yeon's use of space along with soft light, plain walls, framed structures, horizontal planes, and an overall simplicity in design shows that Yeon referenced Japanese aesthetics in his design.¹⁶¹ Works of art were not crowded in the gallery space (fig. 3.11). Instead, they were only carefully placed against or near the wall or baffle, on a pedestal, or in a display case. Works of art only had to compete with a bench for resting, thus, allowing intervals of space (*ma*) between the works and allowing a visual and mental pause for the viewer. Moreover, Yeon used the space to create restricted viewing areas, also common in Japanese design. Yeon created subtle tranquil spaces without pretense. His spaces were modern while he relied on ancient design principles like the concept of *ma* or *tokonoma*.

¹⁵⁹ Patricia J. Grahm, *Japanese Design: Art, Aesthetics & Culture*, (Tokyo: Tuttle, 2016), Loc 633, Kindle.

¹⁶⁰ Alan Fletcher, *The Art of Looking Sideways*, (London: Phaidon, 2001), 370.

¹⁶¹ For more on Japanese influence on American architects see Myungkee Min, “Japanese/American Architecture: A Century of Cultural Exchange,” Dissertation, Chair Meredith L. Clausen, 1999, University of Washington.



Figure 3.11. Brundage Collection, M.H. de Young Memorial Museum, view of installation by John Yeon (1966), courtesy of the Asian Art Museum, San Francisco

Laurence Sickman and the Nelson Atkins Museum, Kansas City

As previously mentioned, Yeon was a close friend of Laurence Sickman, "one of the great pioneers and connoisseurs of Chinese art."¹⁶² Their correspondence about art, collecting, conservation, mutual friends and the museum world is documented at the Nelson-Atkins and the

¹⁶² Quote from Wai-Kam Ho, curator of Chinese art at the Nelson-Atkins Museum the director of the Nelson-Atkins Museum (tenure 1953-1977) in Douglas C. McGill, "Laurence Sickman, Scholar and Expert In the Art of China," *New York Times*, May 11, 1988, accessed 6-15-2015, available online at: <http://www.nytimes.com/1988/05/11/obituaries/laurence-sickman-scholar-and-expert-in-the-art-of-china.html>

Watzek House archives and dates back to World War II.¹⁶³ Sickman had attended Harvard and from there met Langdon Warner, the leading Asian art scholar in America who served as both professor at Harvard and curator for the Fogg Museum, was the director of the Philadelphia Museum of Art, and had helped the Nelson-Atkins purchase works while he was in Asia. Sickman had traveled to China on a Harvard-Yenching fellowship soon after his graduation in 1930, and began to assist Warner in 1931, acquiring works for the Nelson-Atkins Museum. In 1935, Sickman was named curator of Oriental art at the Nelson-Atkins, and in 1953 he became Director of the museum where he served until 1977. Sickman co-wrote one of the most comprehensive surveys on Asian art, *The Art and Architecture of China*,¹⁶⁴ and indeed, he is regarded as one of the greatest Chinese scholars. Based on a mutual respect and similar interests, his friendship with Yeon dated back before World War II. Sickman had provided not only insight into art and connoisseurship, but granted Yeon opportunities for museum design.

After working with Yeon on the exhibition for the Brundage Collection in 1960, and later in 1966, Sickman had hired Yeon to design the Chinese Decorative Arts Gallery for the Nelson-Atkins Museum in Kansas City. In 1973, Yeon signed a contract to complete the unfinished interior of the museum's Frank G. Crowell Wing. Previously, Keene, Simpson & Murphy had been hired to design the second floor of the west wing of the Nelson-Atkins, but Sherwood Songer, Superintendent, had concluded that "very little [had] been provided by the architect for

¹⁶³ Richard Louis Brown is currently writing an essay that discusses John Yeon's art collection. This essay will be presented and published for an upcoming John Yeon symposium (2017) at the Portland Art Museum.

¹⁶⁴ Laurence Sickman and Alexander Soper, *The Art and Architecture of China*, (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1956).

the 1/3 payment.”¹⁶⁵ The drawings that Keene, Simpson & Murphy had provided were "sketchy," so within six months, the Nelson-Atkins offered the job to Yeon.¹⁶⁶ Officially, Yeon was named Project Manager for the installation of the galleries. Since Yeon did not hold an architectural license, he hired prominent Portland architect John Hinchliff to sign the drawings.¹⁶⁷ Stewart Hutchinson,¹⁶⁸ an architect from Kansas City, was the resident architect who would oversee construction and work as a liaison for Yeon while he was in Portland.¹⁶⁹ The unfinished interior space was divided into two levels of galleries and consisted of the Chinese Painting Gallery, the Japanese galleries and the Impressionist galleries. Yeon's design for the Asian galleries at the Nelson-Atkins show the architect's "Japanese-like sensibility." This "Japanese-like sensibility" has been discussed in regards to his architecture, but also translates to the designs he created for museum installations. Yeon's work was personal, far apart from what had characterized the International Style. As Kevin Nute explained, "Yeon seems to have used only what made sense in the context of his personal architectural vocabulary, and in so doing

¹⁶⁵ Memo from Sherwood Songer, Superintendent, to Mr. Sickman, Mr. McGreevy, Mr. Blackwell, Mr. Sutherland, and Mr. Donnellan, dated July 20, 1972, JY Museum Work, Watzek House Archives.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.

¹⁶⁷ Born in England (1915), Hinchliff had worked with Marcel Breuer, Pietro Beluschi, and Walter Gordon, accessed April 23, 016, ee footnote 5:
<http://focus.nps.gov/pdfhost/docs/NRHP/Text/05001539.pdf>

¹⁶⁸ Hutchinson designed residences, schools, commercial buildings and churches. He was the Architect of Record on award-winning projects, including the University of Missouri at Columbia's School of Law; the Roaring River State Park Lodge, in Cassville; and the Westport Square Marketplace in Kansas City. Open light was an important aspect of design for Hutchinson. See more at:
<http://www.legacy.com/obituaries/kansascity/obituary.aspx?pid=176892004#sthash.pUUM4TDa.dpuf>

¹⁶⁹ Letter from John Yeon to Milton McGreevy, dated October 26, 1972, JY Museum Work Box, Watzek House Archives.

effectively made these characteristics his own.”¹⁷⁰

Chinese Decorative Arts Gallery (1966)

Laurence Sickman viewed the display of Chinese decorative arts with the original context in mind. Therefore, he sought to display "works of art along with furniture and decorative pieces.”¹⁷¹ Sickman is regarded as one of America’s foremost Chinese scholars. An anonymous donor had provided the funds to the Nelson-Atkins for a room to house Chinese furniture and decorative arts, and Sickman chose Yeon to design the new gallery. The Chinese Decorative Arts Gallery opened on November 17, 1966. With the new space, Sickman wrote, "the most sumptuous pieces of Chinese furniture in the collection can be shown for the first time combined, as they should be, with the appropriate arts.”¹⁷²

The arrangement of the gallery was based on late 17th/early 18th century illustrations from *Chin P'ing Mei*, a renowned Chinese novel about private life in an exquisite house from the Ming Dynasty. The Chinese interior consisted of two parts: the public and the private rooms. The public rooms were formal, and the arrangement was symmetrical. Therefore, chairs and stools were arranged in pairs. Also, the furniture was arranged according to a "fixed social order.” For instance, a formal couch, called the *k'ang*, "the piece of furniture with the highest social status," was placed at the highest spot, "at the center of the north wall, farthest from the door, and facing

¹⁷⁰ Kevin Nute, *The Mirror and the frame: John Yeon and the landscape art of China and Japan* (Eugene: School of Architecture and Allied Arts University of Oregon, 2010), 25.

¹⁷¹ “Laurence Chalfant Stevens Sickman (1907-1988),” *The Monuments Men*, Monuments Men Foundation for the Preservation of Art website, accessed 10-25-2015, available online at: <http://www.monumentsmenfoundation.org/intl/it/the-heroes/the-monuments-men/sickman-maj.-laurence>

¹⁷² Laurence Sickman, *Chinese Domestic Furniture Brochure*, Nelson-Atkins: Chinese Furniture Gallery Brochure folder, JY Museum Work Box, Watzek House Archives.

south.” Tradition dictates that the host received the most esteemed guest at the *k'ang*.¹⁷³ From the *k'ang*, in a declining order, the armchairs were placed, then the armless chairs, and finally, furthest away from the *k'ang* and closest to the door, the stools were placed "for the humbler guests or relatives of minor status."¹⁷⁴ Unlike the public rooms, the private rooms were more informally arranged. The brochure for the opening of the Chinese Decorative Arts Gallery included a front piece that illustrated an informal furniture arrangement for a woman's bedroom that was taken from the *Chin P'ing Mei* (fig. 3.12).

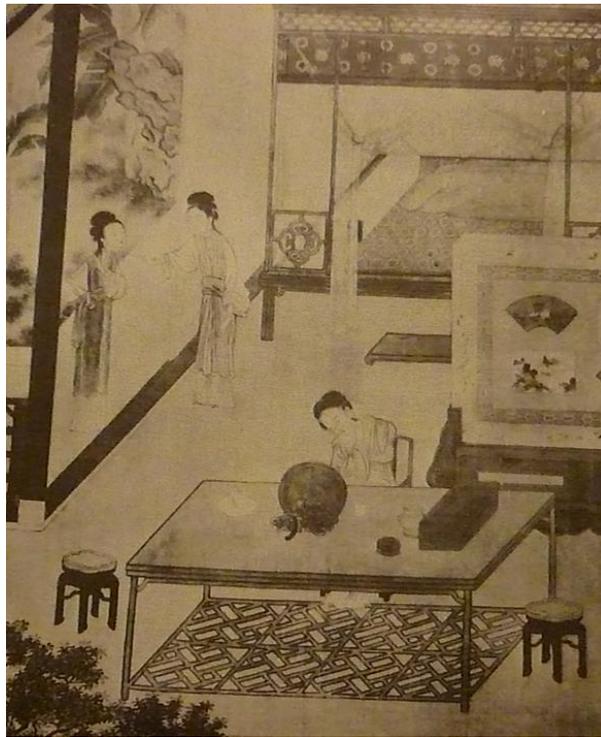


Figure 3.12. illustration of the informal furniture arrangement from the *Chin P'ing Mei* that was published in the opening brochure for the Chinese Decorative Arts Gallery, courtesy of Mr. Richard Louis Brown, Watzek House Archives

¹⁷³ Ibid.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid.



Figure 3.13. Chinese Decorative Arts Gallery, original installation, view of the informal bedroom in the background, *Canopy Bed with Alcove*, Chinese, 16th century. Huanghuali wood with 19th century painted soft wood base and canopy, silk gauze curtains and silver hooks, 91 x 86 1/4 x 84 1/4 inches, courtesy of Mr. Richard Louis Brown, Watzek House Archives

The Lighting

In the past, Chinese decorative arts at the Nelson-Atkins Museum were not displayed in a luminous all white room. Yeon created a luxurious white cube with bright lustrous light because, according to him, the objects in the old gallery would "get absorbed into the background without spotlighting."¹⁷⁵ Yeon's observations of his basement inspired the design of the Chinese Decorative Arts Gallery. At the beginning of the design process, Yeon wrote to Sickman about the white background in his basement where furniture and fabrics looked good and photographed well against the background. He explained:

The real trick of the all white room is that shadows are minimized and all things appear as in limbo--or in a fog and snow storm--out of context with environment. Chinese furniture holds up very well in a shadowless light when against white. There is dramatic contrast of dark against light--and being waxed, the molding reflects lightbulbs without need of sharp shadows necessary to bring and relief in subtle surfaces.¹⁷⁶

¹⁷⁵ Letter from John Yeon to Laurence Sickman, dated Feb. 1, 1965, John Yeon (1960-69) folder, Laurence Sickman Papers, Box 2C

¹⁷⁶ Ibid.

What is striking about Yeon's observation about an entirely white room is that it precedes Brian O'Doherty's *Inside the White Cube* by over ten years. In 1976, O'Doherty famously wrote about how the white cube made works of art appear as in limbo:

Unshadowed, white, clean, artificial- the space is devoted to the technology of esthetics. Works of art are mounted, hung, scattered for study. Their ungrubby surfaces are untouched by time and its vicissitudes. Art exists in a kind of eternity of display ...there is no time. The eternity gives the gallery limbolike status; one has to have died already to be there.¹⁷⁷

Yeon certainly was not the first person to design an entirely white space for showing artworks, but his design for the Chinese Decorative Arts Gallery at the Nelson-Atkins Museum shows how the architect was in tune with the aesthetics and style of the period.

The problem for Yeon was "enough light must flood the rooms and illuminate all the objects by dancing around--off floors and walls," but he was afraid of "too much light." Yeon considered the optical effects of lighting on the viewers when they transitioned from the neighboring galleries. He certainly did not want to produce a dark, "stygian" effect for the other galleries, neither did he want a "blinding" one for the Chinese Decorative Arts Gallery. Yeon thought about using wall washers, which are often used in lighting design to illuminate large surfaces, and he mentioned the lighting in his basement.¹⁷⁸

Yeon looked to the new Decorative Arts Gallery in Chicago for inspiration. There, washers were used alone and "the ceiling were low." Yeon writes, "Elsewhere, the new lighting seemed to consist of a grid ceiling which would accommodate intensely bright panels 2 feet

¹⁷⁷ Brian O'Doherty, *Inside the White Cube*, (Santa Monica: Lapis Press, 1976), 15.

¹⁷⁸ Letter from John Yeon to Laurence Sickman, dated Feb. 1, 1965, John Yeon (1960-69) folder, Laurence Sickman Papers, Box 2C.

square, or panels with incandescent spots or floods directed at specific targets.”¹⁷⁹ For the Chinese Decorative Arts Gallery at the Nelson-Atkins, he suggested "strips of illuminated panels (such as are in my basement) for general illumination" with flood lights, spotlights, or blank spaces in between them (fig. 3.13). The ceiling grid is a common motif in Chinese interior design. Yeon had also thought about painting the ceiling of the gallery a color, like yellow, blue, or pistachio green.¹⁸⁰ Yeon was not sure exactly what color the ceiling should be at the moment he wrote the letter. He kept going back and referring to his basement, writing, "I like the all white room in my basement because it abstracts the background to the ultimate ... no top or bottom, like being in a snowstorm.”¹⁸¹

Yeon discovered that fluorescent lights could be controlled by rheostats, meaning the voltage and current could be controlled without breaking the flow of the current. He had also found out that there was a new material that he could use for the illuminated ceiling in the gallery. There was a clear plastic material, which Yeon believed "works like studded glass." This material would be easier to handle, and it would cut out the infrared. The lights could be relamped from below, which per Yeon, "permits a solid ceiling about 24 or 30 inches above the suspended ceiling (the visible one) containing the plastic panels and spotlights.”¹⁸²

Yeon's design for the Chinese Decorative Arts Gallery emphasized the line and form of the furniture by providing a striking contrast with the space. White paint, white floors, and bright light provided a backdrop for contrast and emphasis of the works on display. The placement of

¹⁷⁹ Ibid.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid.

¹⁸¹ Ibid.

¹⁸² Letter from John Yeon to Laurence Sickman, John Yeon (1960-69) folder, Laurence Sickman Papers, Box 2C, Nelson-Atkins Museum Archives.

the furniture was balanced within the two adjoined rooms, and the placement, together with the forms and the lines of the furniture worked to create balance and unity within the space. Again, Yeon gave a nod to tradition without trying to replicate an historical display by the arrangement of the furniture, and secondly, the grid pattern for the lights.

The Chinese Painting Gallery (1973)

Visitors walk through a dark mahogany door way and are greeted with a matching dark mahogany version of the *tokonoma* when they enter The Chinese Painting Gallery at the Nelson-Atkins Museum. The room is warm and darker than most of Yeon's spaces, proving that each of his designed spaces is unique and individual. A large, commanding, vertical mahogany cabinet made from three separate cabinets overlain and extended beyond one another, with a viewing area on each side of the cabinet takes up the middle of the gallery space. This cabinet creates a circular traffic flow around its perimeter and the staggered position created three individual viewing bays on each side (fig. 3.14). Long, horizontal mahogany scroll cases align the walls and surround the vertical cabinet. Dark-stained highly glossed floors blend into the shadow created from the diffused track lights, hidden from above behind a scrim. Ample light, white walls and dark wood create an elegant atmosphere for viewing Chinese horizontal screens and vertical scrolls.

The scroll cases for the Chinese Painting Gallery were made from Philippine mahogany in Portland, Oregon by Specialty Woodworking, as specified by Yeon, so he could oversee the mill-work. All the wiring, lighting, and glass were installed later, and a dark walnut stain was also applied after the mill-work had been completed and the cases had reached Kansas City.¹⁸³

¹⁸³ Letter from Laurence Sickman to John Yeon, dated April 10, 1973, JY Museum

Yeon chose to have the cases finished at the museum in Kansas City because he wanted to prevent the finish from being damaged during handling and transportation.¹⁸⁴

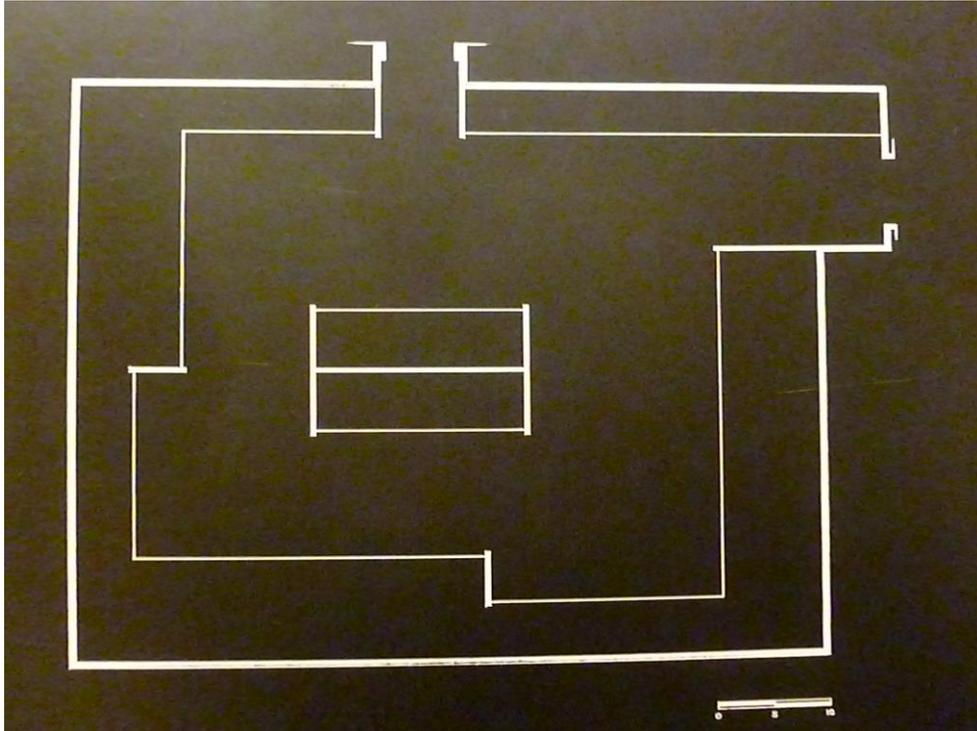


Figure 3.14. Plan of the Chinese Painting Gallery space, courtesy of Mr. Louis Brown, Watzek House Archives

Scroll Cases and Lighting

Yeon was concerned about installing and presenting the album leaves because the glass cases reflected the light. Moreover, the horizontal cases did not allow for a simultaneous display of horizontal screens and album leaves. The album leaves were taken from albums that were customarily twelve pages. The pages were usually folded, and the albums were typically wooden

Work, Watzek House Archives.

¹⁸⁴ Letter from John Yeon to “Larry” Laurence Sickman, dated October 9, 1973, JY Museum Work Box, Watzek House Archives.

or brocade. Albums are much smaller than scrolls, around 120 square cm, and they include calligraphy and painting. Usually, the calligraphy and paintings correspond to one another. For instance, a calligraphic poem would appear on one page and a painting about the poem would appear on the next page. The paintings could be done by either a single or multiple artists, who might have joined their works together in the album to give to a friend for a special event or occasion.¹⁸⁵

Yeon had wanted to honor the intimate quality of viewing album leaves. To begin, Yeon had wanted to install the album leaves on the south wall of the Chinese Painting Gallery because the east and west walls faced "reflection danger." He wrote:

The south wall faces the end of the center cases which are wood and so will not reflect an illuminating wall. The space for hanging-scrolls is the north wall which must be illuminated too. This too faces the ends of the cabinets and so will not reflect. The reflection danger is from the east and west walls. The horizontal scroll cases on these walls pose some threat of reflection but not nearly as much as would illuminate walls and painting from above.¹⁸⁶

Yeon thought that lining the cases with a dark material and obscuring the lighting would help eliminate the reflection although they would not stop the reflection from the album leaves and the walls.¹⁸⁷ He also thought that illuminating every wall would make the floors show more. In the beginning of the design process, Yeon "gave up on the floor" because of the expense. He had originally figured that the lighting would not make the floors show, but once the museum wanted

¹⁸⁵ "Mountings: hanging scrolls, handscrolls, fans and the album leaf," Kahn Academy and The British Museum, accessed 10-30-2016, website. Available online at: <https://www.khanacademy.org/partner-content/british-museum/Asia1/british-museum-china/a/mountings-hanging-scrolls-handscrolls-fans-and-the-album-leaf>

¹⁸⁶ Letter from John Yeon to "Larry" (Laurence) Sickman, Labor day, JY Museum Work Box, Watzek House Archive.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid.

to illuminate the walls to show the album leaves, he worried that "the least attractive" floor in the museum would stand out.¹⁸⁸

Next, Yeon's main reason for not wanting to hang the album leaves throughout the entire gallery was because that mode of presentation went against the nature of how one looks at the album. In China, album leaves are "more intimate than the hanging scroll or handscroll formats."¹⁸⁹ Therefore, the mode of display for album leaves should echo this intimacy, or at least, their display should not conflict with scrolls (fig. 3.15). Scrolls were meant to be unrolled as one looked at its contents. In context, the Chinese would not look at the entire scroll at once. "Nothing could be more detrimental to the intended narrative process of viewing than a full simultaneous display of the scroll as a whole."¹⁹⁰ However, all works on display were taken out of context, and Yeon was working on facilitating the best way to look at these works within the galleries at the Nelson-Atkins.

Yeon pointed out, "The main reason is the proximity of two types of paintings made for very different viewing processes, and different in scale, subject and mood."¹⁹¹ Yeon felt passionately about this. He wrote:

The viewer of a good horizontal scroll should be able to move along without interruption or distraction through the unfolded painting when, perforce, the painting itself cannot unfold before the stationary viewer. This uninterrupted absorption during the time of viewing is an essential condition for the enjoyment of scroll painting. A Chinese scholar would not look at an album leaf every time he unfolded a new section of scroll even if this were easy to do, with a servant changing the album leaves.¹⁹²

¹⁸⁸ Ibid.

¹⁸⁹ "Mountings: hanging scrolls, handscrolls, fans and the album leaf," Kahn Academy and The British Museum, website.

¹⁹⁰ Gunter Nitschke, From KJ 8, "MA, Place, Space, Void."

¹⁹¹ Letter from John Yeon to "Larry" (Laurence) Sickman, Labor day, JY Museum Work Box, Watzek House Archive.

¹⁹² Letter from John Yeon to "Larry" (Laurence) Sickman, Labor Day, JY Museum

Yeon felt so passionately about not showing album leaves above the horizontal cases for the handscrolls that he claimed he "would have designed the gallery so that it would be impossible."¹⁹³ He did his best to emphasize his discontent with the thought of displaying the album leaves. Yeon wrote, "When a painting was first tried out in the scroll case mock-up, I thought it looked great. It was alone in space, creating without interference its own unique enchanted world. But when an album leaf was tried out over it, the spell was broken."¹⁹⁴ Yeon explained that it "was not a case of less is more as far as architecture is concerned," rather, for Yeon, "it is a case of less is more as far as the paintings are concerned."¹⁹⁵

Yeon was pleased with the scroll cases when he saw them. "The plastic over the lights should be faceted to diffuse the lights more, like the plastic in fluorescent fixtures."¹⁹⁶ The lights produced a shadow above the cases, which Yeon did not mind if the shadows were uniform around the entire room. He had wished, however, that the lights were bright enough "to illuminate the album leaves."¹⁹⁷ Yeon wrote, "Album leaves should only go in groups, as in the past, and be illuminated where they exist." "It's too bad there has to be anything above the scroll cases for one should move along concentrating on the scroll, not having to look up and down, different painter, different scale, but then I suppose there would not be room enough for the album leaves elsewhere."¹⁹⁸ "Certainly there shouldn't be vertical scrolls over the scroll cases.

Work Box, Watzek House Archive.

¹⁹³ Ibid.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁹⁶ Letter from John Yeon to Laurence Sickman, John Yeon (1960-69) folder, Laurence Sickman Papers, Box 2C.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid.

They would be too high to see properly, and the gallery would begin to look like a department store during a white sale.”¹⁹⁹ Clearly, Yeon was both aesthetically and stylistically aware of what he was designing.



Figure 3.15. Album leaves installed above horizontal scroll cases, original installation of the Chinese Painting Gallery at the Nelson-Atkins Museum in Kansas City, image courtesy of Mr. Richard Louis Brown, Watzek House Archives

Chinese Sculpture Gallery

Yeon worked out much of his designs through communicating with museum personnel. Marc Wilson, Yale educated and former project coordinator at the National Palace Museum in Taipei, Taiwan, was named curator of Oriental Art in 1973. He curated the Archaeological Finds

¹⁹⁹ Ibid.

of the People's Republic of China blockbuster exhibition in 1975. Wilson was not an architect. Yeon's writing about his frustration with Wilson when designing the permanent installation at the Nelson-Atkins grants insights into the way an architect deals with installation design. Contrasting Yeon's approach to Wilson's ideas towards the installation further explains the differences. However, Yeon had specified in the contract that he address the museum trustees directly when he had a conflict with the director and/or curator. In a letter addressed to Herman Sutherland, Yeon discusses the potential reinstatement of the Chinese Sculpture Gallery. In the letter, he directly addressed the difference between his style of installations and those of the blockbuster exhibition. He wrote:

I suspect Marc's confidence largely derives from his partial involvement in the design of the Treasures of China show, which was handsome indeed. This was in the a la mode formula of blockbuster temporary exhibitions. The costly formula succeeds because the objects are smashing, highly publicized, elaborately guarded and mobbed by lucrative attendance. This style must be what Marc means by a one-to-one approach, one or a few things revealed at a time through direction controlled viewing, dramatically lit in a dark void.²⁰⁰

Yeon assesses that the blockbuster style must be what Wilson sees as a "one-to-one approach, one or a few things revealed at a time through direction controlled viewing, dramatically lit in a dark void." Yeon wrote that although these spaces might be effective, the formula was too space consuming for permanent installations; furthermore, it would cause security problems, interrupt docent and school tours, and necessitate alterations to the heating and cooling ducts. Most importantly, it would entail "total modification of the architecture in the space it occupies." The second part of the letter demands full attention because it sheds light on

²⁰⁰ Letter addressed to Herman Sutherland from John Yeon, dated June 28, 1979, John Yeon Museum Work, Watzek House Archives, Portland, Oregon.

the differences between architects and museum designers, and how they view the museum space.

The present space is one of the more monumental interiors in the Gallery. Color, lighting and mountings are all unfortunate now but could be changed without obliterating the monumental interior. Floor and ventilation work could be retained unchanged. The contrast between the height of this gallery and the adjacent Japanese screen gallery is mutually enhancing from either direction. The symmetry of the sculpture gallery in contrast to the asymmetry of the screen gallery is also mutually mutually enhancing. It is indicative of one of the distinctive differences in the two cultures displayed; asymmetry is pervasive in Japan, symmetry in China. In short, I think that the present gallery has sufficient potential to be recycled rather than replaced, and at a very considerable saving in cost.²⁰¹

Indeed, Yeon wanted to maintain total creative control. Partly because "pre-Marc, no concept or recommendation was challenged, nor any solution prescribed. There was a back-and-forth discussion most of the way. But in the Chinese painting gallery there was serious interference from Marc, who wanted to design the horizontal cases; his several models didn't work. ... he seems to be a frustrated architect."²⁰² Yeon was baffled as to why Marc Wilson would have wanted to alter the building, so he discusses this in the letter to the trustees by differentiating architects from curators:

architecture is a considerable stretch of curatorial responsibility and I don't think the span is favored in most museums. Nor has it been in the Nelson Gallery in the past. The remodeling of the large gallery is an architectural problem even if the retention of the existing form is part of the solution. The deployment of sculptures in space, and the design of baffles, mounting, cases and lighting all require architectural organization.²⁰³

Yeon articulates the main difference between architect museum designers and non-architect museum designers. Architects understand architectural organization. Herman Sutherland,

²⁰¹ Letter from John Yeon to Herman Sutherland, dated June 28, 1979, JY Museum Work II, Watzek House Archives.

²⁰² Ibid.

²⁰³ Letter from John Yeon to Herman Sutherland, dated June 28, 1979, JY Museum Work II, Watzek House Archives.

museum trustee, responded to Yeon's concern, writing, "It is my personal opinion that we should not so materially alter our museum without competent, professional guidance. This becomes increasingly important to me as I have the opportunities to compare what you have done for us with other major museums' recent alterations. We have no room for experimentation or naive amateurism."²⁰⁴

The Amida Buddha Stair Hall (1976)

The *Amida Buddha* is the symbol of light, or oneness, for Shin Buddhism. Langdon Warner had helped the Nelson-Atkins Museum build their collection while he was in Asia. Langdon Warner was an expert in Japanese art and found the large Buddha in Nara. Originally, the *Amida Buddha* from the Muromachi Period (1392-1568) was housed in a temple "without much money," so although it seems to be made of bronze, it is, instead, a three-section wooden work painted gold and black (fig. 3.16). After the *Amida Buddha* was displayed during the opening of the Nelson-Atkins in 1933, it went into storage and "was seldom exhibited because of its 9-foot height." One of the original objectives of the new wing was the installation for the *Amida Buddha*, so in 1976, John Yeon designed a permanent space for the monumental sculpture on a landing just outside the Japanese gallery.²⁰⁵ Yeon designed a skylight stairway with patterned travertine floors and a molded, paneled backdrop wall specifically for the positioning of the Buddha.²⁰⁶ Yeon aimed for an aesthetic display, certainly not a contextual

²⁰⁴ Letter from H. Sutherland to John Yeon, dated July 25, 1979, JY Museum Work Box, Watzek House Archives.

²⁰⁵ Lee Pentecost, *Making a Masterpiece: 75 Years of the Nelson-Atkins Museum*, Nelson-Atkins Museum website, accessed 9/9/2015, available online: <http://volunteer.nelson-atkins.org/documents/MusGuide/Research%20-%2075th%20Anniversary%20by%20Lee%20Pentecost.pdf>

²⁰⁶ Letter from John Yeon to Laurence Sickman, dated October, 25, Box: JY Museum

one. He wanted to present the Buddha as an "independent work of art" because according to him, "the Buddha is beautiful as sculpture quite apart from any icono-graphic significance."²⁰⁷ Since the work was taken out of context and exhibited in a museum in the United States, with "nothing remotely reminiscent of a temple or Joss house," Yeon wanted to show it with "sympathetic respect."²⁰⁸ He considered the original context and adapted it into a simple, modern space.

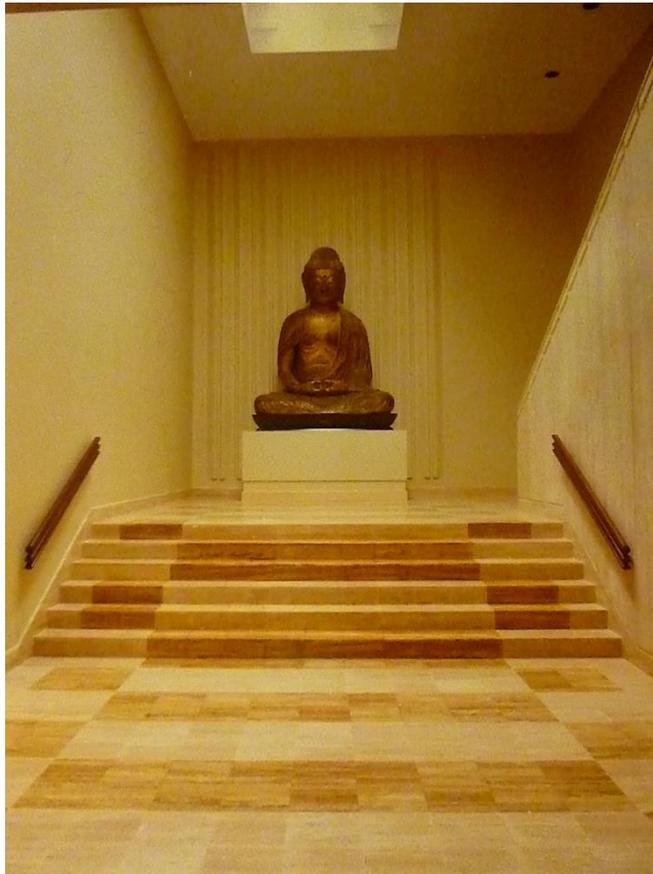


Figure 3.16. *Amitabha Buddha*, Amida Nyorai (Amitabha Buddha), from the Muromachi Period (1392-1568) East Asian Art, Lacquered and gilded wood, 110 x 84 x 58 inches (279.4 x 213.36 x 147.32 cm), Purchase: William Rockhill Nelson Trust, Gallery Location: Buddha Stairhall (S21), image courtesy of Mr. Richard Louis Brown, Watzek House Archives

Work, Watzek House Archives, Portland Oregon.

²⁰⁷ Letter from John Yeon to Laurence Sickman, Box: JY Museum Work, Watzek House Archives, Portland Oregon.

²⁰⁸ Ibid.

The Base of the Buddha

Yeon had agonized over the design for the base of the *Amida Buddha*. He wrote to Sickman, "The exploration was more difficult than I expected."²⁰⁹ Since the base for the Buddha needed to be large, Yeon wanted to create a base that would not stand out visually. He wanted the Buddha as the focal point, and the problem for him was "to provide visually ample support without appearing to be a big object in itself in the stairhall."²¹⁰ First, Yeon proposed that the color of the base should be light to match the walls. Yeon did not want the wood of the base to compete with the rosewood that was in the stairhall, so he suggested a stained white oak, vinyl, or painted base. Although a rich material, the wood in the Japanese gallery that he had designed was too dark for the base and would also compete with the rosewood. He wrote: "With a light wall-related color for the base, its bulky presence would be minimized. This might tend to make the Buddha appear to float (not really) but I don't think this is bad."²¹¹ Yeon had written an essay that discussed the aesthetic preference of his time as one united by "the inflamed hatred of gravity." Yeon believed that some of the best modern designs seemed like "some magic act of levitation."²¹² Hence, Yeon used paint to trick the viewer into perceiving the weight of the Buddha was lifted, creating the effect of a floating Buddha (figs. 3.16-3.17).

Yeon carefully thought about the placement of the base for both visual and maintenance reasons. In the design proposal, he explained the placement: "The big block would be scribed to

²⁰⁹ Letter from John Yeon to Laurence Sickman, dated October 12, 1975, Box: JY Museum Work, Watzek House Archives, Portland Oregon.

²¹⁰ Ibid.

²¹¹ Ibid.

²¹² John Yeon, typed essay on design throughout the ages, p. 24, JY Museum Work, Watzek House Archives.

the panelling of the wall so dirt wouldn't collect on the floor behind it. A long handled duster could be used to clean the surface of the deck behind the Buddha, I still think the figure should not be smack against the wall panelling, not only for maintenance reasons, but for visual ones too.”²¹³ The sides had a further projection than the front of the base. Yeon thought that projection in the front was not "essential" because it would conserve floor space and appear less bulky. He wrote:

Aligning with the panelling at the sides is important. But the amount of projection is not essential along the front. A lesser amount reduces bulk and conserves floor space in front. The base is drawn 4'-3" high. I don't know the height of the old base; wish I did. But the problem is somewhat different than formerly because from below the steps the figure will be viewed higher than before, quite a bit higher. Also, the base will be viewed at eye level from below the steps, making its bulk and profile more conspicuous than before. The Buddha is drawn accordingly to the dimensions on the back of the photo I have. This makes the height in relation to width greater than in the photo. Obviously I have no side view of the figure. Perspective and foreshortening will naturally alter the relationships shown flat in the drawing. The cut-out figure for scale is 5' 10" tall. The base around the base is travertine as in the stairhall.²¹⁴

In addition to the light-colored base, Yeon had designed a separate darker portion of the base, like a modern abstraction of a meditation cushion (figs. 3.17). Yeon explained, "I reluctantly came to the molded profile for the member directly under the Buddha since I try to avoid traditional shapes, or shapes which become part of the design of the object. But this is such a distant echo of a lotus blossom ... and it does add to the effect of levitation, and reduces the height of the block below."²¹⁵ Yeon specified how he wanted this done, writing that it "should be dark enamel, not black but brownish black, like old lacquer."²¹⁶ He envisioned "close variations

²¹³ Letter from John Yeon to Laurence Sickman, dated October 12, 1975, Box: JY Museum Work, Watzek House Archives, Portland Oregon.

²¹⁴ Ibid.

²¹⁵ Ibid.

²¹⁶ Ibid.

of this dark color mottled over the surface before it is pumiced. Not to look fake antique, but to look less harsh.”²¹⁷

On October 28, 1975, Laurence Sickman advocated for a traditional base for the *Amida Buddha*, responding that he had preferred tradition "in the installation of exotic objects.” Sickman had suggested "a kind of cushion, reminiscent of a lotus" for the base. Traditionally, the base underneath the "cushion" would have to be round or octagonal. Another type of pedestal that he had recommended was "an abstraction of the Buddha seat on Mt. Meru." The Yakushigi was believed to serve as a "classic example" of this type. It had a "broad platform, supported by a reduced cube which in turn rests on the base equal in size to the platform.” For Sickman, the base would still convey a "sense of lightness." According to the letter, the platform that supported the Buddha, should be 9 feet wide. That way, "with approximately a foot on either side of the knees" of the Buddha, the base "would pick up the interval between the tan marble slabs on the staircases and landing.” Sickman agreed with Yeon's idea for a painted wooden base, for it would be less expensive and easier to clean. The budget for the installation was minimal because most of the money had been spent on construction, so Sickman suggested that the pedestals for the Chinese show be recycled and that Yeon have the installation material constructed in house at the museum.²¹⁸ He included an image of another Buddha for Yeon to consider (fig. 3.18)

²¹⁷ Ibid.

²¹⁸ Letter from Laurence Sickman to John Yeon, dated 10/28/1975, Box: JY Museum Work, Watzek House Archives, Portland, Oregon. Also, a copy of this letter is in the Laurence Sickman Papers, Box 2C, The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art Archives.



Figure 3.17. Close-up of the separate, darker portion of the base where the base and the Buddha meet the paneled wall, 2014, photo credit: Melinda McVay

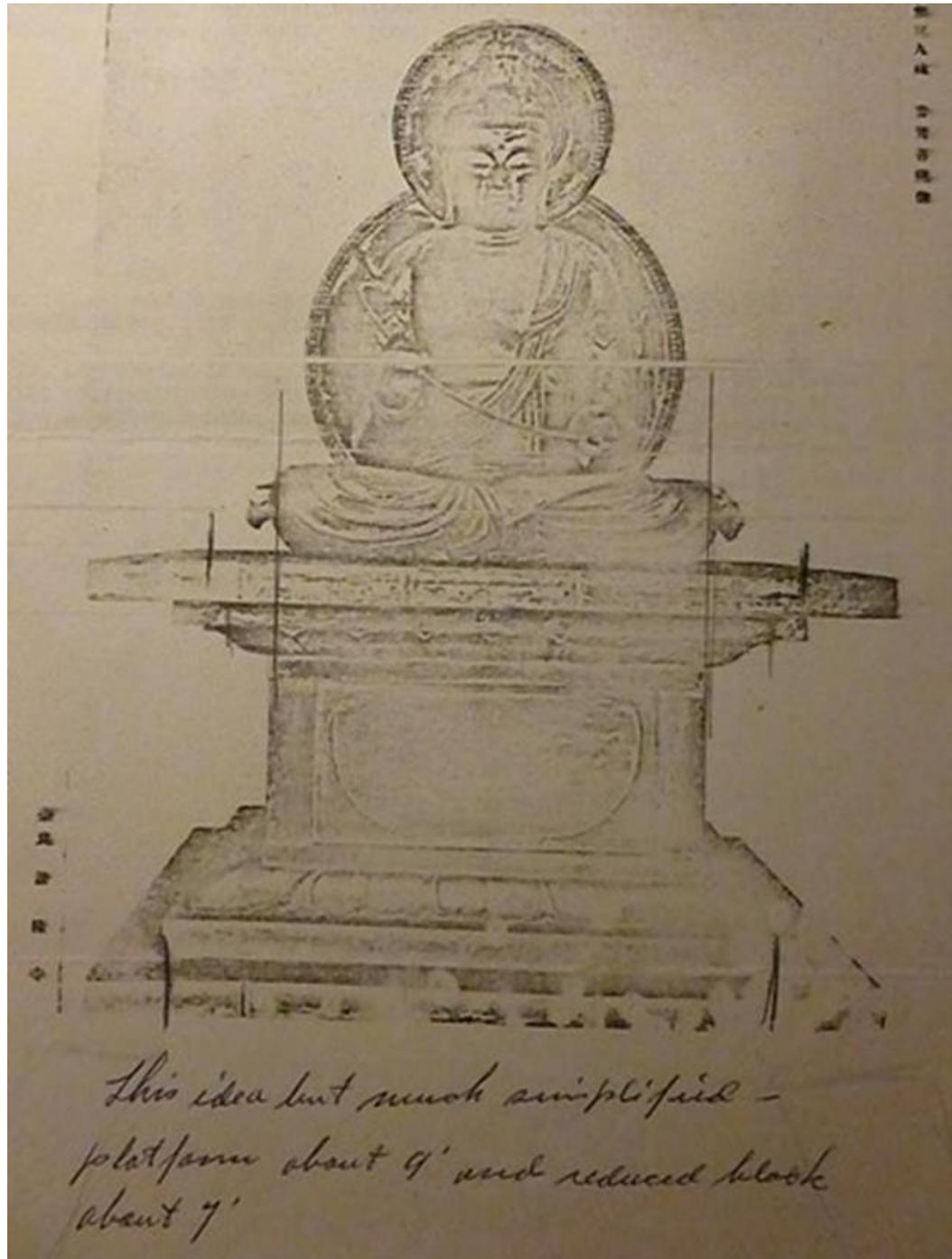


Figure 3.18. Image of a Buddha on a base that Laurence Sickman had sent to John Yeon when Yeon was designing the base for the stairhall that was specifically designed to house the Amitabha Buddha, courtesy of Mr. Richard Louis Brown, Watzek House Archives

Yeon responded to the request for a more traditional base in a letter addressing Larry Sickman. The letter further exemplifies Yeon's design process, one that involved dialog about art history, costs, and most importantly, aesthetic decisions. Yeon claimed, "If an old Japanese base for the Buddha existed, it would be used without a moments hesitation. Or, if a good old design could be skillfully reproduced, that could be used too, though with hesitation by some. Unfortunately, neither of these possibilities are available." The image that Sickman sent was too ornate and not simple enough for Yeon. Yeon wrote:

If I recall correctly, the former base for the Buddha was very much like the one you now propose. That base, of course, was not made with the present setting in mind. But the setting is now there. Didn't the former base have two parallel horizontal slabs separated by a rectangular block of narrower spread? I can only tell you that such a composition, considered as an abstract architectural element, has no visual relationship to the architecture of the hall, and in my opinion, only the most tenuous archaeological relationship to the Buddha. It takes more than a hint such as that to explain the validity of the prototype to someone, unlike you, who hasn't knowledge of the original.²¹⁹

Here, Yeon shows how he not only thought as an architect during the design process, but he also thought compositionally.

Yeon's modernist design required not only soft light, open space, plain walls, framed structures, horizontal planes, but most importantly, it required a sweeping simplicity in design. Yeon explained to Sickman, "The setting is very abstract, achieved by manipulations of spaces and proportions, with simplicity an important ingredient. I see no reason why the base should not be related to its surroundings rather than to some remote historical form impossible to reproduce except in parody."²²⁰ Nor did Yeon understand why the museum took an "archaeological

²¹⁹ John yeon, letter addressed to "Larry" Sickburn, Box: JY Museum Work I, Watzek Archives.

²²⁰ Letter from John Yeon to Laurence Sickman, Box: JY Museum Work, Watzek House Archives.

approach" to the Buddha when all of the other installations were "shown on simple contemporary bases." Indeed, simplicity was important to Yeon's design for the installation of the *Amida Buddha*. He had claimed that the effects of simplicity were similar to the effects of lightness, writing, "They are seldom inexpensive or expediently achieved. Only clumsiness is cheap and effortless. Time, skill, talent and money, far beyond the call for necessity, go into the realization of our present aesthetic preferences regardless of how much lip service we give the creed of functionalism."²²¹

The Bronze Doors

Indeed, Yeon believed that "clumsiness is cheap and effortless," and he was willing to pay with his own money for his aesthetic preference. On October 11, 1974, H. Sutherland wrote to Milton McGreevy, Menefee Blackwell, and Laurence Sickman, stating that he had spoken to Stu Hutchison, who had mentioned that, "John Yeon was still wringing his hands on the change from the bronze doors to the aluminum door on the upper balcony into Rozzell Court." To Sutherland, "this is sort of like an architect acts."²²² The budget for the Buddha stairhall did not allow for the extra cost to create and install bronze doors for the entrance from the Rozzelle Court.²²³ The museum trustees believed that it would be more "prudent" to purchase aluminum doors instead.²²⁴ Yet, Yeon was persistent and would not concede.

²²¹ John Yeon, typed essay on design throughout the ages, 24, JY Museum Work, Watzek House Archives.

²²² Memo addressed to Mr. Milton McGreevy, Mr. Menefee D. Blackwell, Mr. Laurence Sickman, signed H. Sutherland, dated October 11, 1974, Nelson Atkins-Archives

²²³ Copy of memo to Nelson-Atkins superintendent Herman Sutherland, signed "Church," dated October 14, 1974, Nelson-Atkins Archives.

²²⁴ Ibid.

In a four-page letter addressed to “Larry” (Laurence Sickman), Yeon pleaded for the bronze doors, writing:

This is about the bronze doors and the ramifications which affect a decision, these being more important than one might first suspect, or, nothing is ever simple ... Not that I think the design of the new doors is all that great. They are not the doors to the Bapestry. To me they have agreeable proportions and lightness and combine well with the proportions of the marble frame. Simple geometry, squares and rectangles. They are deliberately understated and I hope devoid of a la mode clichés. I think they are sympathetic to the building, moreso, in fact, than the old doors, about which not much can be said except that they are bronze. The transoms over them have no relationship to the doors (at least those on the balcony don't). In context of the original building, they scarcely count as a design element ... A final thing to consider as an economy move would be eliminating the doors entirely, and closing the existing window along with the other two ... It might just open a new can of worms...²²⁵

Still, the museum trustees did not want to pay the extra cost for bronze doors, so Yeon wrote to Herman Sutherland, lumber executive and museum trustee, stating that he would pay “the difference in cost between bronze and aluminum for the doors themselves.” Yeon felt so passionate about the material that he was willing to pay the difference. Yeon wrote:

I assume you are aware of my strong feelings about ersantz doors. I am certainly aware of the Trustees' desire to effect savings. And indeed post-bidding savings have been made with full cooperation. The galleries could have been designed in a much more costly fashion and yet even in the existing plans further savings could have been effected by using inferior or ersatz materials throughout. The material of the doors seems to be the sacrificial lamb symbolizing prudent economy. I cannot say that any other target would have been preferable but I do indeed regret the choice of the door material for this purpose. My feeling may be irrational, a gut feeling about ersatz materials. But not entirely.²²⁶

Yeon continues by explaining why the doors were not designed for aluminum fabrication, stressing that “it is the eventual appearance of the doors which would matter most.”²²⁷ Yeon

²²⁵ Letter from John Yeon to “Larry” Sickman, dated July 8, 1974, Nelson-Atkins Archives.

²²⁶ Letter from John Yeon to Herman Sutherland, page 2, Nelson-Atkins Archives

²²⁷ Ibid.

adds that “the anodized finish could only deteriorate whereas the bronze would improve as patina developed.” He argues that bronze doors would also handle scratches better, and “then, nothing else about the structure of the Gallery is conspicuously ersatz,” writes Yeon, claiming, “this would be the most important door to the loggia of Rozelle Court which in itself is a luxury of space and materials” (fig. 3.19).²²⁸ Yeon proved that “time, skill, talent and money, far beyond the call for necessity,” went into his “aesthetic preferences.”

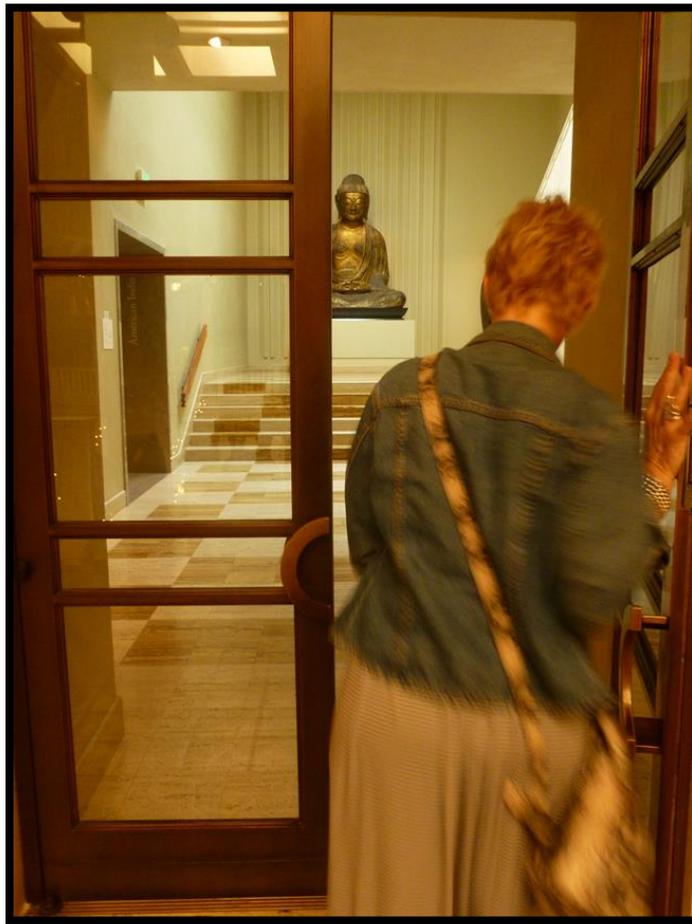


Figure 3.19. Bronze doors from Rozzelle Court to the Buddha Stairhall, 2012, photo credit: Melinda McVay

²²⁸ Letter from John Yeon to Herman Sutherland, page 2, Nelson-Atkins Archives

The Background of the Buddha

Simplicity should not be mistaken with minimalism. Yeon claimed that a flat background would not be adequate for the display. In discussing the design, he wrote to Laurence Sickman, "I became more and more apprehensive about the placement of the Buddha before a blank plaster wall."²²⁹ Yeon remembered seeing the Buddha "against the folds of a curtain in Kirkwood Hall," and he thought that looked good (fig. 3.20). He wrote, "Originally, it would have been seen against a dark and mysterious interior, glowing from reflected light. The molded plaster does not substitute for that situation but it would provide some chiaroscuro instead of a blank flat surface."²³⁰ Yeon designed bold panel moldings because he foresaw the moldings being flattened out from the light entering through the skylights (figs. 3.21-3.22).²³¹



Figure 3.20. Image of the *Amitabha Buddha* that was sent to John Yeon from Laurence Sickman, showing the curtains from Kirkwood Hall at the Nelson Atkins Museum, Yeon's inspiration for the paneled background, courtesy of Mr. Richard Louis Brown, Watzek House Archives

²²⁹ Letter from John Yeon to "Larry" Laurence Sickman, dated February 22, 1974, JY Museum Work Box, Watzek House Archives.

²³⁰ Ibid.

²³¹ Ibid.

As the natural light changed throughout the day, so, too, would the moldings. He believed that the effect would be "flexible," and compared it to "a gray theatrical curtain."²³² Of course, aligning the base with the paneling at the sides was crucial.²³³ The simpler the design, the more imperfections will stand out. In a letter to the curator Marc Wilson, Yeon discussed the site for the Buddha:

The stairhall is surely an important Buddhist site in the museum, that's where Buddha Himself will be. The most important Buddhist material should go there if it could be accommodated to advantage. But the space regurgitates most of the appropriately Buddhist things in the collection except the objects you mentioned PLUS the standing Jizo. The space to the north of the loggia door is a good space and one always intended for an object (or painting necessarily framed). The Jizo is the best thing now available, it seems to me, and I think it might look well there and need no additional lighting. It would be a shame not to use such a strategic spot by leaving it blank. The hall itself needs something there (the door could not be centered). I do not regret blank spaces around the Buddha since that will make him all the more important, but blank spaces under the balcony would have no function and merely look unfurnished, empty.²³⁴

Yeon included an image of the Buddha with the letter and jotted down his projected dimensions for the base. His blue-ink drawing of the Buddha is in the special collections archives at the University of Oregon and shows how Yeon enjoyed drawing the subjects for display. One can see that he studied the Buddha, as the drawing exhibits a careful hand and detailed rendering; moreover, it shows that Yeon paid as much attention on the Buddha as he did with the surrounding environment (fig. 3.21). Yeon shaded in the load-bearing base and leaves the larger one white. He also used this drawing to explore the textured background of the Buddha.

²³² Ibid.

²³³ Letter from John Yeon to Laurence Sickman, dated October 12, 1975, Box: JY Museum Work, Watzek House Archives, Portland Oregon.

²³⁴ Letter to Marc Wilson from John Yeon (January 21, 1976). File: Buddha Installation, K.C., Cases Letters, Box; JY- Museum Work I, Watzek House Archives.

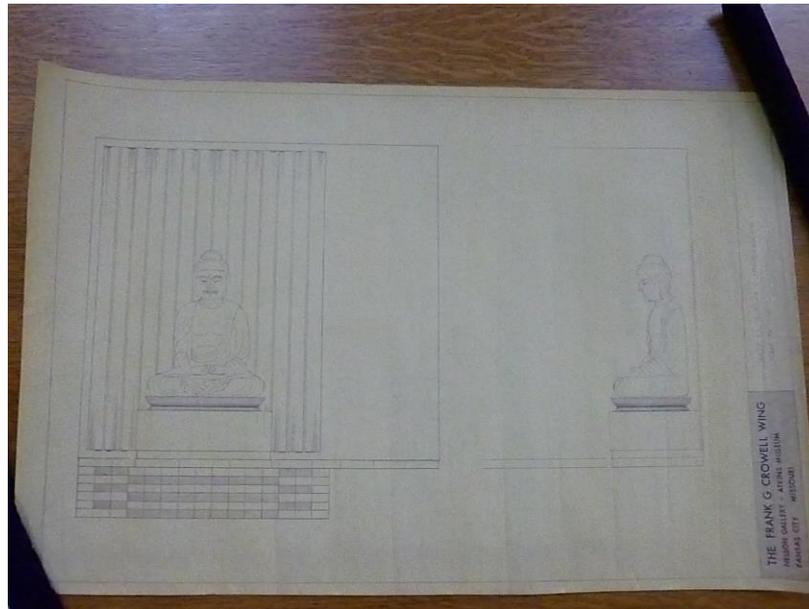


Figure 3.21. Drawing of the Amida Buddha by John Yeon, showing the background, base, and tile. Image taken by Melinda McVay, University of Oregon Library, Special Collections and University Archives, John Yeon architectural drawings 1934-1938



Figure 3.22. Image of the view of the Amida Buddha from stairs, Yeon's original installation, courtesy of Mr. Richard Louis Brown, the Watzek Archives, Box I JY Museum Work

Japanese Screen Gallery (1976)

The Japanese Screen Gallery at the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art opened in 1976. Three years before the opening and in preparation for the design, Yeon had written to Menefee Blackwell, University Trustee of the Nelson-Atkins (1957-1991), requesting permission to address the Trustees for arbitration when there were design disagreements between Yeon and the museum staff. Beyond Yeon's appeal to a higher authority for possible design disputes with museum staff, what is most remarkable about this letter is how it shows the architect's aesthetic integrity. Yeon required complete curatorial control for the Japanese Gallery. He wrote that he must "be given responsibility for the installation of the Japanese Gallery at the time of the opening, and the installation to last for at least six weeks after the opening."²³⁵

Yeon made these requests before signing the contract, as he had done for most of the other museums that had hired him to design their installations. Yeon specifically required such provisions for the design for the Japanese Gallery because, according to him, "the distinctive spaces and proportions of this gallery will not be explained or realized without an extension of the concept to the arrangement of the objects in it."²³⁶ Yeon also wrote to Sickman in order to inform him about his agreement to design the installation: "There are facets of the design of the room which depend for fulfillment on the composition of the objects in it and I don't want to leave this unexplained. Bases, colors, too, are an important part of the effect."²³⁷ When Yeon designed residential homes, he designed the interiors, furniture, and gardens. He also made such

²³⁵ Letter from John Yeon to Mr. Menefee Blackwell, dated September 17, 1973, b file, Box JY Museum Work I, Watzek House Archives, Portland, Oregon.

²³⁶ Ibid.

²³⁷ Letter from John Yeon to "Larry" (Laurence) Sickman, Labor day, JY Museum Work Box, Watzek House Archive.

agreements with the trustees at the Portland Art Museum; therefore, he wanted the same control over at least one of his compositions for the Nelson-Atkins.

Yeon's inspiration for the Japanese Screen Gallery came from Japanese design. Space was emptied. Design scholar Penny Sparke writes that "the 'elimination of the insignificant,' the commitment to modularity, the relationship of internal and external space and the idea that the architecture should be responsible for the whole interior rather than for the architectural shell alone," all aspects of Japanese design, became important to modern architects.²³⁸

Kemari Scene from the Tale of Genji, an eighteenth-century six-panel folding screen, on loan from Yeon, now in the collection of Minneapolis Institute of Arts, was installed in the center-right case of the gallery for the opening (fig. 3.23).²³⁹ About a thousand years ago, Murasaki Shikibu wrote about a courtly lady-in-waiting in the *Tale of Genji*. The screen depicts a scene from the novel where eight courtiers joined together in a courtyard for a New Year's eve game of kickball (*kemari*). The courtiers are garbed in ornately patterned Heian style robes and playing in front of a room with a veranda. From right to left, a mature bald male figure, second a back turned male figure wearing an aristocratic hat, third a boy with long hair pulled back, fourth courtier in green robe and aristocratic hat is central figure, fifth a male wearing an aristocratic hat in profile, sixth another mature male with a bald head, seventh figure has his hand up on his temple and is also wearing an aristocratic hat, and the final figure is a young male figure.²⁴⁰ All of the figures depicted in the screen are active, focusing on the game-ball.

²³⁸ Penny Sparke, *Modern Japanese Design*, (New York, E.P. Dutton, 1987), 29.

²³⁹ Gift from the Clark Center for Japanese Art and Culture, (2013.29.12)

²⁴⁰ Minneapolis Institute of Arts, accessed January 23, 016,
<http://collections.artsmia.org/art/116972/kemari-scene-from-the-tale-of-genji-japan>

"The robes, cherry trees, and palace veranda, reflect the spirit of *fūryū*.²⁴¹ *Fūryū* ("blowing with the wind") "became an aesthetic term describing things and events out of the ordinary, such as poetry competitions, unconventional displays of flowers in a garden, opulent decorative arts, lavish banquets, and spectacles associated with court and religious festivals."²⁴² Yeon placed the screen, *The River Bridge at Uji* on the wall facing the entrance (fig. 3.24).²⁴³ Yeon installed this screen to the right of the *Kemari Scene from the Tale of Genji*, creating an interesting juxtaposition, for the famous Uji Bridge also provided the setting for the final chapters of the *Tale of Genji* by Murasaki Shikibu (fig. 3.25).



Figure 3.23. Original installation of the Japanese Screen Gallery by John Yeon, *Kemari Scene from the Tale of Genji*, eighteenth-century, the screen was on loan from John Yeon, now in the collection of Minneapolis Institute of Arts, Gift from the Clark Center for Japanese Art and Culture, (2013.29.12), image courtesy of Mr. Richard Louis Brown, Watzek House Archive

²⁴¹ *Japanese Design: Art, Aesthetics & Culture*, Loc 492.

²⁴² *Ibid.*, Loc 469.



Figure 3.24. *River Bridge at Uj*, by an unknown artist from the Momoyama Period (1568-1614), ink, color, and gold on paper, pair of six-fold screens, each 5' 7 1/2" x 11 1/4", one of a pair of six-fold screens, ink and color over gold-foil ground on paper, Original installation of the Japanese Screen Gallery by John Yeon, curated by Yeon.



Figure 3.25. Original installation of the Japanese Screen Gallery by John Yeon, curated by John Yeon, image courtesy of Mr. Richard Louis Brown, Watzek House Archives
Japanese Drum Stand

Wilson wrote to Yeon and asked him if he would be interested in remodeling and reinstalling the Chinese Sculpture Gallery, and he asked Yeon for advice on installing a large half of a frame for a Japanese ceremonial drum (fig. 3.26). John responded with "a proposal for discussion – not yet a proposal for installation." Since the drum was only half, Yeon suggested, "why not, then, supply the mirror image?" Then, Yeon offered some friendly architect advice:

Say, with a mirror floor to ceiling six feet wide and divided into six sections as are the travertine panels on the opposite wall. It would not be mounted directly on the wall but on a frame (metal or wood) a few inches thick against the wall and fastened to it at a few points. This would cause less damage to the wall than would a direct mounting of mirrors (in the event of change).

Being centered on the screen gallery entry, the reflections would not be chaotic: an axial extension of perspective lines and travertine wall. From the screen gallery, the mirror would not help to explain the object but from any other position, it would. From wide arcs on both sides of it, the original composition would be recreated. There would be no need for written descriptions. The buttress effect would then be avoided. There would be an illusion of more surrounding space. The object would be given special emphasis, which it deserves.

But the reason for a big mirror here is not for decorative architectural effect but to explain an object in a way which only such a mirror can. The occasions for this function will be rare. The missing part of a fragment must literally be a mirror image of the surviving part. In this case, even completion of the void for the drum is important. I think scruples about mirrors should be suspiciously dissected before this solution is rejected as too glitzy.²⁴⁴

Yeon's installation work is best understood as careful compositions. Yeon was an architect/designer/collector whose designs should not be disregarded as formal structures. Instead, like Japanese design, there is meaning and reference in his formal compositions. Yeon composed space, color, form, and light to create three-dimensional spaces that referenced sublimity, simplicity, asymmetry, and tranquility. His designed spaces appear balanced, even when they are asymmetrical. Indeed, his spaces appear simple; however, what appears simple

²⁴⁴ Letter from John Yeon to Marc Wilson, dated September 30, 1983, Japanese Drum Stand, 1983, folder, Box JY Museum Work I, Watzek House Archives, Portland, Oregon.

seldom is simplistic. Simplicity, for Yeon, was without excessive ornamentation. Yeon's compositions utilized the finest materials, skill, talent, and a deep understanding of the works that were displayed. They derive from Asian architecture and design principles popularized by the Arts and Craft movement in the Pacific Northwest. All of his design decisions were carefully thought through, agonized over, and discussed. Yeon's museum installations show restraint, discipline, and clarity. Nothing superfluous was used. Chance and indeterminacy were not a part of Yeon's designs.

Yeon's compositions derived from the art works that he was responsible for showing, and in doing so, he gave life to the museum. In *the living museum*, Samuel Cauman writes about the significance of museum installation. "In its architecture and its methods of installation the living museum adapts to each period and style that it presents. It is shaped by what is in it. It is the stage for a drama of man's creative imagination. Its articulation helps to release the message within the work of art and to transform the onlooker."²⁴⁵ Architect Pietro Belluschi said that Yeon made a point that one should be aesthetically and stylistically conscious of what one does.²⁴⁶ Although that might have not been Belluschi's attitude, it was, indeed, the way that Yeon approached his museum work. Yeon managed to create thoughtful installations of Asian art that incorporated the fundamentals of simplicity and austerity that made up the philosophical framework of diverse aesthetic rules for design. Doing so, he appropriated the values that, according to Asian art scholar, A. L. Sadler, and Japanese design publisher, C. E. Tuttle, have

²⁴⁵ Samuel Cauman, *the living museum*, (New York: New York University Press, 1958), 9-10.

²⁴⁶ Oral history interview with Pietro Belluschi, 1983 August 22-September 4, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

kept Japanese “taste more sensitive and healthy and potent than that of perhaps any other country.”²⁴⁷



Figure 3.26. Image of Japanese Half of Frame for Temple Drum, (1150-1200 AD) Late Heian-Kamakura Wood with lacquer, paint, gilding, 3.3 meters high, sent to Yeon from Wilson, Watzek House Archive

²⁴⁷ Penny Sparke, *Modern Japanese Design*, p.11.

CHAPTER 4

A. JAMES SPEYER: INTERNATIONAL STYLE

A. James Speyer represents the International Style movement where less is seen as more prudent. Open spaces, smooth surfaces, precise detail, straight lines, rectilinear forms, modern materials, lack of ornamentation, minimal decoration, and illuminated galleries characterize the installation designs created by Speyer. Speyer's work most closely held to all the standards that define the highly influential International Style that Philip Johnson and Henry Russell Hitchcock championed. Like most architects, including John Yeon and Lina Bo Bardi, Speyer's creations exhibit a visually weightless quality. Although his undergraduate architectural education focused on a Beaux Arts curriculum, traveling throughout Europe and visiting friends at the MoMA opened the young architect's eyes to new and fresh ideas that he applied to both the homes and the museum installations that he designed and created.

Background

Speyer (1913-1986), born in Pittsburgh, moved to Chicago in 1939 to become the first graduate student to study architecture under Mies van der Rohe at the Illinois Institute of Technology (IIT). Speyer wanted to learn from the master in order to shake off the old notions of monumentality that had been instilled in him from the Beaux Arts training that he had received at the Carnegie Institute of Technology in Pittsburgh and at the Chelsea Polytechnic in London and the Sorbonne in Paris. Speyer wanted to become an artist; however, his father refused to pay for him to attend art school, so Speyer decided to follow his mother's advice and settled on an architectural career. Speyer established a private architectural practice in Chicago where many of his modernist homes are along the North Shore, and while running his practice, taught

architectural design at IIT. Speyer began his career as an architect, all the while maintaining a close relation to art and museums; however, it was not until he reached middle age that he moved on to a museum career. Speyer gave up his architectural practice in 1961 after the Art Institute of Chicago (AIC) asked him to become the museum's first curator of Twentieth Century Art.²⁴⁸ His twenty-five-year career (1961-1986) as the curator of twentieth century painting and sculpture at the Art Institute of Chicago is marked by exemplary exhibition designs that presented contemporary art in a new fashion. Indeed, Speyer relied on his appreciation for the art that had been cultivated from an early age, as well as Bauhaus aesthetic principles. Speyer's appreciation for the arts made him a better curator, and his understanding of architecture made him an exceptional installation designer whose work exemplified the second generation of architects following the International Style. For Speyer, the exhibition was a means for aesthetic enjoyment and contemplation. His background in architecture provided the skills and theories he needed to facilitate the best possible way to view art. Because of his thoughtfulness towards works of art and his keen sense of design, Speyer will be remembered as one of the most remarkable museum curators of the twentieth century.

Speyer was raised in an affluent Pittsburgh home under the guidance of a mother and father who both appreciated and participated in the arts, either in the studio, museum, or at the auction house. Both of Speyer's parents were, indeed, connoisseurs of art. Speyer's mother, Tillie

²⁴⁸ Although Speyer became the “first” curator of twentieth century art, he succeeded Katherine Kuh, AIC's first curator of modern painting and sculpture (1954-1960). Roberta Smith, “Katherine Kuh, Art Connoisseur And Writer, 89,” Obituary, *New York Times*, January 12, 1994, accessed September 28, 2016, available online: <http://www.nytimes.com/1994/01/12/obituaries/katherine-kuh-art-connoisseur-and-writer-89.html>

S. (Sunstein) Speyer (1889-1979), was a practicing artist and member of the "Associated Artists of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania," and his father, Alexander C. Speyer (1884-1959), was an investment banker as well as, according to Speyer, a "quite, not at all ostentatious, patron" of the arts.²⁴⁹ Tillie Speyer practically raised her son James in the museum. Speyer recalled that his mom would take them to visit art galleries, and when James and his siblings were abler to get around, she took the family to museums in New York and abroad. Needless to mention, Speyer was raised in a privileged, loving home.²⁵⁰

Speyer's education was unique. His paternal grandfather had died shortly after his father was born, so his grandmother sent his father off to boarding school around the age of six. His father was not fond of the experience, so as consequence, he "overreacted" and home-schooled all of his children until they "were a good deal older than when one normally starts in grade school."²⁵¹ Speyer remembered that he was home-schooled by his parents and tutors until he was around the age of twelve, when he finally left the home to attend part of public grade school and high school. His father oversaw his earlier education, which was particular in that it emphasized what his father viewed as important.²⁵² As an example, when Speyer was ten, his father moved the family to France, where Speyer learned about art and culture and became fluent in French.

²⁴⁹ Oral History of A. James Speyer, interviewed by Pauline Saliga, (Chicago Architects Oral History Project, 11-13, and 18-19 June, 1986). *The Art Institute of Chicago*, (2001), accessed 10-30-2016, Available on-line at: <http://digital-libraries.saic.edu/cdm4/document.php?CISOROOT=/caohp&CISOPTR=10409&REC=8>

²⁵⁰ Oral History Interview with Tillie Speyer, "Speyer, Tillie - 1976 - Tape 1, Side 1," NCJW Oral History Project, Archives Service Center, University of Pittsburgh, accessed September 29, 2016, available online: <http://images.library.pitt.edu/cgi-bin/i/image/image-idx?view=entry;cc=ncjw;entryid=x-ais196440.449>

²⁵¹ Ibid.

²⁵² Ibid.

The move was not for his father's work; instead, when asked why the family had moved abroad, Speyer responded that it was for teaching. He claimed, "My father was very interested in certain literature and my mother was very interested in art so they did a lot of teaching. They taught us a lot, but not formally. The tutors we had were not high enough caliber or they weren't well rounded enough, or something. In any case, it was a very peculiar and warped education but ultimately it all settled down and worked out very well. But it took a long time."²⁵³ The family collected art as well as furniture for their home.

His father saw art as a commodity, so incidentally, he taught Speyer about finances through art. His father would send him off to buy art. Speyer recalls, "When I was as young as, say, sixteen my father thought it was very good for me to be exposed to the art world in a kind of semi-professional way and he would send me to auctions with a certain amount of money and a list of the things he wanted me to bid on for him."²⁵⁴ Indeed, at a very young age, Speyer's education prepared him for museum work.

Speyer was influenced by both his father's practicality and by his mother's artistic nature. He chose his career as an architect because he was able to please his father by going into "an activity more connected to the business world than painting," and he was able to use his artistic talents that had been cultivated by his mother.²⁵⁵ In fact, an architectural career was his mother's idea. In an interview, he explained his choice to attend architectural school:

²⁵³ Oral History of A. James Speyer.

²⁵⁴ Ibid.

²⁵⁵ Ibid.

I chose architecture because from an early childhood I wanted to be a painter. It was the usual thing--my father felt that I should have a profession and that I couldn't be sure of making a living as a painter. My mother, who was a painter and sculptor, wanted to encourage me, and did. She always encouraged me to be in the arts. She wondered if architecture might be a kind of middle ground a profession and the arts. I think that's really why I did it. I had always been interested in buildings, even as a child, and I'd always loved to look at them. I had traveled abroad a fair amount, even as a boy before college. So, I had a preparation for architecture, and it seemed like a good solution.²⁵⁶

Speyer recalls his childhood trips to New York and abroad and remembers vividly the skyscrapers in Manhattan and the palaces in Europe. For him, the opulence of exquisite palaces like Versailles and Buckingham was what had interested him as a child. He also remembers the Eiffel Tower, for it had always impressed him and would continue to be the building that he considered one of the “most exciting in the cityscape.”²⁵⁷

Speyer had always loved to travel, and this passion for traveling later became a deciding factor when choosing a college to study architecture; moreover, his acceptance of the curator position at the AIC would be contingent upon the freedom and flexibility to travel. For college, Speyer thought that if he stayed in Pittsburgh and went to Carnegie, his father "would let me go to Europe during the summers."²⁵⁸ He had a choice. He could either stay in Pittsburgh and travel during the summer, or he could go away for school and stay home for the summers. Since his parents were always away during the winter, he figured that if he stayed at home, he would be alone for the most part and be able to get away and travel during the summer.²⁵⁹ Speyer's parents had a tremendous impact on his career path. Speyer absorbed their love for art, culture and

²⁵⁶ Oral History of A. James Speyer.

²⁵⁷ Ibid.

²⁵⁸ Franz Schulze, “Speyer’s Life and Career,” in *A. James Speyer*, (Chicago: Richard Nickel Committee, 1997), 7.

²⁵⁹ Speyer Interview.

travel. His childhood provided values that helped him develop an appreciation for art from early on that would continue to guide him in the choices he made at the Art Institute of Chicago.

Speyer attended the Beaux-Arts architectural program at the Carnegie Institute of Technology where he majored in Architecture and minored in Art History. Carnegie, according to Speyer, was a good school with an excellent art program, but their pedagogy in the Beaux-Arts system was lacking substance. There he excelled in the artistic courses and struggled in the mathematics courses. He recalled:

I was not very interested in the Beaux-Arts curriculum. I did pretty well in the big renderings, but I hated the formalistic focus and the lack of any kind of intelligent analysis of architecture. It was all formalistic; you know the Beaux-Arts is by definition. I feel that except for the painting and drawing, and I spent a great deal of time painting and drawing, that I was wasting my time. I hated the mathematics. I had to take almost every mathematics course over at least once if not twice, I mean twice if not three times. It was quite arduous.²⁶⁰

According to Speyer, the Beaux-Arts is "a kind of mock monumentality" that leaned towards "a Neo-Baroque or Neoclassic direction."²⁶¹ Speyer did not excel in his architectural classes, and he struggled to pass the mathematics and physics courses.²⁶² He performed much better in drawing and painting, so most of his time was devoted to the more creative aspects of his undergraduate studies.²⁶³ One can see the beginnings of a museum career by Speyer's values and motivations as an undergraduate student at Carnegie. He spent all his free-time painting in a studio he had at home; moreover, he worked to maintain the love and appreciation for art that his mother ingrained in him from an early age.²⁶⁴ Architecture was secondary to Art.

²⁶⁰ Oral History of A. James Speyer.

²⁶¹ Ibid.

²⁶² Ibid.

²⁶³ Ibid.

²⁶⁴ Oral History of A. James Speyer.

After Speyer graduated with a B.S. degree in Architecture from Carnegie in 1934, he studied architecture and painting from 1934-1937 abroad at the Chelsea Polytechnic in London and the Sorbonne in Paris. His courses in Europe also followed the Beaux-Arts doctrine; however, Speyer supplemented the Beaux-Arts curriculum by visiting museums and painting.²⁶⁵ In Europe, Speyer discovered Le Corbusier, and he began to absorb the International Style.²⁶⁶

In 1937, Speyer returned from his studies abroad to Pittsburgh, where he was offered the head designer position for the Pittsburgh Plate Glass Company. It was his first architectural job. Matured and completely independent from his schooling, Speyer was given freedom to create and experiment with new materials, like pigmented structural glass.²⁶⁷ Pigmented structural glass, commonly known by trade names such as Vitrolite, Carrara Glass, Sani Onyx or Rox revolutionized the building materials industry and soon became the preferred product for designers and architects. The Preservation Brief from The National Parks Service explains why the material became a favorite for architects:

The versatility of pigmented structural glass contributed to its popularity. Not only could the material be applied to both the exterior and interior, the glass could be sculptured, cut, laminated, curved, colored, textured, and illuminated. Often applied directly over existing architecture to remodel older buildings, as well as in new construction, a veneer of pigmented structural glass had the ability to define a building's architectural character as new and up-to-date. Pigmented structural glass also complemented the period's silvery metal accents and affinity for slick, shiny surfaces. A successful application of a structural glass veneer often resulted in a streamlined look characteristic of the Art Moderne architectural style.²⁶⁸

²⁶⁵ Ibid., 11.

²⁶⁶ Ibid., 12.

²⁶⁷ Ibid., 13.

²⁶⁸ National Parks Service US Department of the Interior, "The Preservation of Historic Pigmented Structural Glass (Vitrolite and Carrara Glass)," accessed 5/6/2016, <https://www.nps.gov/tps/how-to-preserve/briefs/12-structural-glass.htm>

Speyer designed interiors, exteriors, and furniture for Pittsburgh Plate Glass Company. His exposure to planes of color from working with pigmented structural glass would later surface in the new Morton Wing at the AIC, as the panels he designed were wrapped in vibrant colored fabrics. In a 1986 interview, Speyer remembered the fantastic colors he worked with at the glass company. He stated, "Naturally glass was their product, and the kind of glass they had, in addition to plate glass and glass blocks was an opaque glass in colors. I don't know whether their trade name was 'Vitrolite' or 'Corara.' I don't know whether you've ever seen these colors, that kind of glass. They were used for theater lobbies, bathrooms, storefronts. It was a very beautiful product."²⁶⁹

Speyer would often travel to New York. New York was important to him because there, he was exposed to the International Style. Speyer claimed, "By that time I was not only very aware of everything going on in the International Style, but I knew a great many of the people involved."²⁷⁰ Speyer worked for the Pittsburgh Plate Glass Company for a year and spent the money he had earned on trips to New York.

While living at home, James Speyer spent time with his childhood friend, Edgar Kaufmann Jr., whom he had known from Pittsburgh. Kaufmann's father, Edgar J. Kaufmann, was a prosperous business man whose family owned Kaufmann's department store and who is mainly known for commissioning the famous Fallingwater by Frank Lloyd Wright (under the strong urging of Jr.). like Speyer, Edgar Kaufmann Jr., had studied painting and architecture abroad. Kaufmann apprenticed to Frank Lloyd Wright at Taliesin from 1933-34, worked for his

²⁶⁹ Speyer Interview, 13.

²⁷⁰ Ibid., 14.

father's department store while taking time off to organize *Useful Objects* (1938), the MoMA's first design exhibition, and later served as Director of Industrial Design at the MoMA. During his term at the MoMA, Kaufmann spearheaded the "Good Design" program from 1950-1955 where the museum worked alongside the Merchandise Mart in Chicago to promote good design in the home.

Kaufmann Jr. proved instrumental in introducing Speyer to many influential characters. First, he turned Speyer onto new ideas by introducing him to Laszlo Gabor (1895-1944). Kaufmann Sr. had brought Gabor, the Hungarian born Viennese architect, to America in 1935 to direct the store's art department. Kaufmann, Jr. had met Gabor, who was working at the Wiener Werkstätte, while he was in Vienna. Gabor's designs for both window and in-store displays "frequently challenged conventional practice and, occasionally, notions of propriety."²⁷¹ According to *Werkbundsiedlung Wien*, Gabor had begun as a painter, studying under Lovis Corinth at the *Akademie der bildenden Künste* (Academy of Fine Arts) in Berlin before he had settled in Vienna in 1924. In Europe, in 1928, Gabor worked as secretary of the Austrian Werkbund, where he later co-directed the Werkbund Exhibition with Hermann Neubacher and Josef Frank. Laszlo Gabor "was responsible for the color scheme of the model estate, where an exhibition of his works was also to be seen."²⁷² After Gábor arrived in the USA in 1935, he taught at the Carnegie Institute of Technology in Pittsburgh. Gabor dazzled Speyer with his innovative designs for the department store, and served as both a friend and mentor to the budding young architect.

²⁷¹ Entry, accessed September 29, 2016, <http://waterlandlife.org/fw-museum.asp>

²⁷² WERKBUNDSIEDLUNG WIEN website, "biographies," accessed September 29, 2016, <http://www.werkbundsiedlung-wien.at/en/laszlo-gabor/>

In addition, through Kaufmann, Speyer became friends with Philip Johnson and John McAndrew, and later became acquainted with Alfred Barr and Rene d'Harnoncourt. All were leading figures in the art world who would have a tremendous impact on Speyer's aesthetic choices, values, and motivations toward museum design. When Wright was building Fallingwater for the Kaufmann family, John McAndrew, curator of Architecture and Industrial Art at the MoMA, had visited the site. There, he met Kauffman Jr., and from then on, Kauffman began an eighteen-year relationship with the MoMA, which would benefit his childhood friend, James Speyer. Philip Johnson had helped organize the epoch-making *Modern Architecture: International Exhibition* (1932) and served as the Head of the Architecture department for the MoMA. The *Modern Architecture: International Exhibition* and its companion book, *The International Style* introduced architects like Mies van der Rohe and Le Corbusier to the public, showing a global style with formal and aesthetic merit. Speyer remembered:

I learned a great deal from them about architecture, painting and the contemporary idioms in the arts. It was thus that I began to realize more and more poignantly how little I knew, although I had been aware of it for some time. I got to know a lot of people; I went to all the exhibitions and I was very strongly influenced by the Museum of Modern Art in all of its manifestations. This didn't start, I would say, until about 1935 [or 1937].²⁷³

This time was crucial in the formation of Speyer's approach towards design. His design experience at the Pittsburgh Plate Glass Company, and the new ideas in relation to exhibition design at the MoMA would later influence decisions Speyer made as contemporary curator at the Art Institute.

In 1927-28, Alfred Barr, the Museum of Modern Art founding director had traveled to Moscow and then to Germany where he had visited the Bauhaus. Indeed, this visit had a huge

²⁷³ Speyer Interview, 14.

impact on his modernist understanding and played a significant role in how he formed the program for the MoMA. The Bauhaus began in 1906 under the original title Weimer School of Arts and Crafts until German architect Walter Gropius took over as director and changed the name to *Das Staatlich Bauhaus* (State School of Building) in 1919. Not only did Gropius change the name, but he also reformatted the curriculum to reflect his ideas on art and architecture:

The objective of all creative effort in the visual arts. . . is to give form to space. . . . But what is space, how can it be understood and given form? . . . True creative work can be done only by the man whose knowledge and mastery of the physical laws of statics, dynamics, optics, acoustics, equip him to give life and shape to his inner vision. In a work of art the laws of the physical world, the intellectual world, and the world of the spirit function and are expressed simultaneously.²⁷⁴

Gropius wanted to unite all branches of art, architecture, and design. The Bauhaus not only taught courses in architecture, but in painting, drama, music, and crafts. Their design principles were structured so that through handicraft an artist could master the character of form and materials, and later they would be able to design for mass fabrication.²⁷⁵ The Bauhaus was important for the move towards installation design because it promoted all aspects of architecture, including designing exhibitions. Indeed, the exposure to the Bauhaus exhibit at the MoMA designed by Herbert Bayer would have influenced Speyer's choices while he was at the Art Institute. In 1938, Barr, director of the MoMA, hired Herbert Bayer to design, organize, and install the Bauhaus exhibition for the museum. *The*

Bauhaus 1919-1928 (December 7, 1938-January 30, 1939) presented over 700 objects: paintings, furniture, rugs, mobile sculpture, paper and tin sculptures, glass and metal dishes, architectural

²⁷⁴ Herbert Bayer, Walter Gropius, et. Al., *Bauhaus: 1919-1928*, (Boston: Branford, 1959), *passim.*, 1029.

²⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

plans and models, photographs, lighting fixtures, textiles, typography, film, ballet costumes, and many other items (figs. 4.1-4.3). The press release for the exhibition proclaimed, “The entire installation will exemplify, as far as possible in the given gallery space, the Bauhaus principles of exhibition technique in which clarity and arresting arrangement are combined.”²⁷⁶ Most notably, Bayer included the museum floors in the design of the exhibition (fig. 4.3). The MoMA’s press release touted, “the Museum floors—traditionally not part of the exhibition—will be decorated with painted guide-lines, footprints and abstract forms which will not only direct the visitor step by step through the exhibition but will bear artistic relation to the actual physical shape of each gallery and the type of objects exhibited in it.”²⁷⁷ Since Speyer was spending time with Barr and others from the MoMA, he more than likely would have seen the exhibition, and if not, he would have at least heard about it because the “reaction to the exhibit was intense.”²⁷⁸ For the exhibit, Bayer not only introduced the public to the Bauhaus school of design, but he removed all of the interior walls and hung gigantic photo-panels that hung by wire (fig. 4.2).²⁷⁹ Bayer’s exhibitions were extremely influential. Between 1938 and 1943, his exhibitions “presented the most advanced principles of display in the world, and they were important early examples for American designers to see firsthand.”²⁸⁰ Along with Ludwig Mies van der Rohe,

²⁷⁶ *Bauhaus 1919-1928* “Press Release” dated December 2, 1938, MoMA.org exhibition archives, accessed September 28, 2016, available online at: <http://www.moma.org/calendar/exhibitions/2735?locale=en#installation-images>

²⁷⁷ Ibid.

²⁷⁸ Gwen F. Chanzit, *from bauhaus to aspen herbert bayer and the modernist design in America*, (Boulder: Johnson Books and the Denver Art Museum, Boulder, 2005), 121.

²⁷⁹ Ibid., 125.

²⁸⁰ Ibid., 132.

Speyer would later practice Bayer's techniques for exhibition design while working as contemporary curator at the Art Institute in Chicago.

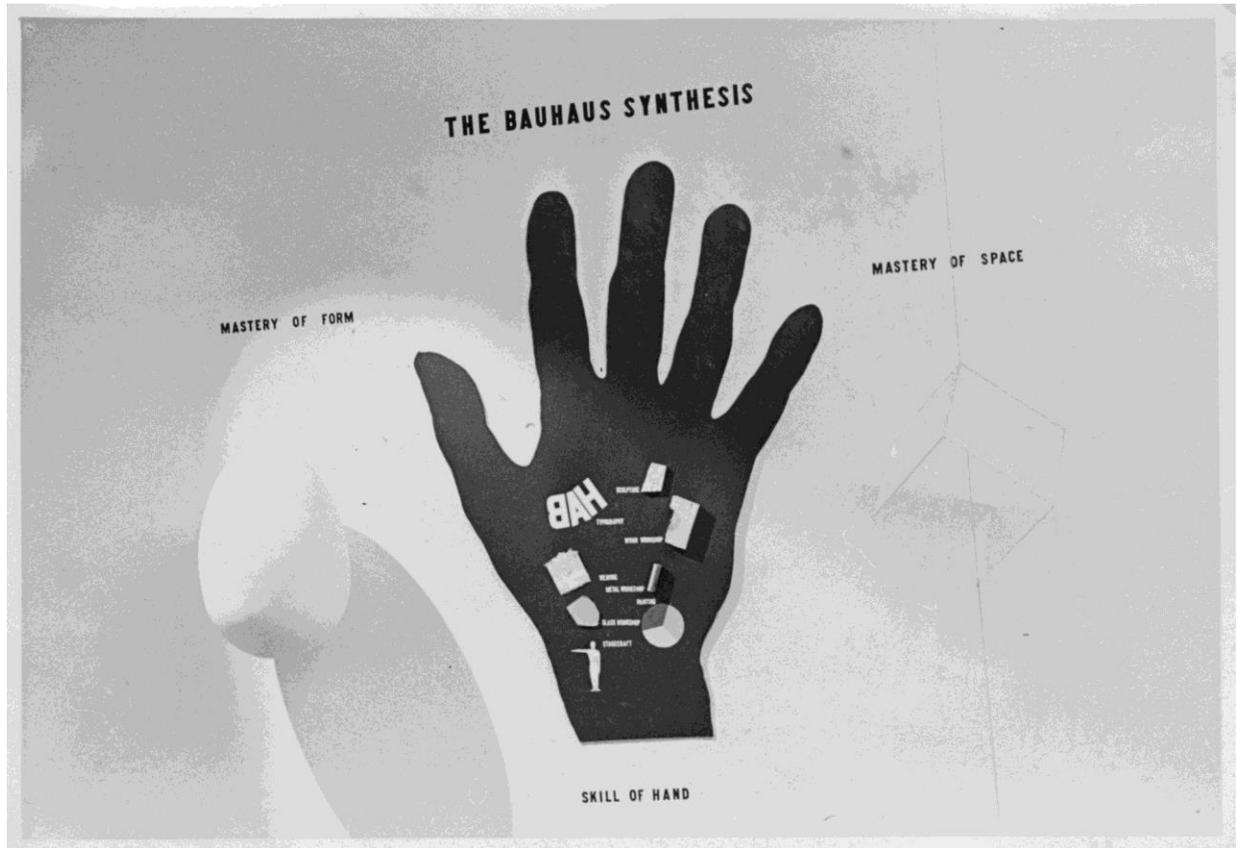


Figure 4.1. Close up of Bayer's installation for *The Bauhaus 1919-1928*, MoMA website

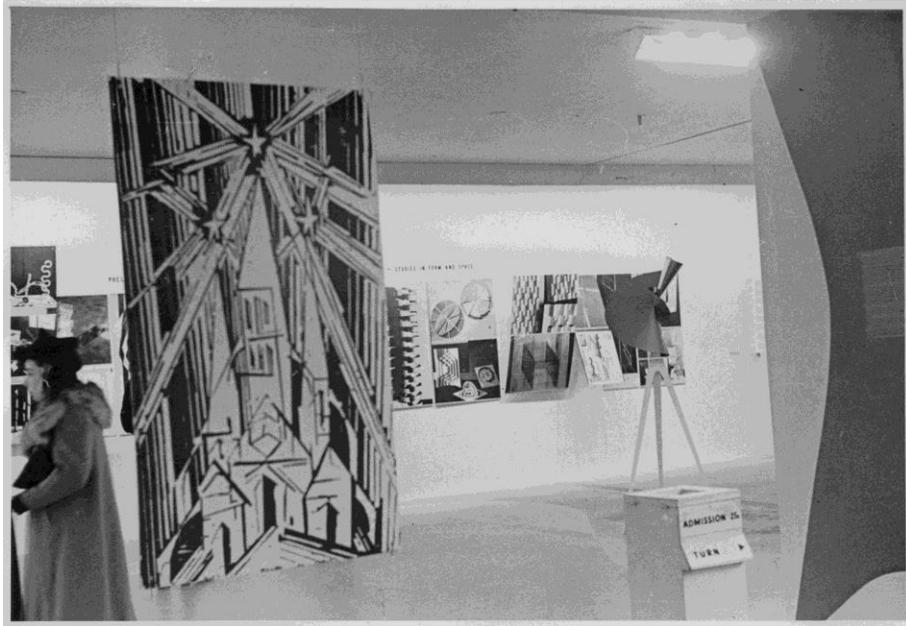


Figure 4.2. *The Bauhaus 1919-1928*, large photo-panels hung from wire, MoMA website



Figure 4.3. *The Bauhaus 1919-1928*, traffic flow guide painted on the floors of the MoMA, MoMA website

Walter Gropius, by then Chairman of the School of Architecture at Harvard University, contributed to the Bauhaus exhibition.²⁸¹ Speyer met him through his friends at the MoMA and was accepted to study architecture under him at Harvard, although ultimately Speyer decided not to attend. In the summer before Speyer would have started attending classes at Harvard, Gabor had told him that there was word of Mies van der Rohe coming to the United States. According to Speyer, "he had heard through the European architectural grapevine that Mies van der Rohe was coming to America to work in Chicago, but that it would not be announced because if it were announced the Nazis wouldn't let him leave Germany."²⁸² By the time Speyer heard Mies was coming to Chicago (1937), he was completely enamored with the International Style, and he saw Mies as a greater architect than Gropius. For Speyer, Gropius was "a great activist in architecture and a kind of arbiter of taste, and not a great architect."²⁸³ So Speyer packed his bags and took off to Chicago to see if Mies van der Rohe would accept him into the graduate program. He remembered:

I went on train, came to Chicago where I'd never been before, did a little research through the Holabird and Root office, found out that Mies van der Rohe might be at the Stevens Hotel, which is now the Hilton Hotel. I called him and he was, indeed, there. He had arrived a couple of days before. I didn't speak one word of German and he didn't speak one word of English. I made a date somehow over the telephone. I met him in the 18th-century-shrouded salon of the Stevens Hotel. We got along very well. He accepted me and I canceled out of Harvard and came to Chicago. That is how I came to Chicago.²⁸⁴

Speyer moved to Chicago in 1939 and became Mies van der Rohe's first graduate student at the Armour Institute, which a year later merged with Lewis Institute, becoming the Illinois Institute

²⁸¹ *Bauhaus 1919-1928* "Press Release," dated December 2, 1938.

²⁸² Speyer Interview, 21.

²⁸³ Speyer Interview, 22.

²⁸⁴ Speyer Interview.

of Technology (ITT) in 1940. Speyer began to study architecture under Mies at the Armour, when the architectural school was housed in the Art Institute of Chicago. Speyer became acquainted with the museum as early as 1937, as he took painting classes while he studied under Mies.²⁸⁵

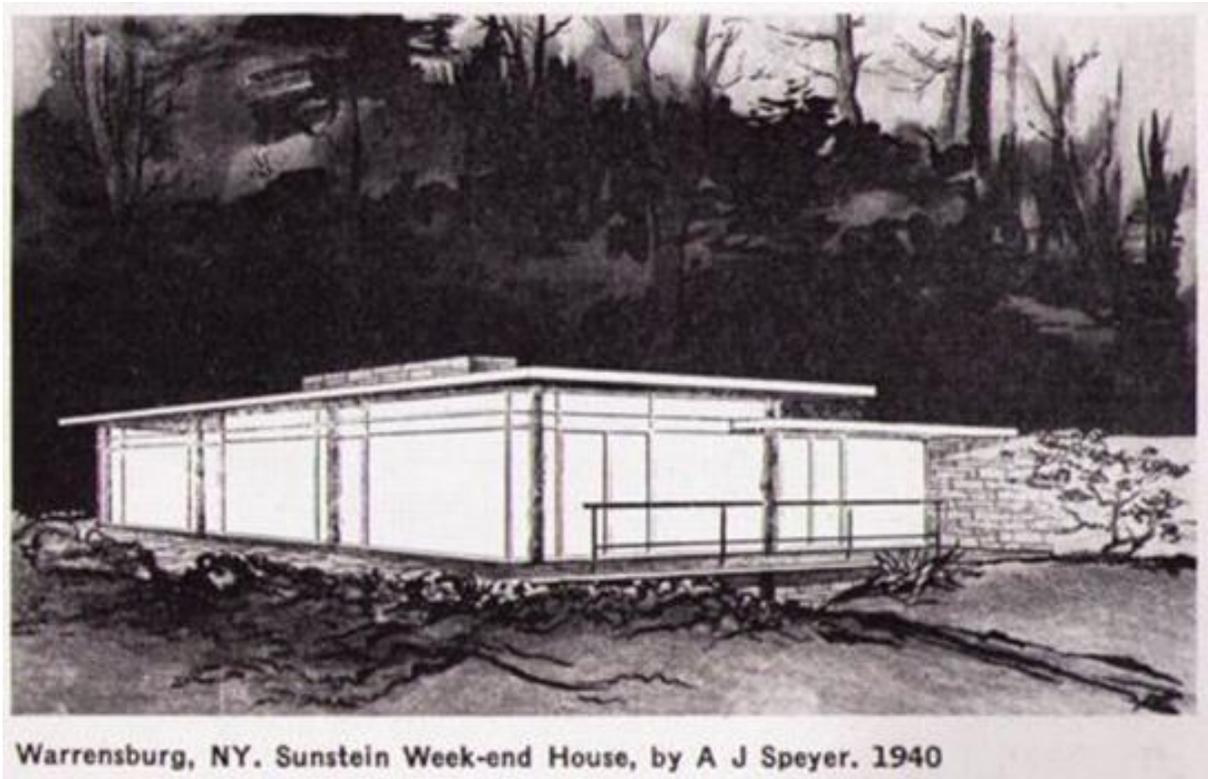


Figure 4.4. James Speyer, Sunstein House, drawing, as seen in the Museum of Modern Art Guide to Modern Architecture: Northeast States, MoMA publication (1940)

Mies clearly influenced Speyer. The Bauhaus system provided Speyer what the Beaux-Arts had previously not. Speyer remarked that the curriculum was "the difference between night and day." Before, he had been assigned projects "in which the student was often obliged to tackle

²⁸⁵ Ibid, 26.

intricately full-scale design problems from the start.” He explained. “You first learn how to use your tools, the pencil, pen, paintbrush, or the crayon, and then you learn how to draw, whether freehand or mechanically . . . so in a very real sense, you are learning the limitations and possibilities of materials. Then you study construction . . . from simple construction to more complicated construction.”²⁸⁶ Speyer embraced the Bauhaus curriculum. He believed in it and later relied on it for his own teaching. According to Speyer:

I think the greatest thing was that the curriculum was orderly, working from simple to complicated, from easy to difficult. It was planned to train a student to become an architect in the most direct fashion where the student might come in without any knowledge of architecture and emerge, if not as a great artist, at least as a thoroughly trained architect. If he were not a great creative architect, or even a mildly good creative architect, at least he knew his craft perfectly. He knew how to draw, how to build, how to plan, and he was assured of a basic professional status. If he was an artist, he could elevate any one of these professional assets to the level of fine art. I think that it was without question, from my point of view, the best and most basic curriculum that I could imagine. That is why first, I believe I profited to the extent I did and second, that I sponsored [the philosophy in my own] teaching for so many years. It simply was a profound belief. I think that it is exactly the opposite of most architectural school curricula in that it is so, I repeat, simple and direct in evolution, whereas the temptation in so many schools is the reverse. I made the point earlier that Mies always felt that it was very damaging for a student to be put into a situation where he could not find a solution.²⁸⁷

Before Speyer had ever gone to Chicago, he had accepted the new European aesthetic principles as his own, but under Mies, he developed his own concepts of open space, as exemplified in Speyer's master's thesis titled "The Space Concept in Modern Domestic Architecture."²⁸⁸

In 1941, on the same day that Speyer completed the master's program, Mies hired him as a faculty member for the Illinois Institute of Technology. In addition, that same year, the MoMA

²⁸⁶ Schulze, “Speyer’s Life and Career,” in *A. James Speyer*, 11.

²⁸⁷ Oral History of A. James Speyer, 61-62.

²⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

included drawings of his Sunstein house, along with images of Yeon's Watzek House, in *The Wooden House in America* exhibition (September 9–30, 1941) (figs. 4.4-4.5).²⁸⁹ The press release for the exhibition announces:

The exhibition briefly traces, through historical and explanatory material, the changes in wood construction and design as affected by the development of building tools, by the country's growing prosperity and by imported styles. Examples illustrated include the massive early hand-hewn log house, the heavy frame construction of New England* Colonial homes, the refinements of the Georgian era, the development of the light stud frame—an important American invention—and finally modern experiments in construction. Samples of typical American building woods as well as wood products such as plywood and wood fibre panels are also shown.²⁹⁰

Additionally, a drawing of the Sunstein House had also been included in the MoMA's Guide to Modern Architecture: Northeast States (fig. 4.4). Unfortunately, Speyer's professional life was put on hold when he was drafted by the military, where he served from 1941 to 1946 as a Major in the Intelligence Service for the U.S. Army and later as a Monuments Man. During that time, Speyer served on the monuments team, which prepared for his museum career while serving for the military. He recalled the time he spent in Korea, "We stayed in the villages where they had museums. The main thing we had to do was try to keep the GIs from pillaging the temples for souvenirs . . . I learned a lot about the art of Korea."

²⁸⁹ MoMA website, "exhibitions," September 29, 2016, <http://moma.org/calendar/exhibitions/3013?locale=en>

²⁹⁰ MoMA website, "press release," September 29, 2016, available online: http://moma.org/d/c/press_releases/W1siZiIsIjMyNTI1NyJdXQ.pdf?sha=18af997e6373432e

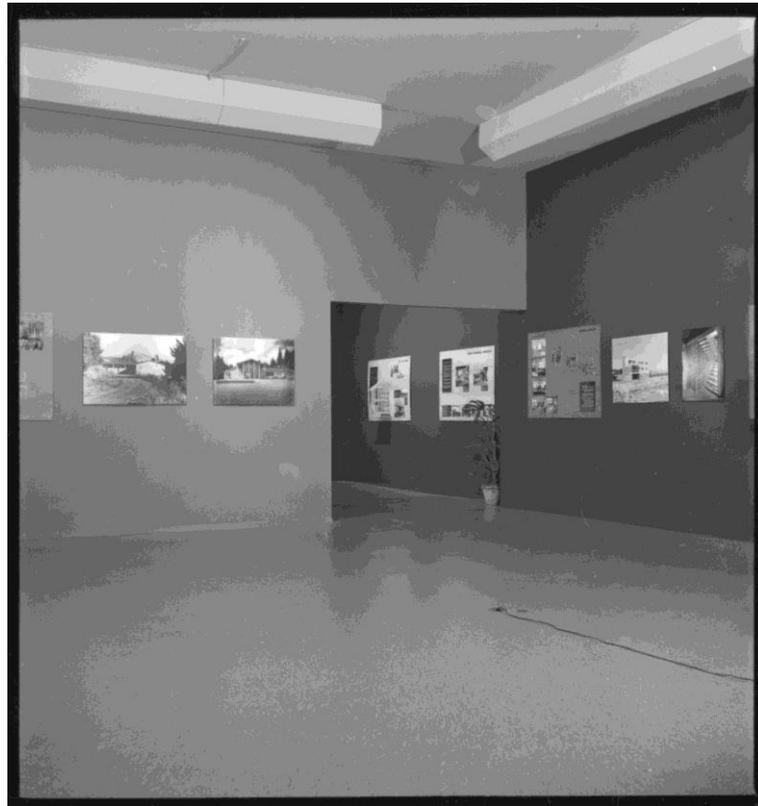


Figure 4.5. View of Watzek House (left) at the MoMA, Speyer's unrealized project, *The Sunstein House* was exhibited along with the Watzek House during *The Wooden House in America* (1941), MoMA website

When Speyer returned to Chicago from the war in 1946, he taught advanced and graduate architecture for Mies at IIT from 1946 to 1962, while simultaneously running his own architectural practice until 1957. Speyer utilized the Bauhaus techniques and the pedagogy he had learned from Mies; as an example, he instructed his students to design sculpture gardens for the museum.²⁹¹ While working as an architect, Speyer completed five houses and worked on several remodel jobs. The homes Speyer designed include: the Stanley G. Harris Residence in Glencoe, IL (1947); the Jerome Apt Residence in Pittsburgh, PA (1953); the Benjamin Rose

²⁹¹ John Vinci, "The Art of Installation," in *A. James Speyer*, 79.

Residence in Highland Park, IL (1953) (fig. 4.6); and the Herbert Greenwald Apartment Remodeling, Chicago, IL (1957). The most noteworthy of remodels was the one he did for Suzette Morton Zurcher, mainly because it was what led to his employment for the Art Institute of Chicago.

Speyer is remembered more for his work at the museum than for the residences that he designed. He especially enjoyed installing the artwork. Curator Anne Rorimer said, "in his area of expertise that he felt territorial about in a sort of literal way was the installation, and he was really known for his approach to installing art." Speyer attributes Mies, who had very high regards for museums, for helping influence his opinion of them, stating, "even my exposure to Mies's indoctrination helped convince me of this idea."²⁹²

Mies van der Rohe had what he called a hierarchy of values in architecture. At the top of this hierarchy was the church. He likened it to a pyramid or triangle, and at the very top was the church. Below the church was a great cultural institution of the museum. Below that ... was the university. Going down the hierarchy one ended up with buildings that were purely functional. But the museum was on a very high level. I also learned from Mies a great respect for museum installations and presentations. Among some of Mies's most significant executed projects, in fact I think some of his most significant works, were exhibitions in museums. We must not forget that even the Barcelona Pavilion was, in a sense, part of the museum installation although that was an exposition. I, therefore, always had a tremendous respect for museums and a great love for them as well.²⁹³

Open spaces that granted unrestricted viewing space were all aspects of Miesian aesthetics that inspired Speyer while at the Art Institute in Chicago. Speyer offered the viewer an aesthetic experience with his installations by creating precise conditions for looking and contemplating through gentle lighting, quality materials, and tranquil public spaces.

²⁹² Oral History A. James Speyer, 118.

²⁹³ Ibid.

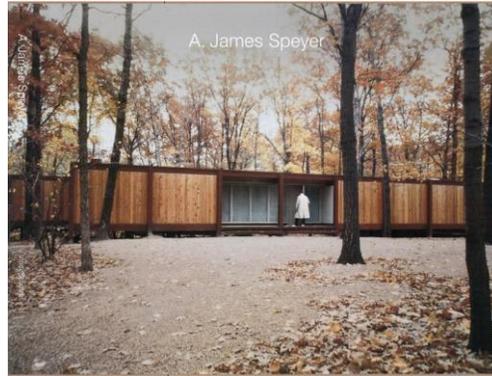


Figure 4.6. James Speyer's Rose House in Highland Park, image from the cover of John Vinci's *A. James Speyer*

In September, 1955, Speyer worked as the Chicago correspondent for *ARTnews* where he covered the local arts scene. As an arts writer, Speyer had to opportunity to connect with the local arts scene in Chicago. Covering Guido La Regina, an Italian painter who was showing at the Myrtle Todes Gallery, Speyer wrote, "It is difficult to have looked at this work in a gallery which emphasizes furniture and fashionable accessories and fits painting between home furnishings. The paintings were superior to the competitive paraphernalia, and yet they were disturbingly too comfortable there..."²⁹⁴ Speyer's writing gives insight to his curatorial approach. He did not mix decorative arts with fine art, as John Yeon and Laurence Sickman did with the Chinese Decorative Arts gallery at the Nelson Atkins. In addition, James Speyer conducted the Ford Foundation Seminar, "Looking at Modern Art," at the AIC. Speyer and fellow Chicago architect Daniel Brenner²⁹⁵ were in charge of ITT student exhibitions as well as

²⁹⁴ FN 10 in Lynne Warren, *art in Chicago 1945-1995*, (Chicago: Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, 1996), 66.

²⁹⁵ Daniel Brenner earned his architectural degree from Columbia University, but left his native New York to study under Mies in Chicago, where he completed his master's degree in 1949. Pauline Sagila and Robert V. Sharp, "From the Hand of Mies: Architectural Sketches from the

the "Good Design" exhibitions. Additionally, James Speyer and Daniel Brenner collaborated in designing the installation for an exhibition at The Arts Club of Chicago, *Sculpture and Painting by Albert Giacometti* (November 4-December 1, 1953) (fig. 4.7), and again, the following two years, Speyer and Brenner designed the *Good Design* exhibition at The Merchandise Mart (fig. 4.8-4.9).²⁹⁶

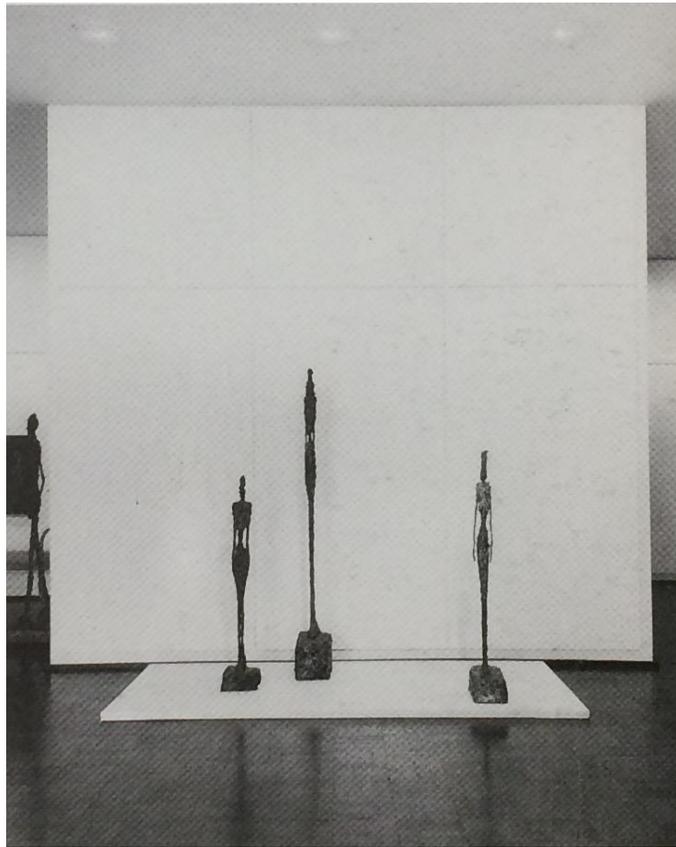


Figure 4.7. *Giacometti* exhibition at the Arts Club of Chicago, 1953, installation by Speyer and Brenner, from "The Art of Installation" by John Vinci in A. James Speyer, Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1997, 78.

Collection of A. James Speyer," *Art Institute of Chicago Museum Studies*, 21, no. 1, Notable Acquisitions at the Art Institute of Chicago, 1995, 57.

²⁹⁶"Good Design Press Release," accessed October 30, 2016, https://www.moma.org/momaorg/shared/pdfs/docs/press_archives/1801/releases/MOMA_1954_0022_21.pdf?2010

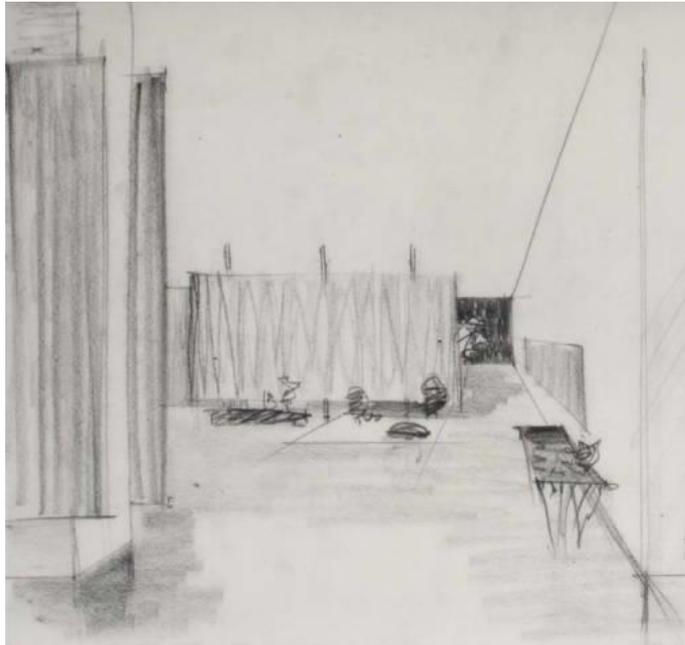


Figure 4.8. Speyer, Architectural Drawing, *Good Design* exhibition, Merchandise Mart, (1954), AIC website Figure James Speyer, Architectural Drawing, “Good Design” exhibition, Merchandise Mart, Chicago, Art Institute Chicago, Speyer, A. James, Collection, 1931-1996 (bulk 1947-1974), Collection # 1997.6, Series II, Box FF 2.7, RBA Digital File name 199706_120913_059.jpg, available online: <http://www.artic.edu/research/archival-collections>



Figure 4.9. *Good Design* (1955), installation by Speyer and Brenner, public domain, MoMA website

The 1954 *Good Design* exhibition marked the fifth-year anniversary of the *Good Design* program and the twenty-fifth anniversary of the MoMA. To commemorate the occasion, three “special retrospective exhibitions” were offered in a larger area of the Merchandise Mart. The first exhibition included 100 works that had been chosen by committee for their “excellence of design.” The selection committee consisted of: René d’Harnoncourt (MoMA director), Alfred H. Barr (founding MoMA director), Philip Johnson (director of MoMA’s department of architecture), Porter McCray (MoMA director of circulating exhibitions), and Edgar Kaufmann, Jr (curator of industrial design). The second exhibition showcased 100 photographs and textile samples that had been chosen from a *Retailing Daily* survey of manufactures that had been involved in the *Good Design* exhibitions. The final exhibition involved design schools that were responding to “what developments they believed would affect Americans’ way of life and their homes in the decade to come.”²⁹⁷ Speyer and Brenner also designed the 1955 *Good Design* exhibition, which, per *Interiors*, included works that “hardly qualify as home furnishings;” however superfluous some of the works might have been, they were noted as indicating “the broadening scope of Good Design.”²⁹⁸ Nonetheless, the installation follows Mies van der Rohe’s designs. Most notably, the hanging fabrics recall the *Silk exhibit* that Mies designed with Reich in Berlin, 1927 (fig. 2.18). Speyer’s friend, Edgar Kaufmann resigned from his position of director of design in 1955 because “he felt that his exhibition program had accomplished its

²⁹⁷ Arthur J. Pulos, *The American Design Adventure 1940-1975*, (Cambridge and London: MIT Press, 1988), 119.

²⁹⁸ *Interiors*, 147, quoted in Pulos, 121

original goal of making consumers and manufacturers aware of good design.”²⁹⁹

From 1957 to 1959 Speyer traveled to Greece on a Fulbright fellowship and taught architecture at the Athens Polytechnion. There, he fell in love with Greek architecture and art. Speyer remarked, "It was a reciprocal learning process . . . my appreciation for Byzantine art, which is considerable today, is based on the tenets that I picked up when I was teaching in Greece."³⁰⁰ No matter where Speyer was or what he was doing, he constantly expanded his knowledge about art, which would later benefit his museum career.

Morton Wing, Art Institute of Chicago

Speyer returned to the United States from Greece in 1959, during a time when the Art Institute of Chicago was in transition. In 1958, the AIC had restructured its organization by dividing the directorship into two positions, an administrative and a fine-arts director. Allen McNab, administrative director (1956-1965), focused on building a new wing to the south of the central building. Sterling Morton, from the Morton Salt Co. family, left \$1.2 million to the museum in his will for the construction of the addition. A committee at the AIC for the construction of the new wing chose Alfred Shaw of Shaw, Mentz, and Associates to design the wing. Shaw created a windowless stone block, made from Bedford limestone, the same material of the 1893 building. The building was capped with a cornice, and a glass and steel curtain wall connected the addition to the existing building (fig. 4.10). Inside the addition, framed by the curtain wall, the main ornament was a helical freestanding staircase that connected the upper and

²⁹⁹ Pulos also points out that others criticized Kaufmann’s *Good Design* exhibitions as an attempt from the MoMA “to force manufacturers and designers to subscribe to a rather narrow theory of what constituted good modern design.”, 121.

³⁰⁰ Franz Schulz, p. 45.

lower floors that provided additional exhibition space and galleries (figs. 4.11-4.12).³⁰¹ The upper level housed contemporary American art, and the lower level presented exhibitions.³⁰²



Figure 4.10. Morton Wing, Gregory H. Jenkins, Architect, AIA, Shaw Metz, Image A.AICH.MORT.09684, THE CHICAGO LOOP.org, accessed September 29, 2016, available online: <http://www.thechicagoloop.org/a.aich.mort.09684.html>

³⁰¹ Builders Ornamental Iron Company had seventeen men working 3 ½ weeks to build the staircase, which had been recognized for “meticulous and skillful craftsmanship.” It was the first cantilever helical staircase that the 45-year-old firm had designed. The railing is aluminum and the stairs are steel. “Morton Wing Stair’s Glisten in the Art Institute,” *Chicago Tribune*, Sunday, March 20, 1966, Section 3A, 1.

³⁰² Robert Bruegmann, “The Art Institute Expands: Challenges of Mid-Century,” *Art Institute of Chicago Museum Studies*, Vol. 14, No. 1 (1988), 71-72.



Figure 4.11. Staircase that connected the upper and lower floors of the Morton Wing, AIC Archives



Figure 4.12. Man descending staircase, Morton Wing, 2014, Photo credit: Melinda McVay

During the transition, shortly before construction began, Katherine Kuh, the first Curator of Modern Painting and Sculpture for the AIC, had stepped down, so, indeed, the museum needed a new curator. Suzette Morton Zurcher, daughter of Sterling Morton and former client of Speyer, was a museum trustee, and with her insistence, the fine-arts director, John Maxon (1958-1965), asked Speyer to design and oversee the installation of the twentieth-century collection in the new Morton Wing and offered him the new curatorship. Speyer accepted the Morton installation immediately, but had to think about the curator position. Eventually, with the enticement of a nine-month academic work calendar that enabled Speyer to spend the summers in Hydra, he became the museum's second curator of twentieth-century art on September 1, 1961.³⁰³

The first major installation Speyer designed was for the museum's new Morton Wing in 1962.³⁰⁴ For Mies biographer Franz Schulze, dealing with the "function" of space is what most inspired James Speyer.³⁰⁵ His way of handling the Morton Wing space set a precedent for future installations.³⁰⁶ The Morton Wing gallery is a large, open rectangular space without windows or any other source of natural lighting except what might seep in from the adjacent stair hall. The high ceilings (22 ft. high) and only one entrance to the gallery required someone who enjoyed working with open space. Speyer used hanging vertical panels, movable walls, limestone benches, and sculptures placed on custom built pedestals and platforms to organize the space and

³⁰³ John Vinci, "The Art of Installation," A. *James Speyer*, 45-46. and AIC Archives, A. James Speyer's "Curriculum Vitae," Box 32: Miscellaneous, Folder 1: Curriculum Vitae, September 25, 1979.

³⁰⁴ Courtney Graham Donnell, preface for *Twentieth-Century European Paintings* by A. James Speyer, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1980), 8.

³⁰⁵ Franz Schulze, A. *James Speyer*, 50.

³⁰⁶ Vinci, 82.

to create a traffic flow throughout the gallery. In order to do this, along with low burlap covered portable walls, Speyer used three colorful fabric covered partitions that reached from the floor to the ceiling to provide a traffic flow within the space. These permanent partitions were 21'7" in height and were secured to the wood floors with three 1/8 inch screws at the base and weighted with sand for added weight and stability.³⁰⁷

Like Byzantine icon paintings, the floor to ceiling partitions were trimmed in gold-leaf molding. These partitions were burnt umber, ocher, and deep cerulean.³⁰⁸ Speyer had partitioned interior space with panels of colored glass for the Pittsburgh Plate Glass Company, and, of course, his mentor Mies van der Rohe, and Herbert Bayer were hanging panels and using movable walls to divide gallery spaces years before Speyer worked for the Art Institute. Their influence is seen in many facets throughout Speyer's tenure at the museum in how he approached exhibition design. In an essay for the Minnesota Society for Architectural Historians, Maura Lucking sees these partitions as relating to Speyer's residential design. Lucking suggests that Speyer was mainly influenced by residential architecture and the partitions served as thresholds into the space.³⁰⁹ Although Lucking offers valuable insight into connections between Speyer's installations and his domestic work, the author fails to consider the broader aesthetic issue.

³⁰⁷ The measurements of the partitions' width was not included in the internal memo. A. James Speyer, "Securing full height partitions: 2nd floor Morton Wing," internal AIC memo to Mr. Harold Buddenbohm, Superintendent, dated September 5, 1962, AIC A. James Speyer curatorial archives.

³⁰⁸ Vinci, 81.

³⁰⁹ Maura Lucking, "At Home in the Museum: James Speyer's domestication of the modern exhibition," for the Minnesota Society of Architectural Historians, September 17, 2011, accessed October 20, 2014, available for download on Academia: https://www.academia.edu/828892/At_Home_in_the_Museum_James_Speyers_Domestication_of_the_Modern_Exhibition

Instead of a singular attentiveness of residential architecture, by examining Mies van der Rohe's concern with art display, we can gain the most insight into Speyer's installation design. In the catalogue for the Mies van der Rohe exhibit Speyer curated, he quoted Mies:

The first problem is to establish the museum as a center for the enjoyment, not the interment of art. . . . the barrier between the art work and the living community is erased by a garden approach for the display of sculpture. Interior sculpture enjoy an equal spatial freedom, because the open plan permits them to be seen against the surrounding hills. The architectural space, thus achieved, becomes a defining rather than a confining space . . . Small pictures would be exhibited on free-standing walls.³¹⁰

The Morton Wing installation shows that Speyer followed the same aesthetic path as Mies. The new gallery was a gigantic second floor room with no views of a garden, so Speyer hung landscape paintings, like Claude Monet's *Water Lilly Garden* (1900) and *Water Lilies* (1920) to serve as a "garden approach for the display of sculpture" (fig. 4.13). Speyer also used the lower free-standing, burlap covered walls to display smaller pictures (figs. 4.17).



Figure 4.13. Monet's *Water Lilies* in the Morton Wing, Box FF, courtesy of AIC Archives

³¹⁰ James Speyer, *Mies van der Rohe*, (Chicago: The Art Institute of Chicago, 1968), 58.

For the opening of the Morton Wing, Speyer wanted to remove the glass from the paintings the 20th Century Collection on the second floor. He wrote to Mr. A. Jakstas, Conservator, asking him to come and inspect the paintings that were glazed, and he specifically asked Jakstas to inspect certain art works.³¹¹ Speyer had also inspected all the frames for the installation and made a list of frames that needed to be replaced, repainted, lined, cut down, or touched up. According to Speyer, Bonnard's *La Seine a Vernon* needed a new frame, but "everybody will be against it." Kandinsky's *Troika* needed a new frame or needed to be repainted, but the liner was "NOT" to be touched. A frame from a Monet was cut down for *Still Life Vase with Flowers* by Redon.³¹² Speyer chose 120 artists to exhibit for the inaugural Morton Wing installation—92 of the works were paintings, and 27 were sculptures.

Speyer decided early on in his museum career to hang paintings at a lower level. Similar to Mies van der Rohe, Alfred Barr's MoMA hang and the Bauhaus technique, Speyer practiced this in Chicago. He did so to encourage an intimate relationship between the art work and the audience, as well as to promote the enjoyment of art.³¹³ In 1966, Speyer claimed, "Most of the paintings are hung at a lower level than is usual to facilitate examination, to relate them more closely to the spectator's plane and to reduce the institutional feeling which arises when a work

³¹¹ Four Kandinsky paintings: *Improvisation with Green Center*, *Improvisation No.30*, *Troika*, and *Landscape with Two Poplars*; *La Seine a Vernon* by Bonnard; four Gris paintings: *The Checkerboard*, *Portrait of Picasso*, *A Table at a Café (Abstraction in Gray)*, *Abstraction (Still Life With Guitar)*; the Monets: *Vétheuil*, *Vétheuil at Sunset*, and the Picassos. James Speyer, internal memo to Mr. A. Jakstas, Conservator, dated September 6, 1962, and internal memo of a list of the paintings and sculptures to be exhibited in gallery 228, dated October 24, 1962, A. James Speyer Curatorial Files, AIC Archives.

³¹² James Speyer, internal memo titled "Frames," not dated, A. James Speyer Curatorial Files, AIC Archives.

³¹³ Vinci, 81.

of art gives the impression of being arbitrarily placed in relation to the visitor- something which can cause estrangement.”³¹⁴ However, Speyer did not hang all the works low. For works of abstract art that Speyer believed needed to be seen from far away, he hung them high, so they could be seen as a full composition. Speyer explained, “Some paintings, however, in which the surface is important and whose visual message operates from a distance, are hung high. The intention has been to create in the gallery a scintillating effect and at the same time to preserve its dignity.”³¹⁵ For example, *Edtaonisl* (1913) by Francis Picabia was hung a few inches below the ceiling (figs. 4.17).³¹⁶ Inspired by Marcel Duchamp’s type of painting that fused cubism with pseudo-diagrams, Picabia established a new visual language, which *Edtaonisl* (Ecclesiastic) is a perfect example. Indeed, Speyer was aware of Picabia’s visual language; thus, he considered the work and the artist’s intention and how they were communicated to the viewer. All of these factors went into Speyer’s decision process during installation.



Figure 4.17. Morton Wing, installation designed and curated by James Speyer, low, moveable walls displayed smaller works, Morton Wing Archives, A. James Speyer Collection, photo credit: Hedrich-Blessing, Box FF, courtesy of AIC archives

³¹⁴ Vinci, 81.

³¹⁵ Ibid., 82.

³¹⁶ Ibid., 81.

The American Exhibition

After installing the Morton Wing, Speyer began his career at the museum by upsetting many people with his reconfiguration of the annually held American Exhibition. Speyer cut down the size of the American exhibition with the 65th *Annual American Exhibition* (January 6-February 5, 1961) at the Art Institute. Speyer explained his intention in the catalogue:

The Sixty-fourth Exhibition of American Art has no polemical purpose; it does not seek to prove a thesis. The sole aim has been to give a cross-section of what is being done in America today, from coast to coast, and from the visual right to the visual left. The material has been chosen only because each item has seemed to be *as good of its kind* as could be obtained. The men and women presented range from the dedicated abstractionist who has been willing (and sometimes anxious) to sacrifice everything to the risk which action painting requires, through the new Dadaists, backed to the old-fashioned practitioner who seeks to communicate precisely the image in his mind. It is not pretended that the exhibition is complete, or that what is included is the only or even, more modestly, the best way. The sole purpose has been to present pictures which are as good as could be found in the hope that the visitor may discover himself what the state of American art is in 1961 or, at least, a part of it.³¹⁷

The *Chicago Daily Tribune*, quoted Speyer, "the Chicago public [was] no longer completely dependent upon the Art Institute Annual for its knowledge of American painting and sculpture." Speyer believed that "it [seemed] more meaningful to shift emphasis from overall coverage to a degree of concentration." He stated that the artists he had chosen "[demonstrated] certain directions in painting and sculpture which [seemed] significant in the United States at [that] time."³¹⁸ The previous exhibition consisted of 211 paintings and 37 sculptures by 248 artists and was cut down to 51 paintings and 38 sculptures by 57 artists.³¹⁹ Speyer's designs for the

³¹⁷ AIC, *64th Annual American Exhibition: Painting and Sculpture*, (Chicago: AIC, 1961), forward.

³¹⁸ Edith Weigle, "Cuts Size of Noted Art Show," in the *Chicago Daily Tribune*, Dec. 22, 1961, A6.

³¹⁹ *Ibid.*

American exhibitions continued to represent the modernist ethic, less is more (figs. 4.18-4.19).

According to the Museum of Contemporary of Art in Chicago, Speyer “helped bring about a change in AIC’s relationship with its community of artists,” for the previous curator, Katherine Kuh, was “inadequate” at “accommodating the emerging art scene.” Speyer’s relationship with various Chicago artists that had been cultivated over the years, allowed him to improve and enlarge the AIC’s relationship with its artists’ community. More importantly, Speyer’s American shows and the reformed Annual Exhibition by Artists of Chicago and Vicinity “mounted at least two major contemporary exhibitions in a season.”³²⁰ Thus, from the beginning, Speyer gained critical acclaim for his exhibition design. On the front page, the newspaper reported:

The exhibition is dramatically staged by Mr. Speyer. He has placed a number of shoulder height, white pedestals, each with its own piece of sculpture, in two parallel rows leading from the entrance of Gunsaulus hall down the gallery toward the center, where against a huge black backdrop, and spectacularly lighted is an enormous nonobjective puzzle by Louise Nevelson of New York . . . A second highly dramatic exhibit is a huge, mural like unframed oil by Milton Resnick, called "mound," seen against another room divider panel, this one painted white.³²¹

Although most critics praised Speyer’s installation, he did not escape criticism. *Chicago Daily Tribune* writer, Edith Weigle, was clearly not pleased with Speyer's decision to cut the scale of the show and exhibit mainly New York artists because she believed that the work did not represent the art in the country. She wrote:

³²⁰ Lynne Warren, *Art in Chicago 1945-1995*, (Chicago: Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, 1996), 77.

³²¹ Edith Weigle, “New York Artists Score Heavily,” in the *Chicago Daily Tribune*, January 5, 1962, A1.

It is attention-getting because of the publicity it receives. The New York school has been the fashion among the taste makers for years. Although its leaders consistently repeat themselves, they are still on view in Manhattan. Action painting, expressionism and abstract expressionism, as well as "hard edge" or precisionist painting--all facets of avant-garde art-- flourish in this American exhibition. There is only one example of complete realism . . . none of them were invited. This exhibition would be the better for the inclusion of more varied types of paintings.³²²

Although Weigle may not have agreed with the size of the exhibition, she again praised the exhibition design, "A. James Speyer, curator of contemporary art at the institute, has staged the exhibition in a dramatic, exciting fashion. It is arresting from beginning to end³²³



Figure 4.18. 65th Annual American Exhibition (Jan.5-Feb.18, 1962), AIC, installation design by James Speyer, courtesy of Art Institute of Chicago, public domain

³²² Edith Weigle, "Variety Missing In Show," in the *Chicago Daily Tribune*, January 14, 1962, W2.

³²³ Edith Weigle, "Variety Missing In Show," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, January 14, 1962, W2.



Figure 4.19. 65th Annual American Exhibition (Jan.5-Feb.18, 1962), AIC, installation design by James Speyer, courtesy of Art Institute of Chicago, public domain

For the 66th annual American Exhibition, Speyer compared Abstract Expressionism with Pop Art. In the catalog's forward, Speyer explained his decision to reduce the size of the exhibition.

He wrote:

The 66th Annual Exhibition of American Painting and Sculpture is directly related to last year's 65th Exhibition. This is . . . planned to convey an idea of the present state of art in the United States by isolating different trends each year. The number of artists and their works is approximately the same as last year; no individual who exhibited in 1961 is represented. The exhibition submits interesting trends by significant contemporary painters and sculptors. By definition, this cycle, and this particular show, has been restricted to a small group whose work seems valuable individually and by juxtaposition. By sequestering the work of a limited number of artists each year in our galleries, we feel that the Chicago community is able to study the presentation in more depth, thus more effectively, than by means of the vast, omnibus exhibition which impossibly purports to be all-inclusive.³²⁴

Similar to John Yeon, Speyer composed a space where, in designs like his mentor Mies, less was more. Both architects wanted to create meditative spaces; neither of them wanted to overwhelm the viewers with mass accumulation. Composition is key to understanding both Yeon's and Speyer's spaces, for they both intended on creating quiet, contemplative spaces for viewing works of art.

Again, Speyer was met with criticism for changing the American Exhibition. Weigle reminded her readers that the American exhibitions used to be "large shows aimed to give as wide a view as possible of current paintings and sculptures in this country. When Speyer took over and put on his first American exhibition . . . he cut it down . . . This year he had pared the number down again." In response to Speyer offering the community a way "to study the presentation in more depth," Weigle blasted Ellsworth Kelly. "Last year there was not too much

³²⁴ James Speyer, *Directions in Contemporary Painting and Sculpture 66th American Exhibition*, (Chicago: Art Institute of Chicago, 1963), forward.

to study, however. The \$1,500 Flora Mayer Witkowsky prize, for example went to the way out 'hard edge' painting by Ellsworth Kelly of New York, called 'Black and White.' There was nothing to study in this picture except a smooth expanse of black paint intersected by strips of white."³²⁵ Once more, Speyer was criticized for showing too many New York artists and not showing enough Chicago artists.³²⁶ Speyer would go on to curate many more American exhibitions, which would reach critical acclaim. He made a habit of showing fewer artists, and "during the 1960s and 1970s the show became one of the most eagerly anticipated and widely reported events on the Art Institute's calendar."³²⁷

Mies van der Rohe Exhibition: A Tribute to the Master

Mies van der Rohe was a retrospective exhibition organized by Speyer at the Art Institute of Chicago in collaboration with The Graham Foundation for Advanced Studied in Fine Arts, held at the AIC April 27-June 30, 1968 before traveling to the Akedemie der Künste, Berlin (August 25-September 22, 1968); the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis (November 2-December 15, 1968); the National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa (January 25-February 23, 1969); and finally, the Amon Carter Museum of Western Art, Fort Worth (March 20-May 4, 1969). The Chicago inaugural exhibition was touted by James Speyer as the first exhibition in the city that was

³²⁵ Edith Weigle, "The Wonderful World of Art: American Show Zaniest Yet!," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, January 6, 1963, F4.

³²⁶ James Speyer writes an apologia for the public disguised as "an informal comment on what a few private galleries are offering." In it, he explains, "the demands of work in the Art Institute are such that it is difficult ever to find enough free hours to maintain close contact with the activities of private galleries in Chicago . . . it is of the utmost importance to keep in touch with these events, both for my own edification and because they relate to the city's total activity in the arts." A. James Speyer, "This Gallery Tour is Rewarding" in the *Chicago Tribune*, May 5, 1963, E5.

³²⁷ Schulze, 50.

devoted to his mentor although Speyer was in Chicago, studying under van der Rohe when the Art Institute exhibited Mies van der Rohe's works in 1938.³²⁸ Speyer would have been aware of this exhibit because in 1938, the architecture classes for the Armour Institute were held upstairs in the lofts at the Art Institute on Michigan Avenue. Nonetheless, John Maxon agreed with Speyer that AIC pay tribute to the eighty-year-old architect who had lived and practiced architecture for over thirty years in Chicago.



Figure 4.20. Mies van der Rohe was a retrospective exhibition organized by James Speyer at the Art Institute of Chicago, courtesy Art Institute Chicago archives

³²⁸ *Architecture by Mies van der Rohe* lasted for a month (December 15, 1938- January 15, 1939) referenced in Pauline Saliga and Robert V. Sharp, “From the Hand of Mies: Architectural Sketches from the Collection of A. James Speyer,” *Art Institute of Chicago Museum Studies*, Vol. 21, No. 1, *Notable Acquisitions at The Art Institute of Chicago* (1995), 7.

Indeed, Speyer wanted to show the architecture, exhibitions, and projects, but most of all he wanted the installation to create a "feeling" of Miesian space.³²⁹ Speyer organized the exhibition and chose not to take a comprehensive approach by showing the entirety of Mies van der Rohe's work; rather, Speyer focused on presenting the "most significant of his projects." Speyer designed the installation and Mies chose the works. Speyer composed the installation in the same manner that Mies had for his exhibition at MoMA, *The Architecture of Mies van der Rohe* (September 16, 1947–January 25, 1948). According to Speyer, the projects that Mies had selected for the AIC show constituted "a definitive advance in principle."³³⁰ Speyer grouped the projects into four groups: high buildings, low buildings, groups of building, and furniture and intended for the categories to "show a full progression, from one solution to the next." He explained: "It is hope this formal division may clarify the boldness of innovation in related examples to facilitate a close and limited comparison which will more clearly show just how these types develop, and how the refinement and extension of an idea takes form."³³¹ The exhibition style was aesthetic, not didactic.³³² Speyer used labels sparingly and offered minimal information.

In an essay about Mies's drawings that were donated by Speyer to the Art Institute, Pauline Saliga, Associate Curator of Architecture for the Art Institute of Chicago, and Robert V. Sharp, the museum's Associate Director of Publications, indicate that what Speyer shows with the Mies exhibitions is a continuity in the architect's work. "Continuity between Mies's projects

³²⁹ A. James Speyer, *Oral History*, 122.

³³⁰ A. James Speyer, "Mies Van Der Rohe Tape," transcript for taped lecture, 2, in James Speyer Curatorial, AIC archives.

³³¹ *Ibid.*

³³² A. James Speyer, *Oral History*, 122-23.

in Germany and Chicago; continuity in his use of universal open space for all building types, whether they were residences, post offices, or art museums; and continuity in his philosophy of simplicity for furniture design, whether the materials were steel and leather or molded plastic.”³³³ Large blowups of pictures and drawings were shown with models and original drawings. Again, Speyer's intent was to give the museum audience the impression that they were in a Miesian space. The giant panels served as walls, guiding the viewers through the exhibition the same way that they might move through one of Mies van der Rohe's buildings.

Speyer included Mies-designed furniture throughout the gallery and in the Morton wing stairhall for seating. He wrote in the catalog that the way the furniture is arranged matters just as much as the singular piece. In regards to Miesian interiors, Speyer claimed, “The chief characteristic of his interiors is their space: the scale, the freedom of individual elements and the openness. By contrast the furniture arrangements are concentrated, and if there are several groups, these are spaced apart from one another, with uninterrupted expanses of floor between. The groupings are architectural in their organization.”³³⁴ Most often, Mies would arrange furniture on a rug “to hold” the furniture together. Moreover, the rug was used “on the horizontal surface exactly as the plane of building material is used in a vertical sense for the wall.”³³⁵ Indeed, less is more for both Mies and Speyer. Speyer writes, “The most evident characteristic of Mies’ furniture arrangement is its clarity; each item stands independently, although he uses chairs, for example, in repetition, pairs, or even sequences of the same piece. The interior is never cluttered; the table surfaces are seen as material, not the support for irrelevant objects;

³³³ Saliga and Sharp, 58.

³³⁴ Speyer, 106.

³³⁵ Ibid.

when sculpture or painting is used, it is given the emphasis of free placement in relation to the walls or furniture...”³³⁶

Speyer’s *Mies van der Rohe* exhibition was very similar to the exhibition that Mies designed for his work at MoMA in 1947-1948. Like Mies, Speyer hung the works low. Also, he hung them high (figs. 4.20-4.21). Speyer presented large Photostats of Mies van der Rohe’s architectural work; whereas, Mies presented large images of his work on moveable walls. Nonetheless, the effect was the same. When images display architecture, the image needs to be larger than the human body. Otherwise, the buildings that are being presented appear too diminutive for one to relate to it as architecture. They seem too small. They appear to be like a doll house. The viewer doesn’t relate to it as architecture. Therefore, with both Mies van der Rohe’s and Speyer’s exhibitions, images of the buildings are blown up to a much larger scale than the architectural drawings and plans.



Figure 4.21. Mies van der Rohe was a retrospective exhibition organized by James Speyer at the Art Institute of Chicago, courtesy of the Art Institute Chicago archives

³³⁶ Ibid.

James Speyer composed spaces of refined balance. His elegant installations communicated a dynamism similar to those designed by his mentor, Mies van der Rohe. Indeed, Speyer's installation maintained a non-linear spatial quality. Spaces were open and free-flowing. His designs were non-didactic, for his priority was to provide "a setting for attentive viewing and refined conversation."³³⁷ Following Mies van der Rohe, the MoMA, and the Bauhaus aesthetics, Speyer believed that a minimal aesthetic was more powerful and effective. Like Yeon, Speyer compressed the selection of works of art in the installations he designed to create an optimal viewing experience for the museum visitor. Also, in line with Yeon's approach, Speyer's installation work is best understood as careful compositions. Speyer was a bourgeois architect whose designs can best be seen as formal compositions. His installations relied on space, color, form, and light to create three-dimensional spaces that referenced sublimity, simplicity, asymmetry, and tranquility. His designed spaces utilized asymmetry while still, appearing uncomplicated. Simplicity, for both Yeon and Speyer, was without excessive ornamentation. Speyer's compositions utilized his architectural training, skill, talent, and a deep understanding of the works that were displayed. His experiences and influences, like Pittsburg Plate Glass Company, the MoMA and Mies, played a part in the installations that he designed.

³³⁷ Andrew McClellan, *The Art Museum from Boullée to Bilbao*, (Berkeley: Univ. Of California Press, 2008), 55.

CHAPTER FIVE

LINA BO BARDI: LIBERATING RATIONALISM

Lina Bo Bardi removed paintings from the walls. This act of liberation adds to the dialogue because it unveils a synthesis of Italian and Brazilian politics and culture. Accessible, unrestricted, communal spaces, floating, weightless supports, paintings freed from the walls with non-hierarchical associations, “poor architecture,” and handmade works best characterize her installation designs. Bo Bardi’s work stems from the Italian Rationalist designs as they were restated in Brazil. Like John Yeon and James Speyer, she designed spaces that exhibited a levitational quality. Works of art appeared to be floating in the galleries, free from gravity and restraints. Although Bo Bardi’s early architectural education began in the eternal city of Rome, full of tradition and meaning, tradition gave way to innovation when the young architect left for Milan, the center in Italian design where Bo Bardi encountered influential personalities, the war, and devastation before she found her home in Brazil.

Background

Achillina "Lina" di Enrico Bo (1914-1992) was born in Rome, Italy. Although her mother had hoped that she would follow a conventional path for an Italian woman, Lina Bo Bardi resembled her father, inheriting his contrarian attitude and artistic talent. Enrico Bo exhibited a certain "anarchist free will" when it came to governing his household, and he was "an extroverted and passionate man," according to Bo Bardi's biographer, A. Lima, who writes "he likely offered young Lina a model for being inventive and for warding off difficult emotions." A. Lima points out that Lina had remembered her father as having good "technical, manual, and

visual skills.”³³⁸ By day, Enrico built and renovated homes in Rome; however, he would have preferred to work as an artist. Lina's father kept up with the latest artistic trends, maintained friendships with artists, and painted futuristic compositions and folksy themes in metaphysical settings that were often populated with vibrant characters.³³⁹ Enrico taught his daughter the basics of art, including perspective and color, and he taught her how to draw. When Lina was a child, she created colorful drawings that concentrated on populated urban spaces, rural Mediterranean architecture, confident feminine figures, and whimsical metaphysical subjects. These early drawings marked the beginning of her aesthetic. Her interest in vegetation, architecture, the use of flowing, black lines, and rich colors appeared first in her drawings when she was eleven years old and continued into old age (fig. 5.1). Enrico Bo introduced his daughter to other artists, in particular, to his friend, Giorgio de Chirico, who painted a portrait of Lina (fig. 5.2). Indeed, since childhood, Lina Bo Bardi kept in tune with Futurism.³⁴⁰ Besides her father, Lina Bo also credits her uncle, Natale Alberto Simeoni as one who had an effect on her during childhood. Simeoni was a bohemian writer with Fascist views who would introduce Lina to the theater. As an adult, Lina Bo Bardi designed film and theater sets and costumes. Indeed, Lina Bo's exposure to theater, art, and politics as a child would have an impact on her, develop over time, and surface in her mature work.

³³⁸ Lima, 6.

³³⁹ Lima, 7.

³⁴⁰ Lina Bo has posed for a Giorgio de Chirico portrait, and one can see a de Chirico influence in her later design work.



Figure 5.1. Lina Bo Bardi, watercolor and graphite on paper, Personal Archive, © Instituto Lina Bo e P.M. Bardi/foto: Henrique Luz, courtesy of Bardi Institute, public domain, accessed December 1, 2016, available online at: http://www.institutobardi.com.br/desenhos_simples.asp?Obra_Codigo=6



Figure 5.2. *Portrait of Lina*, Giorgio De Chirico, 1941, From Instituto Lina Bo e P.M. Bardi, *Lina Bo Bardi*, São Paulo: 1996, 32.

Lina grew up in Rome during its transformation to the center of Benito Mussolini's Fascist administration. When Lina was in secondary school, her father's renovation business was thriving, so the family moved to a more affluent neighborhood where they shared a back wall to *Villa Torlonia*, Mussolini's residence for almost twenty years after he had ascended to power. Lina's grades were not good enough to qualify for the *Liceo Classico* (classical lyceum); however, her drawing capabilities and skills helped her enter in the *Liceo Artistico di Roma* (art lyceum) from 1930-1934 where she studied to become a visual arts teacher.³⁴¹

³⁴¹ Lima, 9.

After Lina graduated in the fall of 1934 from the lyceum, she immediately enrolled in the *Scuola di Architettura* (School of Architecture) at the University of Rome, an almost exclusively male institution. From the onset, Mussolini's fascist government used architecture as a display of power and the university's architecture program supported the Duce's initiative. Mussolini first began aligning fascism with architecture through syndication. In 1919, the University of Rome was the first Italian institution to have a professional architecture program that was separate from the civil engineer program. With the institutionalization of the profession, as with all of the other trades during the time, the Fascist government established the national syndicate of architects.

Terry Kirk explains:

The hierarchical order of the university reflects the nature of Fascist governance. To combat bourgeois individualism, the PNF contrived a militarization of society from national economic policies at the top down to family management programs. A new national chamber of commerce controlled the country's production through syndicates. To regulate Italian society outside the workplace, entirely original structures were devised: institutions for adult recreation after work and for maternity and infant care; paramilitary scout clubs for children; and for the aged, the war veterans' associations. These social groups gave Italians for the first time a clear sense of identity outside the traditional family and direct participation in the hierarchies of the state.³⁴²

Architectural historian Spiro Kostof shows how Mussolini used architecture in Rome (and other parts of Italy) as propaganda for the State. Modeling himself after Augustus, the founder of the Roman Empire, Benito Mussolini saw architecture as the best testimonial of greatness and sought to emulate the grand manner of history. A master scenographer, Mussolini restored specific sites and manipulated them to enhance his regime. The past was unearthed, framed, and used to promote fascism. Mussolini appropriated the great Roman Emperor Augustus as the most

³⁴² Terry Kirk, *The Architecture of Modern Italy 1900-present*. Volume 2, Princeton Architectural Press, 2005, p. 95.

exemplary historical figure who set the standard for Fascist Italy.

While Lina was studying art at the lyceum, in a symbolic effort of connecting Fascism to the Roman Empire, Mussolini prompted the restoration of the tomb of Augustus. The language of "liberating," "excavating," and "showcasing" helped set the tomb, along with other monuments in Rome and throughout Italy, within a fascist context. For Kostof, this was not a completely new idea, for "liberating" monuments was foremost in everyone's minds ever since the preservation movement of the nineteenth century. Nonetheless, beginning in the early twenties and culminating in 1932 project, Mussolini brought scenographic isolation to monuments in Rome, claiming that "monuments must lum gigantic in their necessary solitude."³⁴³ The city operated like a museum. Architectural historian D. Medina Lasansky writes, "The state of decadence and moral decline that the regime believed it had inherited from the previous administration was redressed through the practice of 'liberating' buildings from the accretions of intervening cultures and centuries. Once isolated, it was argued that building acquired a more powerful presence. They became ... more monumental."³⁴⁴ This chapter will show how this concept of isolation also appeared in Lina's museum design.

The architectural rhetoric during the time was led by Lina's senior professors at the University of Rome, architects Gustavo Giovannoni and Marcello Piacentini. Mussolini's

³⁴³ Spiro Kostof, "Fascist and Nazi Architecture and Planning. Mussolini's "linea diretta" redesign of Rome contrasted with Hitler and Speer's plan for Berlin," Pt. 22, April 18, 1991, Lectures from Architecture 170 class, University of Berkeley, last viewed 3/18/2016, available online:

<http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/video/catalog/EFZIKJmSEeOaQoD510pG4A/MBIqVHTt5RGxhKfq-ZLr8g/1458351958>

³⁴⁴ D. Medina Lasansky, *The Renaissance Perfected Architecture, Spectacle, & Tourism in Fascist Italy*, University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2004, p. 181.

ambitious renovation projects were conceived and brought to fruition by both Giovannoni and Piacentini. At the University of Rome Architectural School, Lina would obtain a traditional foundation that would later add to her ideas about social projects, conservation and museum display.

The school was strictly academic, adhering to a pedagogy that held to the neoclassical principles laid out by Giovannoni and Piacentini for Mussolini's fascist regime.³⁴⁵ Gustavo Giovannoni was one of the most influential figures in Italy during the time. He was the dean of the school, a well-known town planner, architectural writer and historian who wrote about sites of scenography, claiming that buildings should belong to their surroundings in order to create a unitary harmonic visual experience. His book, *Vecchie città ed edilizia nuova*, called for "a city as a 'palimpsest' of old and new."³⁴⁶ His theories of *ambietismo* (contextualism) "proposed to ground visual and experimental qualities of urban space into contextual situations, and for his method of scientific restoration, which promoted the preservation of ancient monuments based on rigorous documentation and their integration into the urban fabric."³⁴⁷ Catherine Veikos claims that Giovannoni's ideas remained with Lina for years after she left Italy. Veikos writes: "This complementarity between old and new, the importance of the physical attributes of landscape and regional materials, colors and workmanship, in the formulation of an architectural language had a strong influence on Lina, and she regarded Giovannoni as one of her most important teachers."³⁴⁸

³⁴⁵ Lima, 12.

³⁴⁶ Catherine Veikos, *Lina Bo Bardi The Theory of Architectural Practice*, (New York: Routledge, 2014), 12.

³⁴⁷ Lima, 10.

³⁴⁸ Veikos, 12.

Giovannoni adhered to tradition; whereas his colleague, Piacentini, a bit younger, accepted more modern approaches to architecture and was less of a traditionalist. However, unlike the modernist in Italy, Piacentini was not considered a rationalist, for the rationalist architects were "excessively radical and arrogant."³⁴⁹ Piacentini's book, *Architettura d'oggi* called for an Italian modernization which adhered to "Italian tradition, history, and climate."³⁵⁰ Piacentini was a practicing architect and the leader of the National Fascist Union of Architects. The magazine, *Architettura*, published by Piacentini and the National Fascist Union, promoted "*architettura minore*" (minor architecture) as Italian vernacular.³⁵¹ Both Giovannoni and Piacentini resisted the aesthetics of the international avant-gardes and instead promoted the traditional Italian aesthetic in contemporary practice.

Lina studied Roman architectural history and took technical courses for the first two years in architectural school. In her biographical writings, she wrote that her formal education followed the dictates of Giovannoni and Piacentini. Lina accredits the first two years under their guidance "as a pedagogical challenge that combined technical training and courses about the capital's historical architecture."³⁵² Lina observed in her notes, "Many students ran out of steam after the first year because [of the] *biennio delle matematiche* [two year core program in sciences]' taught by professors in the engineering school."³⁵³ Her proceeding *triennio d'applicazione* (three year practical program) focused on design and building systems, which

³⁴⁹ Lima, 13.

³⁵⁰ Veikos, 12.

³⁵¹ Veikos, 12.

³⁵² Tentori, *Quattro architetti brasiliani e un uomo eccezionale*, 22, referenced in Lima, 14.

³⁵³ Lima, 14, ([footnote 18] original source, Fasolo, *La Facolta di Arcitettura di Roma*, 10.)

utilized Giovannoni's restoration method.³⁵⁴ According to her curriculum, she took courses in art history and art criticism, design, drawing, and architectural theory. She had studied Vitruvius, Vico, and Vignola, and had learned from her architectural theory professor, Enrico Calantra, that "conceptual ideas are historic constructs." Lina claimed that Calantra had an "essential and anti-rhetorical intuition, and a method devoid of false enthusiasm but rich in a profound sense of human inquiry, which accompanied me my whole life."³⁵⁵ Lina's architectural education was traditional, rather than innovative. A. Lima wrote that she had "internalized the varying sensibilities of modern Italian architects who did not resist tradition as much as they rejected aesthetic conservatism and its affiliation in decorative arts."³⁵⁶

While Lina attended the School of Architecture, there were three main principles running Italian architecture. Her biographer, architect A. Lima explains what ideas she would have been exposed to: "Among the principles at stake were the reference to rural and vernacular traditions, the increasing association between nationalism and classical order, the cosmopolitan references to abstract rationalism and industrial logic."³⁵⁷ Bo Bardi's traditional Roman education would remain an essential part of her design aesthetic that she had developed over time. A. Lima points out, "Classical themes such as formal symmetry, hierarchy, axial compositions, platonic geometries, and simple solid volumes with little continuity between interior and exterior spaces were part of an architectural vocabulary to which she was extensively

³⁵⁴ Bo Bardi, "Curriculum vitae," in Lima, 14.

³⁵⁵ Lina Bo Bardi, *Contribuição propedéutica ao ensino da teoria da arquitetura*, 19, referenced in Lima, 14.

³⁵⁶ Paolo Portoghese, footnote, "Un' architettura per tutti," in in Gloria Arditì and Cesare Seratto, *Gio Ponti: Venti cristalli di architettura* (Venice: Il Cardo, 1994], ix-xi] in Lima, 14.

³⁵⁷ Lima, 10.

exposed and which she never fully abandoned.” Lina had studied architecture in Rome, the eternal city, where she was "immersed in a historicist pedagogical setting and a less industrialized but highly symbolic city."³⁵⁸ She had claimed, "Rome was a great school of architecture."³⁵⁹ Most important to Lina's architectural education while in Rome under Mussolini during the height of fascism was the idea of liberating architecture from its surroundings, as this idea helped her create some of the most remarkable museum installations of the twentieth century.

After graduating from architecture school in 1939, Lina left Rome for Milan on April 23, 1940, just weeks before Italy enters World War II. Lina remarked that she decided to be an architect "when nothing was built, only destroyed."³⁶⁰ Instead of designing buildings, she, along with the majority of Italian architects, spent the war years working as an illustrator, graphic designer, and editor for various Italian magazines and supplemented her traditional education from Rome with rationalist and progressive ideas from Milan. Carlo Pagani, her boyfriend at the time, initiated her move, and when she had arrived in Milan, he introduced her to Gio Ponti, a distinguished Italian architect, designer, and publisher. In 1938, after Pagani had finished his fourth year at the Instituto Politecnico in Milan where he had studied under Ponti, he transferred to the Scuola di Architettura in Rome, where he met Lina.

After returning to Milan, Pagani taught at the Instituto Politecnico, and used his connection with Gio Ponti, his former professor, to help Bo Bardi begin her career. Ponti

³⁵⁸ Lima, 14

³⁵⁹ Ibid.

³⁶⁰ *Lina Bo Bardi*, directed by Aurélio Michiles and Isa Grinspum Ferraz (São Paulo: ILBPMP, 1993) video, referenced in Lima, 20.

believed in mixing old with new, a popular idea because the Fascists accepted it as promoting Italian culture. Ponti had written about the unique cultural and environmental qualities of Italian style, which aligned with Mussolini's promotion of *italianità* (Italian essence).

Gio Ponti had founded *Domus* magazine (1928) and *Lo Stile* magazine (1941) and influenced Lina's choices at the MASP in Brazil; specifically, her "Poor Architecture." A. Lima writes, "Ponti's efforts to survey Italian handicraft, to associate it to industrial production, and to promote the continuity between tradition and modernity in the Italian house became significant conceptual references for Lina Bo."³⁶¹ In the beginning, Lina never worked directly with Gio Ponti; instead; she worked as a freelancer for Pagani, who handed over his work from Ponti to her.³⁶² The couple opened a studio together, Studio Bo e Pagani, No. 12, Via Gesù. From 1940 to 1943, Lina had worked with Ponti on *Lo Stile*, and during those same years, she also worked for other magazines: *L' Illustrazione Italiana*, *Vetrina*, *Bellezza*, and *Grazia*. Lina designed illustrations for the publications, wrote the articles, and designed the layout. Different aspects of architecture were covered, including the modernist concern with chair design, which is a subject that Lina would return to when she was in Brazil (fig. 5.3).

³⁶¹ Lima, 19.

³⁶² Bo Bardi, "Currículo literário," 9, Carlo Pagani, "Allegatiballe considerazioni sul 'Currículo literário'" (1994), in Renato L. S. Anelli, *Interloquções com a arquitetura italiana na constituição da arquitetura moderna em São Paulo* (São Carlos: EESC-USP, 2001), 2, referenced in Lima, 19.



Figure 5.3. *Lo Stile*, Illustrations and editing prepared by Lina Bo Bardi with Carlo, courtesy of Collection Zeuler R. Lima, accessed October 22, 2016, public domain available online <http://cral.in2p3.fr/artelogie/spip.php?article255>

In Milan, Lina "was exposed to innovative exhibition design standards of the rationalist Milanese school, which refused to place works of art against walls and alternatively proposed to display them on elegant easels or metal supports going from floor to ceiling in the middle of gallery spaces."³⁶³ Similar to liberating architecture by isolating it, the rationalist liberated works of art by isolating it within the gallery space. For instance, Edoardo Persico and Marcello Nizzoli removed works from the walls and mounted images on a freestanding grid system for the Gold Medals room of the Aeronautics exhibition in Milan in 1934 (fig. 5.4). Also in Milan, Franco

³⁶³ Zueller R. M. A. Lima, "Nelson A. Rockefeller and Art Patronage in Brazil after World War II: Assis Chateaubriand, the Museu de Arte de São Paulo (MASP) and the Museu de Arte Moderna (MAM)," last accessed November 8, 2016, available online at The Nelson Rockefeller Archives: http://www.rockarch.org/publications/resrep/lima.php#_edn18

Albini followed in the same path as Persico and Nizzoli when he presented works of art by mounting the frames on poles that shot up from the middle of the Brera Gallery (fig. 5.5). Beginning in 1941, Lina and Pagani worked on drawings of exhibition design for Ponti.³⁶⁴ The Milanese style of exhibition design inspired Lina, and the style would remain an integral part of her aesthetic choices while she was working in Brazil. In addition to Ponti's influence, the work of another Northern Italian, Franco Albini, a prominent designer and rationalist architect in Milan, influenced Lina's ideas about museum displays. Moreover, his associate, Giancarlo Piantoni, like Lina, disembarked for Brazil in 1946. In Brazil at the museum, Piantoni collaborated with Lina between 1948 and 1950.³⁶⁵

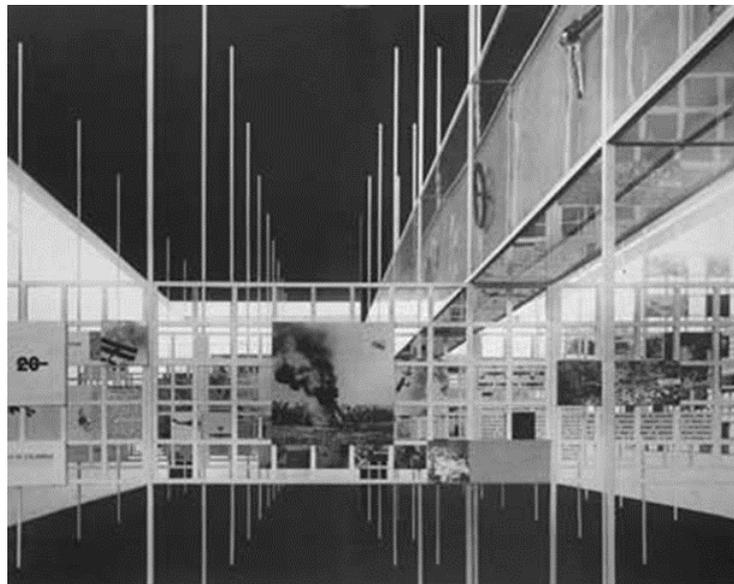


Figure 5.4. Edoardo Persico and Marcello Nizzoli, Sala delle Medaglie d'Oro (Gold Medals Room), Mostra dell'Aeronautica (Aeronautics Exhibition), Milan, 1934 (RIBA Photographs Collection).

³⁶⁴ Veikos, 13.

³⁶⁵ Zueller R. M. A. Lima, "Nelson A. Rockefeller and Art Patronage in Brazil after World War II: Assis Chateaubriand, the Museu de Arte de São Paulo (MASP) and the Museu de Arte Moderna (MAM)."



Figure 5.5. Franco Albini, Pinacoteca di Brera (Brera Art Gallery). Mostra Scipione e del Bianco e Nero (Scipione & Black and White Exhibition), Milan, 1941 (photograph Fondazione Franco Albini collection).

The rationalist ideas of the Bauhaus and Le Corbusier dominated the scene in Milan. Although the traditionalists' aesthetic dominated in Rome during the time that Lina had attended architectural school, she and other students would have already had been exposed to more nontraditional ideas through the MIAR (*Movimento Italiano per l'Architettura Razionale*), a group comprised of Milan Istituto Politecnico graduates who championed the ideas of the Bauhaus and the Russian Constructivist movement, as well as the ideas of Le Corbusier.³⁶⁶ Pietro Maria Bardi, journalist, gallery owner, and connoisseur was among the critics who supported these rationalist architects, granting them "recognition and favor" with Mussolini.³⁶⁷

³⁶⁶ Lima, 13.

³⁶⁷ Ibid.

Lina had first heard about her future husband, Pietro Maria, when she overheard her Uncle Natalino claiming, “Bardi is crazy.”³⁶⁸ In 1930, Pietro Maria had left Milan for Rome where he set up his gallery. His move, “turned him from a press and trade expert into a key cultural player in the unfolding of modern Italian art and architecture.”³⁶⁹ Shortly after Pietro Maria's arrival to Rome, his political alliance with Mussolini allowed him the directorship of the *Galleria di Arte Roma* under the auspices of the National fascist union of fine art.³⁷⁰ Pietro Maria upset the architectural community in Rome with his modern architecture exhibition in 1931, granting him a controversial reputation. Pietro Maria “transformed the practice of architecture in Fascist Italy” with *Quadrante*, a cultural journal that he spearheaded from 1933-1936. According to David Rifkind, *Quadrante* “agitated for an ‘architecture of the state’ that would represent the values and aspirations of the Fascist regime, and in so doing it changed the language with which architects and their clientele addressed the built environment.”³⁷¹

Pietro Maria and Lina first met when Lina was living in Milan. Lina had traveled to Rome in order to interview Pietro Maria for Gio Ponti. Her assignment was to cover his building, which was designed by Luigi Piccinato. The article was her first architectural criticism and her last work for *Lo Stile*, published July 1943, and titled, “*Casa e nuclei abitativi a Roma*” (House and Housing Units in Rome). A. Lima indicates that in the article, Lina announces “the basis of a

³⁶⁸ Lima, 10.

³⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁷⁰ *Ibid.* (Francesco Tentori, *P.M. Bardi* (Sao Paulo: ILBPMB, 1990), 40; Claudio M. Valentinetti, *Il viaggio di Pietro Maria Bardi* (Brasilia: ENPULLCJ/EEJ, Instituto de Letras, UnB, 2000), 4.

³⁷¹ David Rifkind, *The Battle for Modernism Quadrante and the Politicization of Architectural Discourse in Fascist Italy*, (Vicenza: Centro Internazionale di Studi di Architettura Andrea Palladio, 2012), 10.

value system she would develop as an architect in Brazil," stating that "these elements were at the core of her future quest for an architecture that could be simultaneously modern, simply built, and responsive to local realities and daily life." In the article, Lina wrote, "architecture did not emerge from the modern or intrinsic character of materials but, in reality, from the indisputable practical and aesthetic needs that render it natural, spontaneous, useful, and also beautiful."³⁷² She recalled meeting Pietro Maria, describing him as "young [forty-two years old and fourteen years her senior], elegant, he had an oriental flare."³⁷³ The pair strolled the streets of Rome, chatting about the latest artistic trends, visiting artists along the way, and looking at art.

According to Gabriella Cianciolio Cosentino, Lina had left *Lo Stile* because she felt the need to contribute to a greater social and political sphere. Cosentino writes, "That's why in 1943 she left the editorial board of *Lo Stile* and, at the invitation of the publisher Gianni Mazzocchi, became the deputy director of *Domus* together with Pagani." Cosentino adds, "At the age of twenty-nine, she thus found herself directing an important specialist journal and holding a prestigious position, certainly an uncommon thing for such a young woman at the time."³⁷⁴ Indeed, the war had had an impact on Lina. To begin, her office was seriously damaged on August 13, 1943, shortly after the Nazi military control of Italy on July 25, 1943, and all of her and Pagani's work was lost under the building's rubble.³⁷⁵ She, along with Carlo Pagani, had not only witnessed the total destruction of the office, but they experienced ruins first-hand all over the country when they were hired to document the destruction of the Italian peninsula by the

³⁷² Lima, 24.

³⁷³ Ibid.

³⁷⁴ Gabriella Cianciolio Cosentino, "Early Years and Wartime: Lina Bo Bardi's Illustrations and Journalism in Italy (1940-46)", in *lina bo bardi*, 2014, 58.

³⁷⁵ Lima, 24.

Corriere della Sera, a newspaper in Milan that was under the direction of the writer with anti-fascist views, Elio Vittorini. Costentino writes,

Thus in 1945, along with Pagani and the photographer Federico Patellani, she took a trip across the peninsula to photograph and recount the situation of the areas most affected. In the same year, she was one of the founders of the Movimento Studi Architettura, a Milanese nucleus in support of a rationalist reconstruction and, increasingly more sensitive to social problems and committed on the political front, participated in the first Convegno nazionale per la ricostruzione edilizia (national conference for building reconstruction), held in Milan in 1945.³⁷⁶

At the conference in Milan, Lina rallied for the use of propaganda as a way to encourage the populace to contribute to the discussion and decisions in regards to reconstruction.³⁷⁷

The only exhibition that Lina would design while in Italy was a stall for Rhodoïd, a new textile made of cellulose acetate. The display cases were freestanding, instead of against the walls. A. Lima argued that Lina's aesthetics for the installation in Italy would continue throughout her life. He writes, "Her multi-colored display suggested the curatorial principles she would maintain throughout her life: separation from walls, simple hangers, display cases, and pedestals; non-hierarchical associations."³⁷⁸ Costentino adds that the "Italian roots and baggage she carried with her from Italy," meaning her "cultural references, conceptual ideas, decisions of design" work consistently surface in her later work and "influence her theoretical reflections in regards to her future architectural experiments."³⁷⁹ The social, cultural, and political ideas from the rationalist movement in Italy permeate Lina Bo Bardi's aesthetic choices, values, and motivations in Brazil.

³⁷⁶ Ibid, Cosentino, 58.

³⁷⁷ Veikos, 15.

³⁷⁸ Zeuler R. Lima, "Between Cabinets of Curiosities and Teatro Povero," in *lina bo bardi 100*, 68.

³⁷⁹ Cosentino, 61.

On August 24, 1946, Lina married Pietro Maria, and soon after, the two set off for Brazil. Pietro Maria had been caught in the middle of post-war ridicule. Both sides of the political spectrum in Italy were suspicious and launched accusations towards Pietro Maria's ties to Fascist movement. A. Lima explains, "Bardi would not engage in the collective mea culpa or submit to personal scrutiny, and he feared a witch-hunt and the revocation of his professional license to act as an art dealer, critic, and journalist. He hoped some time abroad would do away with his problems. Lina Bo hoped for respite from the harsh war years."³⁸⁰ Initially, the newlyweds arrived at Rio de Janeiro on October 17, 1946, and after a brief stay in Rio, the couple found a permanent home the following year in São Paulo, Brazil. Shortly after their arrival in Brazil, Pietro Maria agreed to direct a new museum for Assis Chateaubriand, a publishing mogul, and Lina would design the building and its exhibitions.

The Museu de Arte de São Paulo

The Museu de Arte de São Paulo (MASP) was created in order to spawn a brilliant Brazilian art scene that complemented the country's growing international identity. The developing nation had important architecture that was worthy of scholarship and international interest, as proved by *Brazil Builds: Architecture New and Old, 1652-1942*, an exhibition held at the Museum of Modern Art in New York in 1943, and the accompanying catalogue. Thus, many Brazilians, like Assis Chateaubriand, scrambled to build on the nation's cultural capital. In 1947, the Bardis arrived in São Paulo at the most opportune time. São Paulo beckoned for an arts institution and Chateaubriand was willing to give Pietro Maria "carte blanche to establish a

³⁸⁰ Lima, 34.

multifaceted collection along with the educational and editorial programs.”³⁸¹ Apart from the institution that Francisco Matarazzo Sobrinho was establishing, which focused on modern art and would eventually become the São Paulo Art Biennial in 1951, Chateaubriand's museum would follow Pietro Maria's advice and focus on art within a historical framework, rather than "exclusively promoting modern abstraction.”³⁸²

Lina's marriage to Pietro Maria had an impact on her work. A. Lima writes that her "professional and intellectual development" was "intertwined with Bardi's endeavors" for the first ten years after they arrived in Brazil.³⁸³ Indeed, the couple agreed on a scheme for the MASP as the two worked towards the same goal. In *The Arts of Brazil*, Pietro Maria sets out a framework for the museum project, claiming that a new museum could only be resurrected from the old museum system through new energy and ideas. Bardi argued that the traditional museums were mainly storehouses that lacked the appropriate accompanying didactic information. He wrote:

The exhibitions themselves often seem mortified, as if the life had been drained out of them until they evoke no sense of the past nor in any way stir the imagination. There is also the mania for sheer accumulation, for long rows of ornaments all alike, or practically so; and the paucity of sound technical information necessary for a minimum of understanding together with an over-abundance of fanciful anecdotes furnished by ignorant custodians and garrulous guides.³⁸⁴

Pietro Maria criticized the architecture of both the Louvre and the British Museum for undermining their modes of display. He writes, "The inadequacy of the presentation is invariably

³⁸¹ Lima, 44.

³⁸² Ibid, 44.

³⁸³ Lima, 42.

³⁸⁴ P.M. Bardi, *The Arts in Brazil A New Museum at São Paulo*, MilaEdizioni Del Milan, 1956, 10.

due to the unsuitability of the premises, however famous the buildings may be in themselves."³⁸⁵ In harmony, Lina called the museum "an intellectual mausoleum," one which "whose architecture resembles forms from antiquity (either classical or Egyptian), suffocated by cupolas, monumental staircases, halls full of columns, in an embarrassing superfluity ..."³⁸⁶ Regarding the collection, Lina wrote that Brazil needed a museum that offered "elementary and didactic classification" because the São Paulo Art Museum "was conceived, directly specifically at uninformed, unintellectual, unprepared masses."³⁸⁷ From its inception, the museum in Brazil was a different type of museum, geared towards the Brazilian masses who were not bound by European history and ideals.

Assis Chateaubriand initiated and financed the museum; Pietro Maria curated and directed the museum, and Lina designed the installations, the exhibitions, and the building. The Museu de Arte de São Paulo (MASP) first opened on October 2, 1947, on rua Sete de Abril in São Paulo. The first museum location was located on the first floor of the headquarters of Diários Associados, Chateaubriand's media conglomerate, in a high-rise building that was still in construction during the opening.³⁸⁸ The future MASP in São Paulo revolutionized museum practices. Lina believed that architecture was "a collective and sociopolitical art form at the service of society."³⁸⁹ She held to this idea while depicting her husband's conceptions of the new

³⁸⁵ Ibid.

³⁸⁶ Lina Bo Bardi, *Lina Bo Bardi*, Second Edition, (São Paulo: Instituto Lina Bo e P.M. Bardi, 1996), 44.

³⁸⁷ Ibid.

³⁸⁸ Lima, 44-45.

³⁸⁹ Sabine Von Fischer, "The Horizons of Lina Bo Bardi: The Museu de Arte de São Paulo in the Context of European Postwar Concepts of Architecture," in *lina bo bardi 100*, 106.

museum into the layout of the space and later into an institution and magazine.³⁹⁰ Originally, the museum consisted of only one floor, and the space was flexible out of necessity. Lina did not design the original building; instead, she worked on the internal space. Lina wrote about the installation of the early museum:

The criterion governing the internal architecture of the Museum were restricted to solutions of 'flexibility,' to the possibility of transforming the ambiance, together with strict economy that is in keeping with our times. The evocative touches and contours were abandoned, and the old works of art were no longer mounted upon velvet, as still to this day some specialists in museums advocate, or upon cloths of the times, but courageously placed upon a neutral background.³⁹¹

Lina had anticipated "in the near future, to extend its premises by the addition of [another floor with] a hall of 1,000 square meters in which the picture gallery will be installed."³⁹² A. Zeuler explains Lina's work for the Diarios Associados building:

In record time, she adopted the whole floor above the lobby into four sections. A large hall for temporary exhibitions faced the street. The center of the floor was initially used for exhibitions. When the museum later expanded to a second floor, the exhibition hall was replaced with a multiuse auditorium, whose detached vaulted ceilings resembled an interior design project Bo Bardi had done with Carlo Pagani a few years before. The teaching facilities were placed on the backside and included a small lecture hall between the museum administrative offices and a small gallery that held temporary exhibitions. Everything in the museum conveyed a fresh approach. For example, Bo Bardi used an Italian prefabricated system of pipes and simple clamps to display artworks. According to Bardi, paintings should leave the walls, where they functioned as ornaments, for easels, which suggested where they were produced.³⁹³ (fig. 5.6)

Art History Panorama traced art from its beginning to the present and served as the inaugural exhibition for the MASP. Lina brought display panels from Rome "in four horizontal rows:

³⁹⁰ Lima, 45.

³⁹¹ Ferraz, Isa Grinspum, and Lina Bo Bardi *Lina Bo Bardi*, (Milano: Charta, 1994), 46.

³⁹² Pietro Maria Bardi, "An educational experiment at the Museu de Arte, Sao Paulo." In *Museum*, New York: UNESCO, 1: 3-4 (Dec. 1948), 142.

³⁹³ Lima, 45.

elements of history and civic life; architecture; sculpture; painting [with] copies of major works are of fair size and nearly all in colors. Each panel contained simple explanations. The section also contained glass cases with works of applied arts pertaining to the period described on the plates."³⁹⁴ Indeed, Pietro Maria helped shape Lina's aesthetic choices and values towards art. His pedagogy and curatorial style are noted by A. Zeuler as influences on Lina's later independent work. For the new MASP, Pietro Maria was focused on creating "a pedagogical museum."³⁹⁵



Figure 5.6. Workers install the easels designed by Lina Bo Bardi for the Diarios Associados building, Baixa e marca: 14 - Exposiçoes Didáticas 1, image courtesy of MASP library archives

³⁹⁴ Pietro Maria Bardi, "An educational experiment at the Museu de Arte, Sao Paulo," 142 and 212, Folder 1471, Box 149, RG 4, NAR Personal Documents, Museums, Rockefeller Family Archives, RAC. Quoted in Zueller R. M. A. Lima, "Nelson A. Rockefeller and Art Patronage in Brazil after World War II: Assis Chateaubriand, the Museu de Arte de São Paulo (MASP) and the Museu de Arte Moderna (MAM)" available online at *The Nelson Rockefeller Archives*: http://www.rockarch.org/publications/resrep/lima.php#_edn18

³⁹⁵ Lima, 45.



Figure 5.7. A chair of Brazilian cherry and simple boards is more acceptable than a couch with trimmings, curated and designed by Lina Bo Bardi, MASP, courtesy of MASP library archives, Baixa e marca: 33-1948- Exp da Cadeira

Lina's first independent curatorial work presented a classic concern of architecture, chair design. For the exhibition, Lina displayed many different types and styles of chairs, ranging from early Italian to Alvar Alto (fig. 5.7). A. Zeuler correctly remarks that the title of her promotional advertisement published in the newspaper, *Uma cadeira de grumixaba e tábua é mais normal do que um divã de babados* (A chair of Brazilian cherry and simple boards is more acceptable than a couch with trimmings) "unmistakably introduced the simplification she would pursue in her later design work."³⁹⁶ During the forties, the Bardis presented a mixture of exhibitions, ranging

³⁹⁶ Lima, 45.

from architectural to indigenous art. A. Lima documents some highlights from the early MASP:

The Bardis also organized solo exhibitions of Brazilian and international artists and designers, whose work was accompanied by lectures and carefully produced catalogues. Among them were architect Lúcio Costa and artist Max Bill (in 1947), artists Cândido Portinari and Alexander Calder (in 1948), artist Flávio de Carvalho (in 1948 and 1949), artists Geraldo de Barros and Mário Cravo Jr. and architects Le Corbusier and Richard Neutra (in 1950) and Lasar Segall (in 1951). The museum also exhibited local and traditional works ranging from indigenous art (in 1948), ceramics from the Brazilian Northeast (in 1949), and the unusual works of interns of a mental institution (in 1948) and naïve Brazilian painters (in 1949).³⁹⁷

The Bardis introduced Max Bill's work at the MASP four years before his work was exhibited at the São Paulo Museum of Modern Art where, according to Pepe Karmel, *New York Times* arts writer, "Brazilian artists suddenly discovered the geometric gospel of Mondrian, de Stijl and Russian Constructivism."³⁹⁸ Instead, the MASP, not the São Paulo Museum of Modern Art, was the first institution to exhibit abstract art and a Max Bill retrospective, which was the catalyst that provoked concrete art. Concretism was an art movement in the 1960's, founded in São Paulo that "abandoned illusionism in favor of a stress on its own elements: line, form, and color."³⁹⁹ São Paulo based art historian, Ana Maria Belluzzo writes that the MASP became a modernizing center for São Paulo, not only by connecting Brazilian artists with European artists, but by the programs at the Instituto de Arte Contemporânea (IAC). The IAC was created by Lina and Pietro

³⁹⁷ Maria Cecília França Lourenço, *Museu acolhem moderno*, (São Paulo: EDUSP, 1998), 99, Zueler R. M. A. Lima, "Nelson A. Rockefeller and Art Patronage in Brazil after World War II: Assis Chateaubriand, the Museu de Arte de São Paulo (MASP) and the Museu de Arte Moderna (MAM)" available online at *The Nelson Rockefeller Archives*: http://www.rockarch.org/publications/resrep/lima.php#_edn18

³⁹⁸ Pepe Karmel, "Art Review; Gathering Up Rich Strands of the Brazilian Avant-Garde," *New York Times*, (Jan. 20, 1995), Accessed October 6, 2016, available online: <http://www.nytimes.com/1995/01/20/arts/art-review-gathering-up-the-rich-strands-of-the-brazilian-avant-garde.html>

³⁹⁹ Ibid.

as the educational part of the MASP with the goal to teach good design to Brazilians. “In workshops inspired by the Bauhaus, Leopold Haar, one of the members of the rupture Group, as well as the architects Lina Bo Bardi and Jacob Ruchti, held classes.”⁴⁰⁰ The IAC was one of the first design schools in Brazil and lasted from 1951 to 1953.

The earliest exhibitions at the MASP promoted European abstract artists, European architects, and Brazilian figurative artists. In 1947, the MASP along with Italian adviser, poet, artist and critic, Emilio Villa, presented the history of abstract art because “São Paulo was stricken by an epidemic of abstractionism.”⁴⁰¹ Three years later, Geraldo de Barros (1923-1998), who was one of the chief agents of modernism in Brazil and founding member of the rupture Group, showed at the MASP, continuing the museum’s interest in abstractionism. The 1950 exhibition of Barros’s photographs at the MASP steered him to a fellowship that allowed the Brazilian artist to study abroad in Europe. While away, he studied printmaking and painting and met important artists like Max Bill. He incorporated the principles of Bill’s Design School in Ulm, Germany and brought them to Brazil where he helped form the concrete art movement.⁴⁰² Belluzzo writes that the rupture Group exhibition was mounted a couple of years after “the first exhibition of abstract art in São Paulo,” which according to Belluzzo, “occurred during the 1949

⁴⁰⁰ Anna Maria Belluzzo, “The rupture Group and Concrete Art,” *Inverted Utopias: Avant-garde Art in Latin America*, Mari Carmen Ramírez, and Héctor Olea, Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, eds., (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), 203-204.

⁴⁰¹ The MASP’s history of the abstract in art exhibition began “not with Kandinsky but with archaic Greece.” In *The Arts in Brazil*, 120-121

⁴⁰² “Artists- Geraldo de Barros 1923-1998, Brazil,” Sicardi Gallery, Accessed October 6, 2016, website available online: <http://www.sicardi.com/artists/geraldo-de-barros/21979/> Also, see Yves-Alain Bois, “From Concreta to Arte Neoconcreta,” *Playing with Form: Neo Concrete Art from Brazil*, (New York: Dickinson Roundell Inc, 2011).

inauguration of the Museu de Arte Moderna (MAM São Paulo) at the initiative of the museum's director, the French critic Léon Dégand." Belluzzo continues:

From then on, the confrontation between figuration and abstraction expanded, fueled by the significant international weight brought to bear by Dégand's inclusion in the exhibition of works by Hans Hartung and Alberto Magnelli. The fact that only three national artists were represented in this show—Cícero Dias, Samson Flexor, and Cordeiro—further stimulated the controversy. The 1949 exhibition marked the beginning of the awareness in Brazil of art's autonomy from the facts of the exterior world. According to Dégand, an abstract work does not evoke either in its means or in its ends the appearances of the visible world.⁴⁰³

Bill's school proposed to reexamine the heritage of the Bauhaus and its "pursuit of clarity of form."⁴⁰⁴ Belluzzo is mistaken by asserting that Léon Dégand was the first person to introduce abstract art to São Paulo, for the Bardis introduced the entire history of abstract art three years prior when the Italian poet, Emilio Villa advised them on the abstract exhibition (fig. 5.7).⁴⁰⁵

As mentioned, Lina relied upon the Italian Rationalist principles for museum installation. Moreover, Pietro Maria's Roman gallery served as a model for the Brazilian MASP. Similar to Pietro Maria's gallery in Italy, he wrote, the "hall in the shape of a double T" was sliced into quadrants: "a picture gallery; periodic cultural exhibition rooms; a lecture room and; rooms for exhibitions both permanent and temporary dealing with the history of art."⁴⁰⁶ Moreover, the

⁴⁰³ Belluzzo, 204.

⁴⁰⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁵ In 1950, Villa moved to São Paulo and worked closely with the Concrete poets Haroldo and Augusto de Campos. According to poets.org: "Those involved with the 'Noigandres' group were strongly influenced by writers such as Ezra Pound, James Joyce, and the visual poetry of Guillaume Apollinaire—all of which had a strong effect on his own writing. Villa collaborated with a number of writers and artists in Italy and abroad, including Alberto Burri, Marcel Duchamp, as well as William Burroughs. He also had a strong influence on the next generation of neoavanguardia Italian writers—including those involved in Group 63, such as Umberto Eco and Adriano Spatola."

⁴⁰⁶ Pietro Maria Bardi, "An educational experiment at the Museu de Arte, Sao Paulo," 142 and 212. Quoted in Zueller R. M. A. Lima, "Nelson A. Rockefeller and Art Patronage in

picture gallery was cut in half by what was called the “cabinet of Form.” This cabinet contained objects with accompanying information.⁴⁰⁷

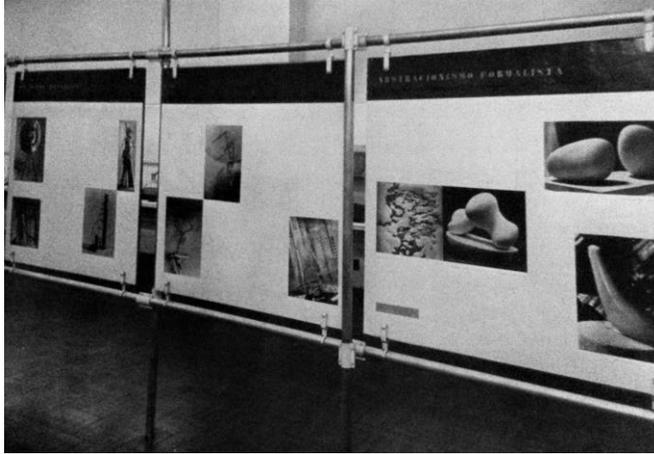


Figure 5.8. Panels from the History of the Abstract in Art (1947), installation design by Lina Bo Bardi, Exhibition adviser, Emilio Villa, image available in P.M. Bardi, *The Arts in Brazil*, (Milan: Edizioni del Milione, 1956) p.121.

The museum served as a vessel for an exquisite European art collection, which gained recognition from some of the top museums. The Metropolitan Museum of Art referred to the MASP as "the only institution in South America which ranks among the major art museum of the great capitals of the world."⁴⁰⁸ The MASP also introduced a whole inclusive educational approach that strove to shatter the boundaries between the European Masters and the handicrafts

Brazil after World War II: Assis Chateaubriand, the Museu de Arte de São Paulo (MASP) and the Museu de Arte Moderna (MAM)"

⁴⁰⁷ P.M. Bardi, *The Arts in Brazil*, John Drummond, trans. Milan: Edizioni del Milione, 1956, 123.

⁴⁰⁸ "Works from São Paulo, Brazil, To Be Shown at The Metropolitan Museum: *Masterpieces of European Painting in International Loan Exhibition*," Press Release, (Tues., March 19, 1957), Digital Collections The Metropolitan Museum of Art Archives, Accessed June 6, 2014, available online at: libmma.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/ref/collection/p16028coll12/id/793

of Brazilians. While Lina was living in Salvador, she wrote: "The modern museum has to be didactic, able to marry conversation with the message that it is the art that takes pride of place, while everything else has a far more modest role."⁴⁰⁹ Lina was working in an urban context without an institution. She incorporated civic values into her museum displays.

Today, the MASP sits where the old coffee barons built their mansions, on Avenida Paulista, some of the most developed and expensive real estate in South America (figs. 5.9-5.11). The area is most commonly called the *Trianon*. Specifically, the location is a belvedere where Avenida Paulista crosses Avenida Nove de Julho, a popular and politically charged meeting spot in São Paulo. Since there was little available public land for pedestrians, parks, or plazas,⁴¹⁰ the land for the MASP was donated to the city on the condition that the view from the belvedere not be obstructed. Lina designed a MASP building that incorporated an open space belvedere (*vão livre*) at street level, paved in "parallelepiped granite slabs and surrounded by gardens and pools with aquatic plants."⁴¹¹ Lina and Pietro Maria believed that the architecture was an agent for social compatibility; therefore, the MASP was designed to serve the public. She managed to create the *vão livre* by designing a below ground meeting hall, at the request of the city, and an above ground two-story gallery space that seemed to hover from above street level. The museum is a massive four floor building that is sliced horizontally through the middle, with the two lower levels containing a restaurant, gift shop, library and temporary exhibition space below ground

⁴⁰⁹ Lina Bo Bardi, *Architectural Words 12: Stones Against Diamonds*, ebook- location 690 of 1540.

⁴¹⁰ Lars Meier and Lars Frers, Eds, *Encountering Urban Places: Visual and Material Performance in the City*, (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012), 87.

⁴¹¹ Museu de Arte de São Paulo Assis Chateaubriand, and P. M. Bardi, *Museum of Art, São Paulo*. New York, N.Y.: Newsweek, 1981, 162.

and the other two, with permanent galleries and office spaces above ground. Lina had initially planned the building for the new location in 1957; however, the inauguration was not until 1968.⁴¹²



Figure 5.9. Mansion at the site of Museum of Art São Paulo, São Paulo, Brazil, image courtesy MASP library archives.

⁴¹² Ibid.

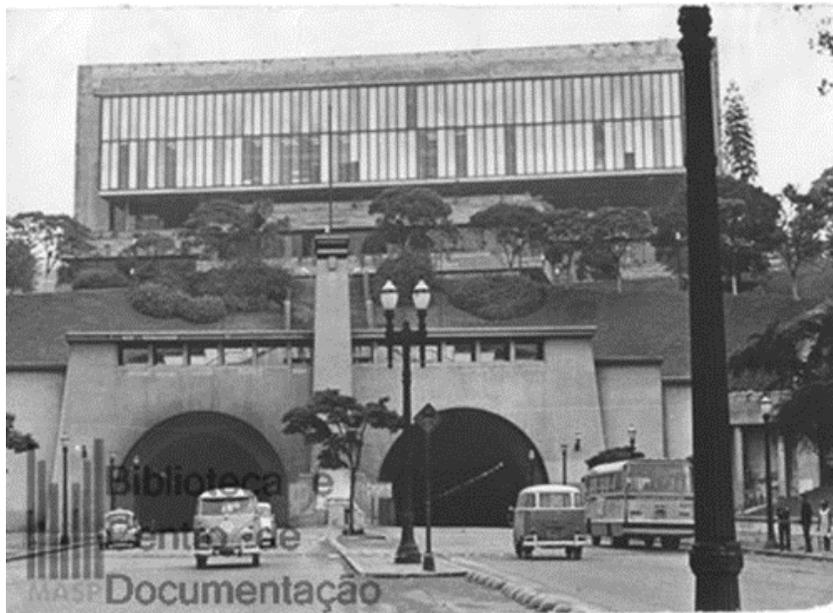


Figure 5.10. Museum of Art São Paulo, São Paulo, Brazil, image courtesy MASP library archives



Figure 5.11. Back side, Museum of Art São Paulo, São Paulo, Brazil. Bo Bardi created an open space belvedere (*vão livre*) at street level, image courtesy MASP library archives

The final design of the MASP building on Avenida Paulista was not the massive Brutalist building that Lina had originally planned (fig. 5.12). Instead of the present open glass-walled structure, she had designed a more solid enclosed building, but the mass was too much for the structure to bear. According to A. Lima, the building ended up as "the result of a technical compromise between her and the construction team— especially evident when contrasted with the theories and the predominately solid, opaque, and roughly textured projects she had been developing in the previous decade." He writes, "MASP's polished and transparent enclosure has placed her work in the international architectural discourse while erasing the ambiguous and hybrid character of her original ideas, which combined rationalist and naturalistic elements." Lima points out that the change in the MASP design had "eclipsed, if not altered, the understanding of her search for simplification and roughness over extravagance and sophistication."⁴¹³ Bo Bardi justified her changes, claiming that she used 'transparent walls as compensation for the efforts of the common people.'⁴¹⁴ Nonetheless, the glass walls of the MASP allowed the works to be bathed in natural light.

Architect Aldo Van Eyck wrote that the construction of the MASP was "an amazing feat for the building is indeed both there and not there, giving back to the city as much space as it took from it. An impossible site if ever there was one - all the more so because it was destined to remain open - not built on."⁴¹⁵ Besides the park, the part of the city where the MASP site is located lacks public space. The public is either moving along with the traffic, or in one of the

⁴¹³ Lima, *Lina Bo Bardi*, 128.

⁴¹⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴¹⁵ Museu de Arte de São Paulo, *Lina Bo Bardi 1957-1968*, (São Paulo: Instituto Lina Bo e P.M. Bardi, 1997), no page number.

buildings, “symptomatic of an exclusionary system that, consciously or not, divides the worlds of work and non-work, wealth and poverty.”⁴¹⁶ Lina Bo Bardi's MASP building provided the city with the desperately needed public space.

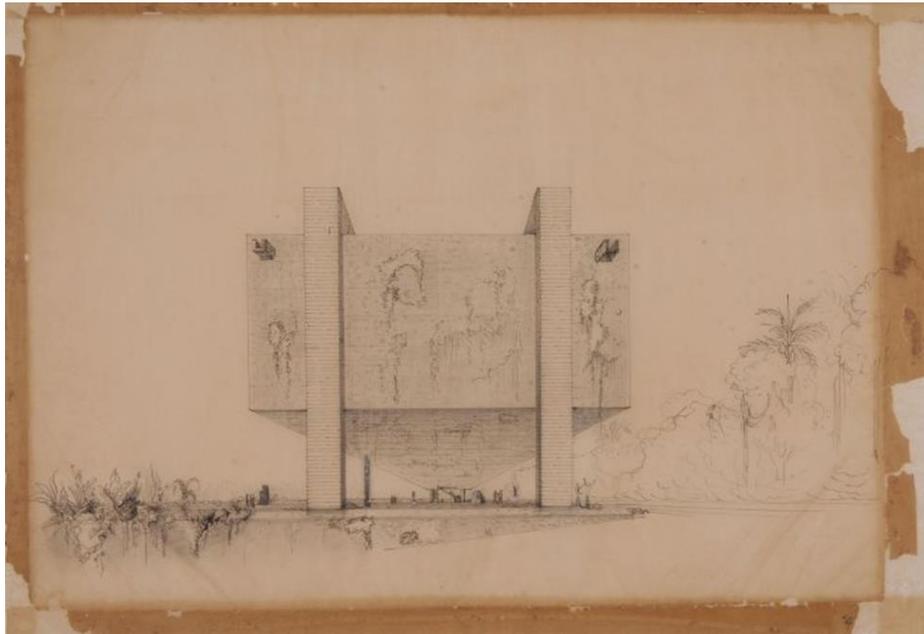


Figure 5.12. Lina Bo Bardi, *Perspective* (1957-1968), Museu de Arte de São Paulo, Graphite, ink, collage, on parchment paper, #036ARQd0104, image available on the Lina Bo and P.M. Bardi Institute website

In 1967, shortly before the MASP was completed, Lina championed rational design in *Mirante das Artes, Etc., (art observatory etc.)*, a publication set forth by Pietro Maria that was part of his Brazilian gallery, *Galeria Mirante*. In Lina's third article for the publication, she discussed her "aesthetic and political concerns about the museum building" (MASP). She wrote, "The Trianon complex will re-propose, in its monumental simplicity, the themes brought forward by rationalism that have become unpopular." A. Lima points out that Bo Bardi carefully

⁴¹⁶ Richard Williams, *Brazil Modern Architecture in History*, (Loc 2074 of 5196)

rejected associations "of monumentality with grandiosity, especially with projects of authoritarian regimes." For instance, Lina writes, "the buildings of Nazi-fascism, which were arrogant and similar to elephants in their lack of logic, but not monumental." Instead, Lina claimed, "that which I call monumental is not a question of size or ostentation, but just an element of collective consciousness." She concluded, "It is necessary to eliminate all elements of perfectionism out of rationalism, which are part of its idealist and metaphysical legacy, and to face the reality of architectural mishaps."⁴¹⁷ Here, Lina gives insight into how she diffused her Italian experience, what she knew about architecture and design, into how she would operate in Brazil.

Italian Influences

Pietro Maria called for a new type of museum in *The Arts of Brazil*, claiming that "a new method of presenting museum objects is required." As museum designer, Lina played a crucial part in developing this new museum and relied on rationalist aesthetics for her Brazilian project. What makes her installations so unique is how she draws from Italian rationalism and combines it with her experiences from living in Brazil; thus, in doing so, she managed to create politically charged museum displays that worked to eliminate perfectionism from rationalism.

Pietro Maria wrote: "How is it that when it is a question of showing industrial products at a trade fair the best architects, designers and artists are immediately called in? But when a masterpiece of Orcagna is to be shown, a nail in the wall, and possibly a strip of faded velvet, is though quit sufficient."⁴¹⁸ Architects had a long history of installing exhibitions in Italy, and

⁴¹⁷ Lima, *Lina Bo Bardi*, 120, from Lina Bo Bardi, "O novo Trianon," *Mirante das Artes, Etc* (November- December 1967), supplement.

⁴¹⁸ Bardi, 14.

many of them worked in museums. For both Lina and Pietro, however, Franco Albini's work for the Museum of the Palazzo Bianco in Genoa was an example of progress being made in museum display (fig. 5.13-5.14). After redecorating the interior, the pictures were "suspended from tubular frameworks in which the verticals are planted in pedestals for support."⁴¹⁹ The pedestals that Albini used for Genoa were re-purposed architectural fragments. With Albini's Palazzo Bianco installation, like the one for the *Black and White* exhibition, paintings appear to be "floating." Removing the works from the walls and exhibiting them with minimal information, places the works out of context. Both these fragments and the absence of labels would influence the display at the new MASP building in São Paulo.



Figure 5.13. Room of the Dutch School, Palazzo Bianco, Genoa, Italy. Architect Franco Albini. Taken from *The Arts in Brazil*, 10.

Although Lina's final design for the installation of the MASP collection differed from Albini's design, there is evidence that she was influenced by his installation at the Palazzo

⁴¹⁹ Ibid.

Bianco. Indeed, Lina was keenly aware of his museum work, as were most Italian architects during the time. Moreover, the two architects had worked together. Lina absorbed and processed Albini's designs and imparted new energy and ideas to art museums through her museum display for the MASP. To begin, years before the new building opened on Paulista, she had used tubular frameworks for the installation of a private collection, which consisted of around fifty paintings, at the Diarios Associados building. The paintings were suspended by a metal tubular system, which gained recognition from abroad in Italy. In 1948, the Italian magazine *Metron* remarked,

When Rationalist architecture repeats European themes on a large scale, it often appears merely as an enlargement of the design upon which it is modeled: ambitious but expressionless and sometimes without any artistic merit. The introduction of the Bardi-Bo coefficient into Brazilian culture will certainly have a positive effect. Bardi brings with him a historic grounding as well as moral and intellectual drive; Lina Bo contributes an element of precision and exactitude, a *poétique mathématique*.⁴²⁰

One can see a direct correlation in the images of these early installations.

Albini's designs for the installation for the Scipione & Black and White exhibitions at Milan's Brera Gallery in 1941 showed paintings on stands that allowed the audience the complete 360-degree visual approach most often given to three-dimensional sculptures (fig. 5.5).⁴²¹ Kay Bea Jones, Italian architectural scholar, describes Albini's work: "Walls become abstract planes from which paintings are removed and suspended on steel armatures. Removing

⁴²⁰ "Sistemazione di un museo in Brasile: Un museo dell' architetto Lina Bo," in *Metron: Revista internazionale di architettura* 23, no. 30 (November- December 1948), 34-35, FN in Sabine von Fisher, "The Horizons of Lina Bo Bardi: The Museu de Arte de São Paulo in the Context of European Postwar Concepts of Architecture," *lina bo bardi* 100, 104.

⁴²¹ Gabriela Campagnol, and Stephen Caffey, Warer Presenter. "Pepper the Walls with Lina Bo Bardi's Museu." Proceeding of the 2010 "Creating_Making Forum," The University of Oklahoma College of Architecture/ Division of Architecture, (Nov. 3, 2010-Nov. 5, 2010), p. 162. Accessed March 15, 2016, available online: http://greenscale.crc.nd.edu/images/pub20092010/10_11_creating_making_conference_proceedings.pdf

heavy picture frames allowed images to float in the open spaces of galleries or dwellings. Custom furniture made of glass yields transparent views and reflected surfaces. Gravity is dynamically challenged as the room's contents float and stairs hover above the ground.”⁴²² However, Albinì was not the only designer in Italy who removed paintings from the walls and suspended them on steel armatures, nor was he the first. Edoardo Persico and Marcello Nizzoli had designed an installation for the Sala delle Medaglie d'Oro (Gold Medals Room) at the Mostra dell'Aeronautica (Aeronautics Exhibition) in Milan, in 1934, seven years before Albinì's Black and White exhibition (fig. 5.4).

Indeed, Lina had been exposed to the aesthetic choices, values, and motivations of the Italian Rationalist while she was in Milan; moreover, after she had moved to Brazil, she worked with Albinì directly at the museum in São Paulo when he had installed an exhibition of Italian sixteenth and seventeenth-century paintings in 1954. The Bardis published images of his work at the Palazzo Bianco in the São Paulo Museum of Art journal, *Habitat*, a magazine for art, culture, and architecture that began publication in 1950, and was co-edited by Lina and Pietro Maria. Albinì's comments on the work were published alongside the images, claiming that he wanted to create an atmosphere of air and light that would, "push vibrations into the atmosphere."⁴²³ Kay Bea Jones writes that Lina Bo Bardi was responsible for hiring and bringing Albinì to Brazil and that Bo Bardi “was intent on importing Northern Italian Rationalist tendencies.”⁴²⁴

Caterina Marcenaro, Direttore of the Ufficio Belle Arti del Comune di Genova, oversaw

⁴²² Kay Bea Jones, "Zero Gravity. Franco Albinì. Costruire le Modernità," *Nexus Network Journal*, Birkhäuser Basel, (2007): 156.

⁴²³ Kay Bea Jones, *Suspending Modernity: The Architecture of Franco Albinì*, (Burlington: Ashgate, 2014), 73.

⁴²⁴ Bea Jones, *Suspending Modernity: The Architecture of Franco Albinì*, 41.

Genoa's art collections and hired Albini to design four museums, including the Palazzo Bianco and the Palazzo Rosso, as well as having the architect design her home. Indeed, the patron agreed with Albini's formal principles, writing, "the palazzo concept has been abandoned to adhere strictly to the idea of a museum. In other words, the work of art is not treated as decoration, but as a world in itself sufficient to absorb the full attention of the visitor."⁴²⁵ Marcenaro and Albini, indeed, liberated the paintings from the confines of the walls, and here, again, one can see the importance of the idea of liberation, not only in the restoration of buildings in Rome, but also, in galleries and museums throughout Italy.

Albini's work for the Palazzo Bianco brought him much acclaim for providing alternative ways to view artworks. Jones argues that his work in Genoa influenced the renovations of: BBPR in Milan (Castello Sforzesco, 1956), Carlo Scarpa in Palermo (Palazzo Abatellis, 1954) and in Verona (Castelvecchio Museum 1957), as well as Scarpa, Gardella, and Michelucci in Florence (Uffizi galleries, 1956).⁴²⁶ Jones also argues that Albini influenced Lina. For Jones, "Bardi's 'easel panels' used for the 1968 installation at MASP constituted an overextended appropriation of that notion that lacked subtlety and respected no boundaries."⁴²⁷ Jones adds that while Albini designed installations that "focused inward," Lina "aimed for the grandiose, the countless, and the general."⁴²⁸ Jones believes that there is a definite impact of Albini on Lina: "Her fascination

⁴²⁵ Marcenaro, "Nell'interesse della didattica è stato abbandonato il concetto di palazzo per aderire strettamente a quello di museo. In altre parole, le opere d'arte state trattate non come parti decorative di un dato ambiente ma come un mondo a se stante, sufficienti ad assorbire la piena attenzione del visitatore." *Museum* 7, no. 4 (1954), FN 8 in Kay Bea Jones, *Suspending Modernity: The Architecture of Franco Albini*, 147-148.

⁴²⁶ Bea Jones, *Suspending Modernity: The Architecture of Franco Albini*, 147.

⁴²⁷ Bea Jones, 73.

⁴²⁸ *Ibid.*

with alternative uses of glass, including her library shelves in the 1951 Bardi glass house, and her passion for spiral stairs suggests additional influences from his work, although Bo Bardi's design methods, drawings, and relationships to her newly adopted Brazilian context depart from the design rigor, pragmatism, and discipline for which Albini is renowned.⁴²⁹



Figure 5.14. Close-up image of the Display Stand designed by Franco Albini (left), image of the side of the stand (right) at the Palazzo Bianco in Genoa, image taken by the author, Melinda McVay, November 2014.

Although Kay Bea Jones is correct in asserting that Lina was influenced by Albini, the writer fails to mention that this style was also Italian, deriving from ideas about liberation that permeated Italian culture and rhetoric. There is little discussion about Lina's aesthetics, other than she departs from Albini. Jones's bias steams from her focus on Albini; therefore, the writer

⁴²⁹ Bea Jones, 73.

neglects a nuanced understanding of Lina and her Brazilian influences. Jones ultimately fails to address Lina's desire to eliminate the "perfectionist" aspect of rationalism. For a lecture, Lina wrote:

After rationalism, modern architecture is once again connecting with what is most vital, primary, and fluid. The way we live may vary from country to country, as was the case with Le Corbusier in India. It is because of this that we recommend the observation and study of the realities of a country as opposed to some crystallised abstraction. Of course this does not mean that we should draw our inspiration from the past - far from it!⁴³⁰

Lina believed that folklore "offers the only means we have to move towards a new architecture- an architecture that uses rationalist instruments to measure the experience of 'non-perfect' and 'clustered cell' structures."⁴³¹ She wrote:

I talked above about 're-proposing' rationalism. Rationalism has to be revived as a defence against architectural irrationalism and as a political response to all those who stand to gain from an 'irrationalist' position presented as avant-garde and progressive. That said, it is important to eliminate the 'perfectionist' strands of rationalism, its metaphysical and idealistic legacy, and cope with the architectural 'incident.'⁴³²

Architect Marcelo Carvalho Ferraz had worked with Lina Bo Bardi on the SESC-Pompeia project after the MASP was completed. He explains how Bo Lina identified more with Brazil than Europe, which was, for Lina, "a musty world," "with too much weight on its shoulders." Ferraz shows Lina's identification with Brazil: "She said: 'Look, you are Brazilians. We are Brazilians. So it is and so it should be shown. We'll make it who and how we are. We must not

⁴³⁰ Lina Bo Bardi, *Architecture Words 12: Stones Against Diamonds*, Kindle: Loc 588 of 1540, First published in Olivia de Oliveira (ed), "Lina Bo Bardi: Obra Construída," 2G 23/24 (2002).

⁴³¹ Lina Bo Bardi, *Architecture Words 12: Stones Against Diamonds*, Kindle: Loc 904 of 1540, First published in *Mirante das Artes 1* (January-February 1967).

⁴³² Lina Bo Bardi, *Architecture Words 12: Stones Against Diamonds*, Kindle: Loc 967-68 of 1540, edited version of an article first published in *Mirante das Artes 5* (September-October 1967).

imitate the Europeans, the Italians, the French, the Americans. We must go on our own way. Universally, but in our own way."⁴³³

Indeed, Lina brought new energy and ideas to Brazil with the Rationalist values expressed in her aesthetic choices for museum display. Sabine Von Fischer agrees. She writes: "This prophecy of their ability to adequately translate the architectural language of Rationalism into a non European context was permanently manifested in the following project, at the second location of the MASP on Avenida Paulista, through a political process in which the influence of the media on politics and economics factored prominently."⁴³⁴ However altered, the Italian Rationalist resurfaced at the MASP with the installation of the artworks by Lina.

Architecture

Lina's first building was not built in Italy; instead, at thirty-six, in 1951, she completed the Bardis' home, Casa de Vidro (Glass House), in the Morumbi neighborhood of São Paulo (fig. 5.15). For Lina, "The problem was to create an environment that was 'physically' sheltered, i.e., that offered protection from the wind and the rain, but at the same time remained open to everything that is poetic and ethical, even the wildest of storms...."⁴³⁵ Casa de Vidro is a partially glass walled horizontal slab house that is perched on top of a hillside by tall, narrow aluminum pillars. The pillars and slab structure allude to Le Corbusier's Dom-ino architectural

⁴³³ Marcelo Carvalho Ferraz, "SESC-Pompeia: Working with Lina Bo Bardi," "Lina Bo Bardi 100, exhibition." Architekturmuseum der TU Munich, Barer Straße 40 80333 München, (12-23-2014).

⁴³⁴ Sabine Von Fisher, "The Horizons of Lina Bo Bardi: The Museu de Arte de São Paulo in the Context of European Postwar Concepts of Architecture," *lina bo bardi 100*, 105.

⁴³⁵ Andres Lepik and Vera Simone Bader, Eds., *lina bo bardi 100*, "Opening Remarks of the Kulturstiftung des Bundes (German Federal Cultural Foundation)," by Hortensia Völckers and Alexander Farenholtz, (Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz Verlag, 2014), 15.

principle from 1914. This principle allows for a free design. Lina was aware of Le Corbusier's design principles. While in Milan, she had overseen the article, "*Case sui trampoli*," for *Domus* that compared Le Corbusier's pillar construction (along with Figini, Pollini, and Frey) with conventional pile homes.⁴³⁶ The design for her home drew from both modern and regional forms of architecture, like Le Corbusier's first architectural work, the country house in Le Pradet, that he designed in 1931 for Madame de Mandrot. For his first residential building, Le Corbusier combined regional and modern materials, using both stone and glass.⁴³⁷



Figure 5.15. Lina Bo Bardi's *Casa de Vidro* (*Glass House*), accessed December 21, 2016, images available on the public domain, courtesy of the Lina Bo and P.M. Bardi Institute <http://bardisbowlchair.arper.com/lina-bo-bardi/institute/>

The same year that Lina completed the Glass House, Charles Dantas Forbes asked Pietro Maria to help him create a city museum. Forbes was the mayor of São Vicente, a tranquil island on the coast of the state of São Paulo within a short ride from the city. Pietro Maria agreed and then passed on the architectural work to Lina. Forbes and the Bardis had planned to build the museum upon the sand at the ocean's edge where it would face the Atlantic. According to Pietro

⁴³⁶ I.M., "Casa de Vidro," in *lina bo bardi 100*, 196.

⁴³⁷ *Ibid.*, footnote 4.

Maria, Lina's project for a small museum on the Atlantic coast, was a "style representative of the age, that should be designed expressively for the purpose it must serve, according to educative principles which, though they may have been evolved in the course of only a few years are nevertheless strengthened by the enthusiasm of the neophyte."⁴³⁸ Lina was excited about designing the museum, for she believed, "a museum is as important as a school." She provided sketches, collages, and a model for the unrealized project (figs. 5.16-5.17). For the museum, Lina combined elements from her glass house and exhibition design for the MASP on rua Sete de Abril.

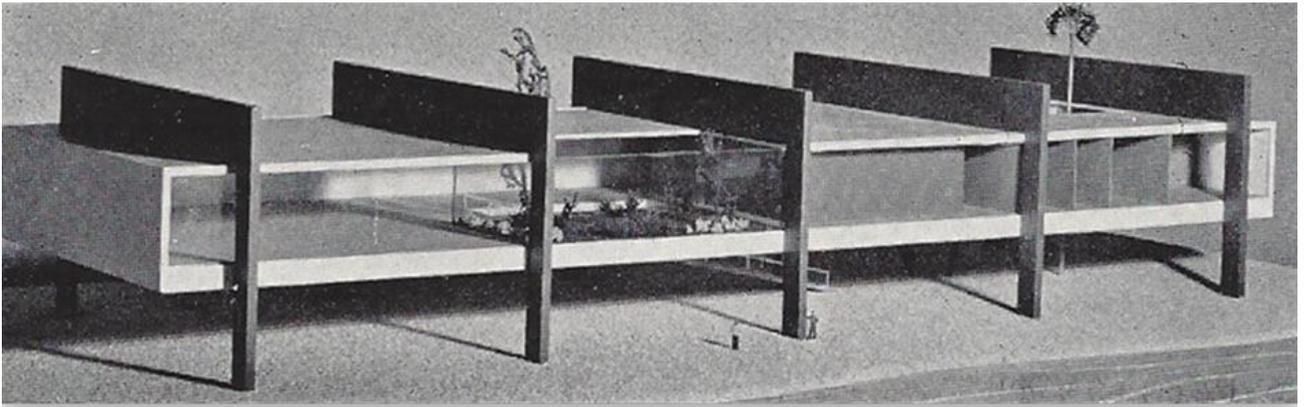


Figure 5.16. Lina Bo Bardi, Project for the museum of São Vicente, Front facing, near Santos, 1950. From *The Arts in Brazil*, p.13.

⁴³⁸ P.M. Bardi, *The Arts in Brazil*, 12.



Figure 5.17. Lina Bo Bardi, Project for the museum of São Vicente, near Santos, 1950. From *The Arts in Brazil*, p.13.

For the building, Lina's "structural logic and simplicity" exemplifies Mies van der Rohe's Crown Hall in Chicago.⁴³⁹ Lina describes it in an article about her museum on the seashore. The museum was to be formed from pre-fabricated elements. The building was to have an open plan, with views of the exterior and interior area for the study of works on exhibition; the auditorium was contained by movable walls. Access to the building was through a ramp. The materials for finishing will be smoothed and varnished natural cement for the porticos, while the closed body will be covered with "Brazilian snow." The casements were to be aluminum.⁴⁴⁰ Lina raised the building on stilts and set it in the sand because she wanted to protect the paintings from the damaging sea water and, of course, because of the exquisite view, however impractical this task might seem. She had noted a plan with "a bearing structure formed by five sets of reinforced

⁴³⁹ Zeuler Lima, 65.

⁴⁴⁰ image of Lina Bo Bardi, article about museum at seashore in *Habitat 8* (July-September, 1952), Zeuler R. Lima Collection, illustrated in Lima, 64.

concrete beams measuring twenty-five meters [82 ft.] between columns and placed twenty meters [66 ft.] from each other, equivalent to the Crown Hall. Both upper and lower slabs [would be] built with prefabricated components."⁴⁴¹

In addition, her collage for the museum on the seashore evokes the surreal paintings of Giorgio de Chirico while at the same time, suggests Mies' collage of an interior perspective for his project, *Museum for a Small City* (1942). With her collage, Lina Bo Bardi joins art and architecture (fig. 5.18). Her ideas for a museum closely align with Mies van der Rohe's 1942 museum project (fig. 2.20). For instance, like Mies' project, Lina's São Vicente building had been "conceived as one large area" allowing "every flexibility in use." Also, the structure was steel, which was planned to consist of "only three basic elements- a floor slab, columns and a roof plate."⁴⁴²

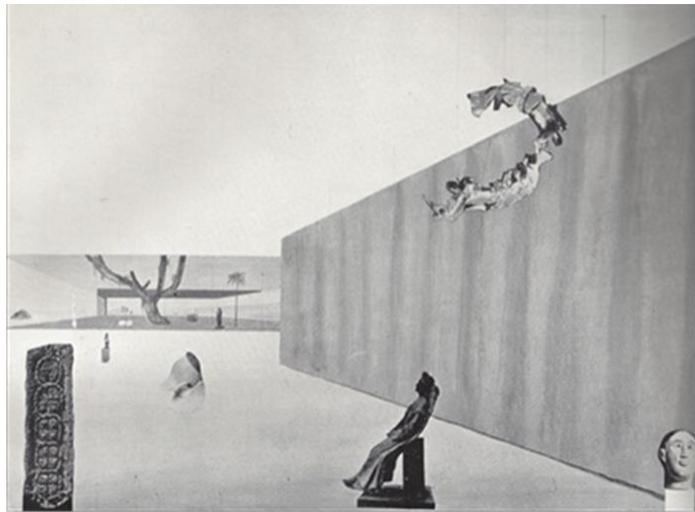


Figure 5.18. Lina Bo Bardi, Interior, Project for the museum of São Vicente, 1950. Image from *The Arts in Brazil*, p.19.

⁴⁴¹ Lina Bo Bardi, MASP, sketches for structural and material alternatives, c. 1957, ILBPMB, referenced in Zeuler Lima, 65.

⁴⁴² A. James Speyer, *Mies van der Rohe*, (Chicago: The Art Institute of Chicago, 1968), 58.

As previously mentioned, Pietro Maria believed that the neophyte's enthusiasm would be strengthened by a new architecture that served a purpose, and he referred to Lina's project for a small museum at São Vicente (1950) as exemplary of this type of new museum and a prelude to what she would eventually produce for the MASP.⁴⁴³ A. Lima explains the project: “The result was a horizontal, semiglazed volume lifted from the beach with access from underneath. She described it as an enclosed block with ‘the façade opened over the ocean, a side with no sun exposure.’ The program was nonetheless simple: an exhibition hall sided by a terrace, a large auditorium enclosed by moveable walls, and services and classrooms organized around an opening in the floor through which a tree would grow.”⁴⁴⁴ Lina’s project for a small museum at São Vicente would not only foreshadow the new MASP building, but as A. Lima argues, it prompted Brazilian architects, Vilanova Artigas and Affonso Reidy to abandon “polished materials and started to design large spanning structures in concrete and rough finishes.”⁴⁴⁵

Museum Installation

The permanent installation that Lina designed for the MASP on Avenue Paulista was remarkable in how it removed the artworks from context by allowing the viewer a new sensual and intellectual experience where one could juxtapose, compare, contrast, and combine. (fig. 5.19)⁴⁴⁶ Freed from the confines of the walls, the works at the MASP appeared to be floating in

⁴⁴³ P.M. Bardi, *The Arts in Brazil*, 12.

⁴⁴⁴ Lima, 65.

⁴⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁴⁶ Although there are many images of the original glass easel installation, I could not find a list of the works that were displayed after extensive research, including a search through the MASP’s archives. Neither could MASP artistic director, Adriano Pedroso, as stated in FN 26 in *Concreto e cristal: o acervo do MASP nos cavaletes de Lina Bo Bardi = concrete and crystal: MASP's collection on Lina Bo Bardi's easels*, (São Paulo: MASP, Cobogó, 2015).

the open sunlit gallery. Lina designed an installation that incorporated glass easels, consisting of a glass panel that was anchored by a concrete base and secured with a simple wooden wedge.

Facing east, these easels were carefully placed throughout the upper gallery of the museum. The concrete bases were aligned with one another, as were the bottom of the paintings, so the installation was by no means done haphazardly. Lina ordered the paintings by national school, instead of historical or aesthetic categories. Each of the framed paintings were mounted on the glass pane. In contrast to the usual display of artworks in a museum, when seen from the east side of the gallery space where one would have been facing the front of the works, none of these paintings had accompanying labels with didactic information about the work. Time (chronology), fashion (movements), and names (artist status) were stripped away, leaving the viewer free to make her or his own judgment about the work. Nonetheless, informative labels were available to the viewing public when one moved around the easel to the west side of the gallery and looked at the work from the back of the painting. Lina affixed labels to the backs of the paintings in order to provide more information for the public without the visual interference of information competing with the work of art. These labels were white matte boards measured to match the same dimensions of their specific paintings. Along with descriptive and analytic textual information, these labels also included images of other works that related to the work on the reverse (figs. 5.20-5.21).

The gray, concrete cube bases of the easels scattered throughout the gallery provide balance and rhythm to the overall installation design, and at the same time, they ground the glass easels. The gallery space is filled with the placement of the artworks. There is little empty space. Instead, the negative space created by the stands provides the appropriate emphasis, proportion,

and rhythm for an implied route or passage for the viewer to roam the gallery. Space works to form an open path, meaning Lina's design opened the path to the museum visitor's discretion. There was not a dictated path for the visitor to move throughout the gallery. Not only were the works liberated from the confines of the walls, but the audience was free to choose whatever path she or he desired. According to Lina, she wanted to 'present the artworks as work and as a prophecy within everyone's reach.'⁴⁴⁷



Figure 5.19. Lina Bo Bardi glass easel project, MASP Picture Gallery, Lina Bo Bardi and Aldo Van Eyck, *São Paulo Art Museum*, (São Paulo: Instituto Lina e P.M. Bardi, 1997), unnumbered.

⁴⁴⁷ Lina Bo Bardi, "Explicações sobre o Museu de Arte," *O Estado de São Paulo*, April 5, 1970, quoted in Zeuler R. Lima, "Between Cabinets of Curiosities and Teatro Povero: Lina Bo Bardi's Tactics of Display," *lina bo bardi 100*, Andres Lepik and Vera Simone Bader, Eds., Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz Verla2014, p. 74.



Figure 5.20. back panels, Lina Bo Bardi, image courtesy of MASP library archives, Baixa e marca: 156 -1968 - Pinacoteca I



Figure 5.21. back panels, Lina Bo Bardi, image courtesy of MASP library archives, Baixa e marca: 156 -1968 - Pinacoteca II

The concept of the MASP installation design is best understood by what Umberto Eco called "identified design." Eco defined identified design as "design which is the outcome of an expressed theory and of a practice in which the object aims to exemplify its author's theory."⁴⁴⁸ Penny Sparke adds further characteristics to Eco's ideas by relating design to "its ideological function as purveyor of Italian nationalistic values."⁴⁴⁹ With the installation design, Lina was communicating her ideology of an aesthetics of Poverty. Instead of strictly arising from Italian Rationalism, Lina's cultural, social, and political experiences helped to shape her unique Brazilian design.

The mid-sixties were a time of political and cultural unrest in Brazil, when, as Richard Williams, writes, "a remarkable number of architects found themselves in direct opposition to the government."⁴⁵⁰ Juscelino Kubitschek left office in 1961, leaving the new capital Brasília and a bad economy for the country. Right-wing, Jânio da Silva Quadros was elected the new president, but resigned within seven months. Quadros's Vice-President and successor, left-wing, João Goulart only lasted until 1964, when a United States backed army coup took over power.⁴⁵¹ As a result, the later part of the sixties was a time of economic growth, as seen on Avenida Paulista and, in contrast, a time of oppression for many people in Brazil, including Lina. In 1964, the military saw her work at the Bahia museum of popular art, where Lina was director, as subversive, so the government required her resignation and closed the museum.⁴⁵²

⁴⁴⁸ Penny Sparke, "Introduction," *Design in Italy*, (New York, Abbeville, 1988), 8.
⁴⁴⁹ Sparke, 10.
⁴⁵⁰ Richard J. Williams, *Brazil modern architectures in history*, (London: Reaktion, 2009), Kindle, loc 1845 of 5196.
⁴⁵¹ Williams, Loc 1845 of 5196.
⁴⁵² Williams, Loc 2134 of 5196.

In 1964, the new government declared that political parties in Brazil, including communism, were illegal and imprisoned many of the party's leading members.⁴⁵³ During this time, a number of architects were communist members, including Lúcio Costa and Oscar Niemeyer. Although some architects worked with the military, including Niemeyer,⁴⁵⁴ many others used their architectural practice for resistance. For instance, many architects used the idea of poverty as a form of political resistance. Williams writes, "The idea of poverty assumed special importance here, becoming a field of action. For many on the left, architects or not, poverty became something with which to identify."⁴⁵⁵ When Lina returned to museum work after her forced resignation, the architect's work, including the installations at the MASP, addressed the aesthetics of poverty by aligning with the public.⁴⁵⁶ For instance, Lina evoked the poverty of the Brazilian people in order to communicate her ideas of social liberation. In 1988, years after the MASP had opened, she arrived at the opening of the Espaço Glauber in Salvador garbed in bags made from coconut fiber, forcing to mind the region's poverty and the "liberatory potential of performance art."⁴⁵⁷ Indeed, Lina's aesthetic had become one of poverty as she titled her architecture "Poor Architecture" and relied on basic materials. Lina said, "There [were] only

⁴⁵³ Williams, Loc 1853 of 5196

⁴⁵⁴ Oscar Niemeyer, Brazilian architect, designed the Ministry of Education and Public Health Building (1943) in Rio, and he designed all of the primary government buildings and housing for Brasília (1957-1960).

⁴⁵⁵ Williams, Loc 1853-1860.

⁴⁵⁶ Jason Farago explains in "Lina Bo Bardi- Brazil's Best Kept Secret," *BBC Culture*, (June 11, 2014) "Many artists and architects went into exile – Niemeyer, a diehard communist, went into exile in France in 1966 and remained abroad for two decades. Bo Bardi stayed. She had no major commissions for a decade, devoting herself to curatorial and theatrical projects, and her insistence on staying in Brazil goes some way to explaining her low international profile today." Accessed October 12, 2016, Available online: <http://www.bbc.com/culture/story/20140611-brazils-best-kept-secret>.

⁴⁵⁷ Richard Williams, Loc 2260 of 5196.

two aristocracies in Brazil: that of the land[owners] and that of the people.”⁴⁵⁸

Olivia de Oliveira, prominent scholar from São Paulo, wrote: "The capacity of popular culture to improvise, simplify, and invent permeated the architecture of Bo Bardi."⁴⁵⁹ De Oliveira points out that post WWII artists and intellectuals sought all that was fundamental and anti-crystallized. Lina not only synthesized Italian Rationalism, but she also translated Italian nationalism to Brazil in the form of a pride for the Brazilian people. However, Williams correctly addresses the point that Lina's concept of poor architecture exoticizes the Brazilian people. For Williams, Bo Bardi wanted to keep the Brazilian people "in a state of attractive underdevelopment," while she could escape to her glass house. Whereas Williams views Lina Bo Bardi as exploitative, Marcus Woods sees her in a more positive light. Woods writes: "If we read her properly she is not merely a forerunner of, but a living blueprint for, the ways in which Africa's presence in the Atlantic diaspora can be creatively read."⁴⁶⁰ Nonetheless, Lina articulated a message of freedom with the MASP installation by presenting works that were freed from categories, floating in the gallery space.

In 1981, *Newsweek* published a book for the MASP as part of the publication's Great Museums of the World series. In it, the "museum staff" explains the installation: "Taking into account that a painting is born in a free space- that is, an easel- its original state can best be evoked when it is exhibited on a tempered plate glass fixed on a concrete base, rather than

⁴⁵⁸ Lima, 36.

⁴⁵⁹ Olivia de Oliveira, "Lina Bo Bardi: Towards an Architecture Without Borders," in *Cruelty & Utopia Cities and Landscapes in Latin America*, (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2003), 199.

⁴⁶⁰ Marcus Wood, *Black Milk Imagining Slavery in the Visual Cultures in Brazil and America*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 405.

against an opaque wall. We concluded that it would be arbitrary to hang a painting which the artist did for a specific ambiance, on a wall of one color or another.”⁴⁶¹ Part of the MASP's collection, Nattier's four portraits of the daughters of Louis XV, were originally hung in Versailles, specifically, in Dauphin's study. The publication champions Bo Bardi's installation, claiming, "It would be wrong to hang them on a wall; we prefer to exhibit them freely on an easel.”⁴⁶²

Again, words like "freeing" and "liberating" directly correlate to Lina's Italian years when architecture was "liberated" from its surroundings and paintings were "freed" from the confines of the walls. As previously mentioned, architects Edoardo Persico and Marcello Nizzoli removed works from the walls, as did Franco Albini and many other Italian architects in order to exalt space and content, as well as for the more practical reason of humidity. The “panel-and-rod system” allowed the stucco to dry while also protecting the works of art from moisture.⁴⁶³ Nonetheless, the Italian tradition of floating and contextless works of art that culminated in the MASP has a mystifying quality. Lina’s stripping the works from the wall, labels, and almost all other information beckons abstract artists. As Guilherme Wisnik writes in the *Folha de São Paulo*:

⁴⁶¹ Museu de Arte de São Paulo Assis Chateaubriand, and P. M. Bardi, *Museum of Art, São Paulo*, (New York: Newsweek, 1981), 163.

⁴⁶² Ibid.

⁴⁶³ Stephen Mark Caffey and Gabriela Campagnol, “Dis/Solution: Lina Bo Bardi’s Museu de Arte de São Paulo,” *Journal of Conservation and Museum Studies*, UCLA Institute of Archeology, Accessed October 13, 2016, available online at: <http://jcms.ubiquitypress.com/articles/10.5334/jcms.1021221/#F10>

Yet if this loss of aura of the works of art is a profanity, the floating of the paintings on glass supports has something of the miraculous, thereby part restoring the mystery. Nothing of this seems to me dated or inadequate for a time, such as our own, in which a shallow illusionism predominates. In this sense, many of the reactions against the easels of MASP, which perpetuate themselves across time, do not seem to get beyond aristocratic taste dressed up as technical specialism.⁴⁶⁴

Taking the paintings back to the easel, Lina's installation broke new ground in how the works were not arranged in chronological or geographical order. The works were granted autonomy and time and space merged; thus, the installation gave complete power of interpretation to the viewer. In an interview for *O Estado de São Paulo* newspaper, Lina called herself, "the designer of the museum and of the crystal easel project (paintings are born in the air)." She asserted: "Let me clarify that my intention was to destroy the aura that surrounds museums," backing her intention to "present the artwork as work and as prophecy within everyone's reach."⁴⁶⁵

Olivia de Oliveira writes that Lina created "a duel subversion of the idea of progress, both because she introduced the notion of the reversibility of time, and because, with it, the creative moment when the painting was still in full dialogue with the painter was reestablished." For Oliveira, freeing the paintings from the walls, eliminating classification, and allowing for a personal interpretation was: "As though at a ball, the visitor was free to choose the painting with which he would begin to dance."⁴⁶⁶ Freedom and accessibility are most often used to describe Lina's installation of the glass easels. Von Fisher claims, "This form of non-contextual

⁴⁶⁴ Guilherme Wisnik, "The Place of Experience," *Folha de São Paulo*, (January 11, 2016), Accessed October 14, 2016, available online at: <http://www.metro.com.br/projects/view/123/9>

⁴⁶⁵ Lina Bo Bardi, Explicacoes sobre o Museu de Arte," *O Estado de São Paulo*, (April 5, 1970, ILBPMB), quoted in Z. Lima, 134.

⁴⁶⁶ Olivia de Oliveira, "Lina Bo Bardi: Towards an Architecture Without Borders," in *Cruelty & Utopia Cities and Landscapes in Latin America*, 203.

presentation can be understood as a pedagogy of emancipation and a release from the conventions of the elitism of art institutions."⁴⁶⁷ Aldo Van Eyck also sees the installation at the MASP as a form of emancipation that allows the artworks to serve, "as windows onto another world, but ... [as] the tactile reality of their painted surface i.e. the physical existence of something actually made- with paint and brush, stroke afterstroke- IN SPACE."⁴⁶⁸

Remarkably, Lina's installations added a new way for audience interpretation, shattering the usual practice within museums. Martin Filler writes that the display at the MASP "gave an entirely different character to the art-viewing experience, and that the MASP approach is now standard practice at contemporary art institutions, because the unpredictable display requirements for today's large installation pieces, video art, and other nontraditional mediums have made such easily transformable interiors mandatory."⁴⁶⁹ Lina had a unique approach to the problems that museums face with labels. In a letter dated September 6, 1953, Pietro Maria wrote that he had been thinking about placing the didactic information on the backside of the paintings.⁴⁷⁰ Lina incorporated this idea into her glass easels, placing the labels on the backside of the paintings. Lina's descriptions covered the back of the paintings with nonuniform labels that were cut to cover the entire surface. Lina arranged the works by national school and further provided a historical context for the artworks by offering labels. "Behind each canvas, on the wall, there are plaques with information, well-thought out explanations, illustrated with

⁴⁶⁷ Von Fisher, *lina bo bardi 100*, 114.

⁴⁶⁸ Aldo Van Eyck, "A Superlative Gift," in *São Paulo Art Museum*, (Lisbon/São Paulo: Blau Lda, and Instituto Lina Bo e P.M. Bardi, 1997), n.p. Also quoted in Veikos, Cathrine, "To Enter the Work: Ambient Art," *Journal of Architectural Education* 59, no. 4 (2006): 74-75.

⁴⁶⁹ Martin Filler, "An Architecture of Perfect Imperfection," *The New York Review of Books*, Volume LXI, no. 9, (May 22, 2014), 15.

⁴⁷⁰ Anna Carboncini, "Lina Bo and P. M. Bardi," *lina bo bardi 100*, 190.

reproductions, engravings, maps, graphics, and documents which can help the visitor to understand the work in question.”⁴⁷¹ On the one hand, viewers want information available about artworks; on the other hand, labels and didactic information distracts from the art. A former curator at the MoMA, Bernice Rose, adds to Filler's arguments, in *Art and the Power of Placement* by architectural historian Victoria Newhouse, "Curators hate the moment of installation when labels go to the walls. They're ugly, but people need them, and they complain when the labels are not big enough to read."⁴⁷² At the MASP, Lina made way for problems that current curators face, both with placement and information.

In 1996, MASP curator Luiz Marques's exhibition *Italian Art in the Brazilian Collections 1250–1950* (*Arte Italiana em Coleções Brasileiras 1250–1950*) replaced Lina's installation design. Originally, the MASP director Julio Neves and Marques had intended for the change to be temporary; however, Lina's crystal easels were removed, and the transparent glass walls were covered with plaster for over 15 years. First, the labels were detached from the reverse side of the glass easels and put on view to urge viewers to learn the names of the artists (Miyoshi 2011: 137–138). Soon after, Neves replaced the glass easels with plaster walls. As Stephen Mark Caffey and Gabriela Campagnol explain, “the curators removed the glass panels, citing justifications that ranged from the impracticality of using glass easels for displaying tapestries and other such large works to reasserting the primacy of the painting-wall dialogue in response to what some characterized as Lina's ‘intolerant’ and ‘authoritarian’ exhibition scheme (Miyoshi 2011: 149; Cypriano

⁴⁷¹ Museu de Arte de São Paulo Assis Chateaubriand, and P. M. Bardi, *Museum of Art, São Paulo*, 163.

⁴⁷² Victoria Newhouse, *Art and the Power of Placement*, (New York: The Monacelli Press, 2005), 230.

2003).”⁴⁷³ Over time, the MASP had very few traces of Bo Bardi. Other than a few of the glass easels that were used for notifications, and some in her studio, they were not displaying works of art (figs. 5.22-5.24). The museum had turned to a darkened mausoleum, far from the light airy galleries that Bo Bardi envisioned (fig. 5.25).



Figure 5.22. Pedestals and glass display from MASP at Serviço Social do Comércio (SESC) Pompeia, 2014, photo Credit: Melinda McVay

⁴⁷³ Stephen Mark Caffey and Gabriela Campagnol, “Dis/Solution: Lina Bo Bardi’s Museu de Arte de São Paulo,” *Journal of Conservation and Museum Studies*, UCLA Institute of Archeology, Accessed October 1, 2016, available online at: <http://jcms.ubiquitypress.com/articles/10.5334/jcms.1021221/#F10> In 2003, Marques (MASP curator 1994-1997) and Luiz Hossaka (MASP chief curator) addressed the problem with the glass easels. Works such as: *Raising Lazarus* by Cândido Portinari, *Apparition of the Virgin with Child to Saint Ubald* by Jacopo Palma, eight 13th century tapestries, *Allegory of Ceramic Painting* by Bordalo Pinheiro Columbano could not be exhibited because of their size. Marques and Hossaka also list 15 works that could not be shown on the easels because of the weight. Additionally, they list other technical problems: fragility of glass, deformation of wood, insolation, and vibration. Moreover, Marques and Hossaka offered four “museological problems”: educational visits, small amount of works on display, lighting, and the low height. Marquez and Hossaka in *Concreto e cristal: o acervo do MASP nos cavaletes de Lina Bo Bardi = concrete and crystal : MASP's collection on Lina Bo Bardi's easels*, by Adriano Pedrosa; Luiza Proença; Museu de Arte de São Paulo Assis Chateaubriand, (São Paulo: MASP, Cobogó, 2015), 147-151.



Figure 5.23. Pedestals and glass display from MASP at Serviço Social do Comércio (SESC) Pompeia, photo credit: Melinda McVay



Figure 5.24. Original base for the Glass Easel Project, designed by Bo Bardi, Bo Bardi's Home Studio, Instituto Lina Bo e P.M. Bardi, São Paulo



Figure 5.25. MASP upstairs gallery, *Lucian Freud: Corpos e Rostos* (June 27, 2013 - 31 January 31, 2014), photo credit: Melinda McVay

In 2014, to mark Lina's centenary, Heitor Martins, president of the MASP, and Adriano Pedrosa, MASP curator, enlisted Martin Corrullon and Gustavo Cedroni, partners at the office METRO Architects Associated, to recreate Lina's glass easels.⁴⁷⁴ The new MASP administration not only returned to Lina's crystal easels, but they also reintroduced her previous display system. Beginning December 2014, the MASP invited METRO to work with the new

⁴⁷⁴ Renato Anelli, "The Recurperation of the MASP: Heitor Martins, Adriano Pedrosa, Martin Corrullon, and Gustavo Cedroni; The APCA Prize 2015, Category 'Cultural Patrimony,' 'Mode of Architecture and Urbanism,'" *Vitruvius*, (February 2016), and Giacomo Pirazzoli, "The Permanent Collection Redesigned," *Domus 999*, (February, 2016), Accessed September 16, 2016, both articles available online at: <http://www.metroo.com.br/projects/view/123/9>

curatorial team and to design all exhibitions and to review of the museum's interior spaces.

According to the METRO website:

In this new phase, the museum intends to focus on its private collection throughout the year in a series of exhibitions focused on art, fashion and photography from Brazil, Italy and France. It will also focus on the formation and growth of this collection, highlighting its importance in the development of Brazil's cultural scene. The exhibition design for these shows will also revive a series of the original exhibition projects designed by Lina Bo Bardi during her time at MASP. These will be displayed in the first floor gallery and will include the FAAP (Fundação Armando Álvares Penteado) exhibit, held between 1957 and 1959 in São Paulo and others held at the original MASP headquarters at Rua 7 de Abril. Along with these exhibition design projects, the recovery of the museum's original architecture will also be seen in the restoration of its spatiality and original features designed by Lina Bo Bardi that have been lost due to successive interventions.⁴⁷⁵

Almost twenty years after Lina's glass easel project was removed and after years of public outcry for their return, finally, on December 10, 2015, just a couple of days after Lina's 101 birthday, 119 selected works of art returned to Lina's original intention for display (fig. 5.26).⁴⁷⁶ The new display differs from Lina's design in how the METRO architects used labels. The 2015 labels are small squares placed on the backside and centered. This way is successful in how it allows the viewer to see the back of the paintings. The stretcher, dealers' labels, labels from

⁴⁷⁵ METRO website, "Projects: MASP EXHIBITION DESIGN SÃO PAULO, SP," Accessed October 12, 2016, available at: <http://www.metroo.com.br/projects/view/122/3>

⁴⁷⁶ *Concreto e cristal : o acervo do MASP nos cavaletes de Lina Bo Bardi = concrete and crystal : MASP's collection on Lina Bo Bardi's easels* discusses many issues dealing with the glass easels. See Zeuler R.M. de A. Lima, "Memory by a Thread and Through a Glass Sheet," for a detail of what happened to the glass easels and Bo Bardi's concept of them during the time after their removal. Also, in the chapter "Concrete and Crystal: Architecture," Martin Corullon addresses the original concerns of technical issues by explaining how the new glass easels were changed and how they remained the same, writing: "The main adjustments were made with the aim of strengthening the concrete cubes; adding the possibility of leveling the set; allowing for the full function of the wedge with a more effective and durable tightening system; standardization of the height of the drilled holes so that the artworks could be switched interchangeably from one glass pane to the other ...; increasing the protection of the edges of the glass panes to avoid breakage and to reduce undesirable vibrations," 33.

auction houses, galleries, and exhibitions all become a part of the work, showing the sociological history of the work. All tell a story and offer other information about the work of art. This information is most often kept away from the average museum visitor. Only the privileged curators, conservators, museum staff and academics are accustomed to seeing this sort of visual information. As of December 2015, all visitors at the MASP are able to see that sort of information. However, one must remember that exposing the sociological history and drawing the viewer's attention to auction labels detracts from the work of art as art. There is a fine line between freeing works of art and fetishizing them.

Since METRO began their partnership with the MASP, exhibitions like *The Bandeirante Photo-Cine Club: From Archive to Network* (November 27, 2015-March 20, 2016)⁴⁷⁷ and *MASP's Rhodia Collection* (October 23, 2015- February 14, 2016) have celebrated Lina's past designs⁴⁷⁸ (figs. 5.27-5.28). The display for *The Bandeirante Photo-Cine Club: From Archive to Network* used Lina's older system of display. Marta Bogéa describes that the display of the exhibition consisted of: "slender panels, supported lightly via few points on the floor and stabilised by steels running horizontally." Moreover, Bogéa shows that "the way the panels [were] used innovates at the same time in which it preserves traces of the original design. This mode of exhibiting the works establishes an interesting dialogue with the logic of display presented by the glass easels on the floor above."⁴⁷⁹

⁴⁷⁷ Marta Bogéa "Lina's Easels from two Opposing Narrative," *Folha De São Paulo* (February 14, 2016), Accessed March 12, 2016, available online at: <http://www.metroo.com.br/projects/view/123/9>

⁴⁷⁸ The hanging black curtains in *MASP's Rhodia Collection* closely resembles the Silk exhibition that had been designed by Mies van der Rohe and Reich.

⁴⁷⁹ Ibid, Marta Bogéa.



Figure 5.26. MASP reinstalation 2015, METRO Architects Associated, accessed December 12, 2016, image courtesy of METRO, available public domain
<http://www.metroo.com.br/projects/view/123/0>



Figure 5.27. 1st floor, MASP, METRO installation for *Foto Cine Clube Bandeirante: from Archive to Network*, photo Eduardo Ortega, courtesy of METRO, accessed December 12, 2016, available public domain <http://www.metroo.com.br/projects/view/122/2>



Figure 5.28. 2nd basement floor, *Masp's Rhodia Collection*, photo Eduardo Ortega, accessed December 12, 2016, courtesy of METRO, available public domain <http://www.metroo.com.br/projects/view/122/2>

A Mão do Povo Brasileiro (Hands of the Brazilian People) (1969)

Housed on the first floor of the museum, the first exhibition at the new MASP, *Hands of the Brazilian People* (1969) showcased hand-made items from mainly the people of the northern and northeastern part of Brazil. Organized by the Bardis, filmmaker Glauber Rocha, and theatre director Martin Gonçalves, an overwhelming presentation of folk items filled the large space. Lina tightly packed in various votives, tools, utensils, furniture, clothing, textiles, toys, and musical instruments that filled the space. She hung everyday items on unfinished wooden planks that lined the gallery walls and presented handcrafted works on pedestals made from the same unfinished timber. Birdcages, canoes, hammocks, and a wooden crucifix hung from the ceiling above (fig. 5.29). Lina utilized as much space as possible, filling all of the gallery space with miscellaneous handmade items from the Northeastern portion of Brazil and from additional regions. The architect created a guided path for the viewer to walk around the space by creating negative space from the placement of the pedestals (fig. 5.30). Other than the voided space of the pathways, Lina cluttered the gallery by using all available space.

The large room was symmetrical with three large-scale figurative works. Lining the entrance, two large papier-mâché puppets faced each other, towering over and greeting the visitors as they stepped into the gallery. After the museum-goer passed the puppets, they were met by a large polychrome baroque Saint George straddling a fabric covered wooden framework to mimic a horse (fig. 5.31). Above the statue of Saint George, Lina hung the canopy of an altar and paper flags.

The mixture of folk art and ordinary appliances celebrated the art and design of the poor in Brazil. Lina, indeed, designed this exhibition with a political intention, as this type of art

showed a creative attempt by those people who struggled to survive under desperate environmental and dire economic conditions. Lina had claimed that “the presentation of creativity and possibilities of everyday craft' instead of 'art as a consolation to poverty.” At the time of the opening for MASP, the Brazilian military government was the most authoritative, so, as A. Lima writes, this statement was an especially "powerful message" during the turbulent years.⁴⁸⁰ "The exhibition was veiled protest against the discriminatory cultural projects of Brazil's ruling classes."⁴⁸¹ Immediately, with the inaugural exhibition, the MASP became the site for political protests.⁴⁸²

A. Lima explains how Lina was warned by Ceslo Fertado, the "influential" economist and foreign minister, that she should not "see her plans as a consolation for poverty."⁴⁸³ According to Lina, the inaugural exhibition was the “presentation of creativity and possibilities of everyday craft” instead of a collection of “art as a consolidation to poverty.” Lina claimed that she “did not want it to be interpreted that way.”⁴⁸⁴ A. Lima believes that the exhibition was a means for Lina to “work out her concerns” that she had over the letter from Ceslo Fertado. Fertado had “warned her about ‘the risk of stopping at the identification phase and ending up like the literature produced about the Nordeste, which only tangentially addressed problems and served as a tranquilizer for those who can’t sleep during their afternoon nap.”⁴⁸⁵

⁴⁸⁰ Lima, “Between Cabinets of Curiosities and Teatro Povero,” *lina bo bardi* 100, 74.

⁴⁸¹ Lars Meier and Lars Frers, eds., 92.

⁴⁸² Lars Meier and Lars Frers, eds., 93.

⁴⁸³ Lima, 121.

⁴⁸⁴ Lima, *Lina Bo Bardi*, 139.

⁴⁸⁵ Lima, *Lina Bo Bardi*, 139-140.



Figure 5.29. *A Mão do Povo Brasileiro (Hands of the Brazilian People)* (1969), courtesy of MASP library archives, Baixa e marca: 160 - 1969 - A M ão do Povo Brasileiro



Figure 5.30. *A Mão do Povo Brasileiro (Hands of the Brazilian People)* (1969), courtesy of MASP library archives, Baixa e marca: 160 - 1969 - A M ão do Povo Brasileiro



Figure 5.31. *A Mão do Povo Brasileiro (Hands of the Brazilian People)* (1969), courtesy of MASP library archives, Baixa e marca: 160 - 1969 - A Mão do Povo Brasileiro

Bo Bardi dedicated the exhibition to the founder of the National Historical and Artistic Heritage Institute, Rodrigo M.F. de Andrade (fig. 5.32). Andrade had been a politician, lawyer, and writer. He served as Chief Editor and Director of the Journal of Brazil. Andrade had started his political life as “head of Francisco Campos office,” working in the Ministry of Education under Getulio Vargas.⁴⁸⁶ President Vargas' social programs are why the former dictator and president of Brazil is today remembered as “The Father of the Poor.” Lina further backed her political statement about poverty by dedicating the exhibition to Rodrigo M.F. de Andrade. When Gustavo Capanema was Education Minister, Rodrigo joined the group of intellectuals and artists who became the heirs of the ideals of the Week 1922. The “Week of Modern Art,” a

⁴⁸⁶ “Award Rodrigo Melo Franco de Andrade has 230 subscribers,” dated 6-10-2015, (last viewed 9-29-2015), available online at: http://www.cultura.gov.br/noticias-destaques/-/asset_publisher/OiKX3xlR9iTn/content/id/1269981

cultural assembly that was held in São Paulo (13-17 February, 1922), was organized by Brazilian artists, composers, and writers in order to sever the ties with Brazil’s colonial past and create a “New Brazil.”⁴⁸⁷ Between 1934 and 1945, Andrade became responsible for the legal consolidation of the Cultural Heritage theme in Brazil. In 1937, he founded the Department of National Historical and Artistic Heritage, current Iphan, which he presided for 30 years.

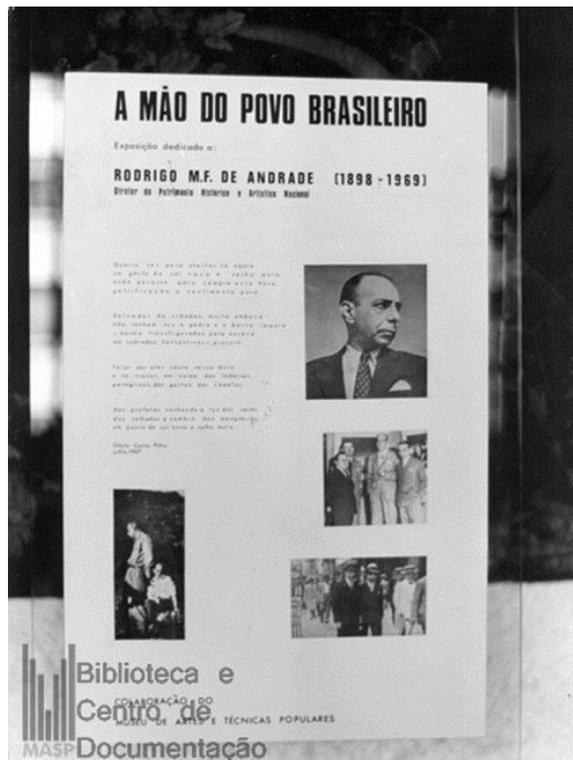


Figure 5.32. Bo Bardi dedicated *A Mão do Povo Brasileiro* (*Hands of the Brazilian People*) (1969) to the founder of the National Historical and Artistic Heritage Institute, Rodrigo M.F. de Andrade, courtesy of MASP library archives, *Baixa e marca: 160 - 1969 - A Mão do Povo Brasileiro*

⁴⁸⁷ “The Week of Modern Art, 1922 Seven days that shook Brazilian culture,” *UNESCO The Courier*, Edouard Glissant, Ed., (December 1986), p. 38.



Figure 5.33. *The Hand of the Brazilian People* (2016), curated by Adriano Pedrosa, Julieta González and Tomás Toledo, exhibition view, Museum of Art São Paulo, Courtesy: MASP, São Paulo, available in the public domain at *Frieze.com*

In 2016, at the same time of the 32nd São Paulo Biennale, curated by Adriano Pedrosa, Julieta González, and Tomás Toledo, *The Hand of the Brazilian People* (September 2, 2016 – January 29, 2017) returned to MASP (fig. 5.33). According to *Frieze* writer, Kiki Mazzucchelli, the new chief curator Adriano Pedrosa “implemented a dynamic programme organized around thematic cycles (Afro-Brazilian art, Indigenous art, sexuality, etc.) that recuperates the museum’s unique history while borrowing Pietro and Lina’s legacy to rethink the role of the institution in contemporary Brazil.” To add, in a similar tone to the political conditions that the first version (1969) of *The Hand of the Brazilian People* opened, the 2016 version, Mazzucchelli reminds us,

opened “in the midst of great political turmoil – Brazil’s democratically elected president, Dilma Rousseff had just been removed in a shady impeachment trial, and the museum was surrounded by police and demonstrators – making the exhibition’s original gesture of presenting everyday objects made by disenfranchised populations as art even more poignant.”⁴⁸⁸ Instead of creating an installation that speaks to Brazil and its immediate time and politics, the curators of *A Mão do Povo Brasileiro (Hands of the Brazilian People)* (2016-2017) decided to copy Lina’s 1969 installation (fig. 5.29).

Unlike, the careful compositions of John Yeon and James Speyer, Lina Bo Bardi’s installations can best be understood of what art historian, Yve-Alain Bois calls “non-composition.” For Lina, composition was arbitrary. She wanted to liberate the viewer by creating an apparently random all-over pattern that never forms a composition. Coming from Italy, with a father who kept up with all the latest artistic trends and followed the tenets of Futurism, Lina’s installations stemmed from dynamism. Umberto Boccioni, prominent Italian Futurist artist, wrote: “All these convictions compel me to search in sculpture not for pure form but *pure plastic rhythm*; not the construction of bodies, but the construction of *action of bodies*. Thus I have as my ideal not a pyramidal architecture (static state), but a spiral state (dynamism) My inspiration moreover seeks through assiduous research a complete fusion of environment and object by the means of interoperation of planes.”⁴⁸⁹ Lina, too, was interested in “pure plastic rhythm” and the “action of bodies.” In terms of Lina’s work, objective structural dynamism helps

⁴⁸⁸ Kiki Mazzucchelli, “Critic's Guide: São Paulo,” *Frieze.com*, (September 6, 2016), Accessed October 15, 2016, available online at: <https://frieze.com/article/critics-guide-sao-paulo>

⁴⁸⁹ Kenneth Frampton, *Modern Architecture a Critical History*, third edition, (London: Thames and Hudson, 1992), 85.

to describe the architect's minimal use of material (concrete, glass, wood) to create her "non-compositional" design for the MASP installation.

Lina's spaces at the MASP were spatially complex, non-didactic, and non-linear. They did not necessarily fall into the Futurist definition of dynamism although they might have spurred from it. Marcelo Carvalho Ferraz, the São Paulo architect who worked closely with Lina, had said that for her, "Europe was the Old World. A musty world. With too much weight on its shoulders ... She said that [Brazil] was America, the New World, where you can invent things and create the world."⁴⁹⁰ Ultimately, Lina justified her designs "from the perspective of service." According to Ferraz, Lina believed that, "Architecture needs to serve. It must put itself in the public service. And as such, the architect is a servant of society." Ferraz believed that with her projects, "Lina had demonstrated that she had many ways of creating architecture. And because of this, you can't categorize her with the School of Architecture in Rio de Janeiro or the School of Architecture in São Paulo," for "Lina is difficult to classify. Her architecture serves." Ferraz sums up her non-compositions, stating, "Lina was anti-formal. She did not take her architecture from an aesthetic. The shape was the result."⁴⁹¹

Zaha Hadid paid homage to Lina when she adapted Bo Bardi's design for *The Great Utopia: The Russian and Soviet Avant-Garde, 1915-1932* (September 25, 1992- January 3, 1993) at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York (fig. 5.34). Hadid designed plastic easels for the upper gallery of the Guggenheim that put Bo Bardi's MASP project to a new use. This

⁴⁹⁰ Marcelo Carvalho Ferraz, "SESC-Pompeia: Working with Lina Bo Bardi," Hanging clipboard, Exhibition Material from *lina bo bardi 100 Brazil's Alternative Path to Modernism*, Architekturmuseum der TU München in the Pinakothek der Moderne, Munich, Germany, (November 13, 2014-February 22, 2015).

⁴⁹¹ Ibid.

was a remarkable tribute from one generation of a female architect to the other, especially so, considering that the Guggenheim exhibition was the same year of Lina's death. Zaha Hadid had stated that Lina was her inspiration in a profile for *The Architects' Journal*.⁴⁹² Most fittingly, Hadid's easels displayed noncompositional Russian abstract works, much like the abstract works that the Bardis had introduced to Brazil.



Figure 5.34. Zaha Hadid, "The Great Utopia: The Russian and Soviet Avant-Garde, 1915-1932" in the fourth-floor Tower Gallery, September 25, 1992-January 3, 1993. Photograph by David Heald. *The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum*. New York: The Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation, 1995, p. 8

⁴⁹² "Profiles: Zaha Hadid," "Women in Practice" *The Architects' Journal*, (12 January, 2012), <http://www.architectsjournal.co.uk/news/zaha-hadid/8624699.article> (accessed 20 January, 2016)

Lina Bo Bardi liberated paintings from the walls. This liberation shows an intermingling of Italian and Brazilian politics and culture. Approachable, open, public spaces, hovering, buoyant foundations, paintings released from the walls with non- categorized associations, “poor architecture,” and handmade labors describe her installation designs. Lina’s work derived from the Italian Rationalist designs. She designed a museum space that made the works of art to appear as if they were floating. Lina’s installations were the most political of all three of the case studies discussed in this dissertation. Her politics were expressed in the liberation of the paintings. The act of removing works of art from their traditional modes of display echoed her desire to liberate the Brazilian people from cultural and political constraints.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

Architect Stephen Holl pronounced: “I feel that the whole of architecture is one that is providing an alternative. I would not call it refuge, but let us say a vessel of existence that brings another level of joy to life.” Holl continued, “The reality of architecture is the reality of the concrete, the physical and the spatial. Or it’s also the sound, the smell, all these fantastic things that come from architecture being built and being experienced. Ah, but then someone had to be there to make that decision.”⁴⁹³ Indeed, someone always makes the decision that unites the “concrete, the physical and the spatial.” Moreover, in regards to museum installation, someone is determining the selection, placement, grouping, chromatic selection, and the lighting of works of art, and that someone has a direct effect on the transmission of art historical and critical knowledge to the public. The previous chapters have shown that art installations are not neutral.

Some might believe that a focused study of museum installation designers is not necessary; however, this third party needs to be examined to fully comprehend the context in which one sees art. Indeed, museum designers “can alter, diminish or intensify the meaning the object carries.”⁴⁹⁴ There are many different approaches to museum installation. Museum designers include architects, graphic designers, interior designers, and art historians. Each arrives at his or her designs in different ways. Some designers tend to create dramatic settings that often mislead the audience, or give the wrong impression about the objects themselves. According to

⁴⁹³ Lina Bo Bardi and Aldo Van Eyck, *São Paulo Art Museum*, (São Paulo: Instituto Lina e P.M. Bardi, 1997), last page, unnumbered.

⁴⁹⁴ Einreinhofer, 83.

Peter Vergo, the tranquil architectural setting is, more often than not, replaced with "a bewildering variety of other kinds of material."⁴⁹⁵ In many of the non-architectural displays, the objects on display coexist with computers, books, and presentations, which all play a part in the installation.

Controversy has especially developed over the blockbuster exhibition. Stuart Silver, former Head Designer at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, discusses the problems of the blockbuster exhibition in an article published in *Museum News*. These problems include crowd control, bad taste in installation, inflated concepts, media saturation, and an overemphasis of capitalism. According to Silver, the shift in motives and style sprang from an awareness and sympathy towards a mass appeal; specifically, museums became more concerned with profits and publicity, as they used attendance as a measure of success. No longer were connoisseurship and scholarship the driving forces behind museum display.⁴⁹⁶ Indeed, Silver created dramatic, theatrical installations. With the help of LaMar Terry, the Metropolitan's lighting designer, nicknamed "the prince of darkness," Silver used light to focus the viewer's attention on the objects, and by doing so, he negated the architectural environment. As Stewart see it, "the show can fall together or fall apart, depending on the lighting," so he had Terry cancel out all of the gallery's natural light by covering the architectural components. Terry opaqued the skylights and spot lit the objects on display.⁴⁹⁷ Case in point, how Silver and Terry approached the lighting

⁴⁹⁵ Peter Vergo, "The Reticent Object," *The New Museology*, Peter Vergo, ed., (London: Reaktion, 1989), 48-49.

⁴⁹⁶ Stuart Silver, "Almost Everybody Loves a Winner: a Designer Looks at the Blockbuster Era," *Museum News*, Vol. 61, (Nov./Dec., 1982), 25-26.

⁴⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 12.

contrasts with the way that an architect would. The theatrical spot-light denies the architectural environment. In contrast, the architecture is foremost on the architect's mind.

A contemporary of Stuart Silver, Gaillard, "Gil" Ravenel headed the Design and Installation Department at the National Gallery of Art (NGA) in Washington D.C., where he worked from 1970 until his untimely death in 1996. Unlike the theatrical installations that Silver had designed for the Metropolitan Museum, the installations at the National Gallery of Art under Gil Ravenel were more discreet. Ravenel was a scholar whose primary loyalty was to the art object. An art historian, specializing in nineteenth century prints, Ravenel began at the National Gallery as a Finley Fellow and had come highly recommended from the graduate department at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, where he had worked on exhibitions and catalogues as a graduate student at the Ackland Art Museum.⁴⁹⁸ Beginning as a curator in the print department, Ravenel made his mark with one of the first exhibitions that he oversaw, *William Hogarth: Paintings from the Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Mellon*.⁴⁹⁹ Working with a much larger budget that Silver had to work with at the Met, Gil Ravenel completely transformed the West Building and quickly gained recognition by painting over the "Finley buff" with darkened, flat blue paint.⁵⁰⁰ Gil Ravenel had also designed the installation of the permanent collection for the NGA. Per Carter Brown, "Instead of some former theater designer or architect or window dresser, we had in Gil an immensely knowledgeable art historian -- with good

⁴⁹⁸ Jay Levenson Interview, interview by Ann G. Ritchie, New York, May 17, 1997, National Gallery of Art Oral History.

⁴⁹⁹ February 12-August 15, 1971.

⁵⁰⁰ David Edward Finley, Jr. Was the first director of the National Gallery of Art. J. Carter Brown explains that "Finely buff" refers to the color of the original stone in the West Building. J. Carter Brown, Oral History.

judgment and solid scholarship and curatorial savvy."⁵⁰¹ Ravenel understood the works that he displayed within a historical context. Although he designed appropriate installations for temporary exhibitions and the permanent collection, he did not have the same training and skills as an architect.

Indeed, there is a significant difference between the installation practices of architects and designers. As previously mentioned, architects see space differently. They are trained to see the layout of purposes in space, including the function of walls, floors, and ceilings. Therefore, architects deal with museum installations as architecture; while designers might focus more on theatrics. On one hand, with the theatrical installations, the viewer is watching. She is a spectator instead of a part of the interaction. On the other hand, with an architect's display, the viewer is not a mere audience member taking in what is presented to her; instead, the architectural display does not have any sort of barrier between the viewer and the work of art. For instance, the architects discussed in this dissertation tended to avoid dramatic, artificial spot-lighting, didactic labels, and theatrical settings. All of the architects discussed in this dissertation refused to reject the space by creating settings that suggested another place or time.

Museums often called for more theatrical settings for temporary exhibitions. Temporary installations are often overtly dramatic, depict fantasy, and tell a story. These types of installations call for quick, non-permanent designs and materials. An architectural background,

⁵⁰¹ Quote from J. Carter Brown, "Gaillard F. Ravenel, 55, Curator Of Design at National Gallery," by Eric Pace, *New York Times*, accessed 1-6-2016, available online: <http://www.nytimes.com/1996/09/16/arts/gaillard-f-ravenel-55-curator-of-design-at-national-gallery.html>

training, and understanding is not needed for a temporary exhibition. Unlike temporary exhibitions, permanent installations cost more and require more permanent materials. Since permanent installations are not quick, they require skills and architectural understanding. They demand clarity and order. Yeon, Speyer, and Bo Bardi show how architects used not only lighting differently, but how they used their architectural training to produce an optimal environment for one to engage with art. Architects, more than designers, art historians, or “window dressers,” design environments where the artworks relate to the space. They work with the architecture: the ceiling, the walls, the floor, the lighting; whereas, designers, like Stuart Silver, tend to create theatrical installations where the environment is secondary and sometimes removed. Architecture begins with place, material, and craft. Architects’ decisions relating to spatial, formal, and architectural layouts satisfy the viewer aesthetically because architects are most capable of offering an integrative environment for the viewer's engagement with art. John Yeon, James Speyer, and Lina Bo Bardi are a small sample of architects, working during the mid-nineteenth century who conveyed new energy and ideas to art museums through the displays they designed. Although museum installation designers no longer have the design authority that these architects had, their ideas have proven influential for architects of today. Zaha Hadid’s installation for the Guggenheim relied on Lina Bo Bardi’s glass easel doctrine and the John Yeon Center for Architecture and the Landscape at the University of Oregon teaches young aspiring architects to follow his precept that good design and regional architecture “does not happen simply, automatically, or unselfconsciously...It results from deliberate aesthetic resistance to

ubiquitous popular fashions. It will be done by people and for people who love landscapes and are literate in architecture.”⁵⁰²

Although each of these architects had different training and different cultural backgrounds, some similarities between them appear. All architects chose delicate lighting and minimal labeling and rejected other information that might distract from the work of art. None of the architects created dramatic, blockbuster spectacles. All of them abandoned the beaux arts systems of monumentality, stone, and renaissance structures. Instead, they focused on a light, airy, levitational, floating quality to their designs. Most notably, in one form or another, the idea of levitation, or floating applies to all their installation work.⁵⁰³ Yeon used paint to camouflage the base for the Buddha, and in doing so, he created the illusion that the *Amitabha Buddha* was floating. Speyer hung both vertical and horizontal panels from the ceilings. This technique, too, created an illusion that these panels were floating in the gallery space. Then, the glass easels that Bo Bardi created for the MASP are constantly referred to as “free” and the works they are securing seem to be “floating.”

All the for mentioned architects had a background in art. Yeon, Speyer, and Bo Bardi had practiced art. Yeon studied art under Harry Wentz at the Portland Art Museum. He continued to create compositions, either with the landscape or architecture. Speyer admitted that he originally wanted to be an artist, but his father would not allow it. Still, he minored in art in college. Becoming an architect was a compromise for Speyer. Bo Bardi studied to become an art teacher

⁵⁰² Quote posted on the John Yeon Center for Architecture and Landscape, University of Oregon website, Accessed April 11, 2017, Available online: <https://yeoncenter.uoregon.edu/>

⁵⁰³ The idea of levitation in architecture is a recurrent theme and a topic that I wish to address in the future.

before she went to architectural school. These architects had passionate devotion to art. Yeon spent a lifetime collecting and studying Asian art. Speyer collected European art and contemporary art, and Bo Bardi also collected art of her contemporaries.

Yeon's installation work is best understood as a series of meticulous compositions. Yeon was a bourgeois architect/designer who was stylistically and aesthetically aware.⁵⁰⁴ Similar to the principles of Japanese design, there is significance and allusion in his formal compositions. Nothing he designed happened simply, automatically, or unselfconsciously. Yeon employed space, color, form, and light to invent three-dimensional spaces that alluded to sublimity, simplicity, asymmetry, and tranquility. The spaces that he designed appear balanced. Simplicity did not mean shoddy, inferior, or substandard; instead, it meant exclusive of ornamentation. Yeon's compositions utilized premium materials, expertise, aptitude, flair, discernment, and a deep appreciation of the works that were displayed. Yeon ruminated over his designs. Different approaches were pondered and weighed, and he was always able to articulate his decisions, offering complete explanations as to how and why he had reached a decision. Yeon's museum installations show control, restraint, and clarity. Nothing gratuitous was used. Yeon's compositions derived from an understanding of the art works that he was responsible for showing, and in doing so, he gave life to the museum. Chance and indeterminacy were not a part of Yeon's designs.

In the same spirit of Yeon, Speyer composed spaces of refined balance. His elegant installations conveyed a dynamism similar to those designed by his mentor, Mies van der Rohe.

⁵⁰⁴ Oral history interview with Pietro Belluschi, 1983 August 22-September 4, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

Indeed, Speyer's installation maintained a non-linear spatial quality. Galleries were uncluttered, accessible, and free-flowing. His designs were non-instructive, for he wanted to provide a quiet, contemplative, refined space. Less was more for Speyer. Although the number of art works was more than Yeon, Speyer compressed the selection of art in the installations he designed to generate an ideal viewing experience. More notably, aligned with Yeon's approach, Speyer's installation work is best understood as carefully composed. Speyer, too, was an architect whose designs can best be seen as formal compositions. His installations relied on space, color, form, and light to create three-dimensional spaces that referenced sublimity, simplicity, asymmetry, and tranquility. His museum spaces appeared dynamic with different heights, textures, and materials. Simplicity, for both Yeon and Speyer, was without unwarranted embellishments. Speyer's architectural training, art history training, and sense of space helped him to compose elegant museum installations. His involvements and influences played a part in the installations that he designed. Speyer composed light, space, and planes as he maintained the Miesian adage—Less was more. Nothing in his compositions was coincidental.

Bo Bardi's museum installations differed from the careful compositions. Instead, her installations designs fall into what Yve-Alain Bois has termed—“non-compositional.” Bois has explained in numerous publications how artists like Piet Mondrian, Kazimir Malevich, Alexander Calder, Ellsworth Kelly, Donald Judd and the Minimalists have stripped their compositions of references to tradition and artist's touch. In many ways, these artists were promoting anti-aesthetics ideals found in modern art. Bois refers to several non-compositional strategies: chance,

index, grid, monochrome, process, and collapsing an image in film.⁵⁰⁵ Although Bo Bardi ultimately failed from erasing herself completely from the installation at the MASP, she, too, had the non-compositional drive. Composition was arbitrary for Bo Bardi. She wanted to free the viewer by creating a seemingly indiscriminate all over arrangement that never formed a composition. Bo Bardi's non-compositions were spatially multidimensional, non-didactic, and non-linear. As her colleague architect Marcelo Carvalho Ferraz claimed, Bo Bardi was anti-formal.⁵⁰⁶

The Bardis introduced abstract art to Brazil by presenting *The History of Abstraction in Art* and the *Max Bill* exhibitions in 1947. Remarkably, Lina and Pietro Maria had a direct impact on the artists in Brazil. Their introduction of abstract art helped spur the *Concreto* (Concrete) and *Neoconcreto* (Neoconcrete) movements, which were geometric abstract art movements formed in Brazil during the 1950s. The *Concretistas* artists worked in São Paulo while the *Neoconcretistas* artists were from Rio de Janeiro. Yve-Alain Bois explains that “the ambition to abolish all remnants of pre-war colonial subjection, and the pervasive sense of potentiality” led to a “quasi-utopian enthusiasm” that “was fueled by the competition between the fast-growing cities of Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo, each dreaming of becoming an international cultural hub

⁵⁰⁵ Yve-Alain Bois, “The Difficult Task of Erasing Oneself: Non-Composition in Twentieth-Century Art,” talk at the Institute of Advanced Studies, Princeton University, Accessed October 1, 2016, March 7, 2007, <https://video.ias.edu/The-Difficult-Task-of-Erasing-Oneself>

⁵⁰⁶“SESC-Pompeia: Working with Lina Bo Bardi,” Hanging clipboard, Exhibition Material from *lina bo bardi 100 Brazil's Alternative Path to Modernism*, Architekturmuseum der TU München in the Pinakothek der Moderne, Munich, Germany, (November 13, 2014-February 22, 2015).

and thus lifting Brazil out of its provincialism.”⁵⁰⁷ Bois points out that Max Bill appealed to Brazilians because his program was “all about programming and careful planning,” and “its ethos is that of the promise.”⁵⁰⁸ For Bois, Bill’s artistic model seduced Brazilians “at a time when social, cultural, and urban *planning* were becoming the optimistic obsessions of most branches of government and the educational elite.”⁵⁰⁹ The classification “Concrete art” came from Max Bill via Theo van Doesburg. Doesburg held that “nothing is more concrete, more real than a line, a color, a surface,” and added “the work of art should be fully conceived and spiritually formed before it is produced.”⁵¹⁰ Bois writes, “execution had to be mechanical, devoid of any signs of the handmade, the subjective, the sentimental.”⁵¹¹ Max Bill brought Theo van Doesburg’s idea of non-compositional art to Brazil.

What is most remarkable about Bo Bardi’s position as advocate for non-composition is how her display for the permanent collection at the Museum of Art São Paulo matched the non-compositional approach of the *Concretos*. Bo Bardi had responded to a critical article by Mr. Julio Tavares published in March 22, 1970, in the *O Estado de S. Paulo* newspaper of her glass easel project, claiming that he was “offended against the presentation of the paintings” and against being able to see the legs of ‘the ladies and gentlemen from Guarulhos’ below the paintings. Bo Bardi wrote:

⁵⁰⁷ Bois, “From Arte Concreta to Arte Neoconcreta,” 9.

⁵⁰⁸ Bois, 10.

⁵⁰⁹ Ibid.

⁵¹⁰ Bois, 11.

⁵¹¹ Ibid.

Mr. Tavares's revolted cry is that of those who feel they've been deprived of one of the most deeply rooted privileges: the cultural privilege. The legs of the gentleman from Guarulhos, which end in inelegant shoes, are offensive to Mr. Julio Tavares' eyes, and the lack of that 'temple' atmosphere for the initiated at the Museu de Arte's picture gallery has profound impact on his 'esthetic' sense and his cultural pride. One cannot innovate without consequences. Those who innovate must pay for it, but those who make them pay are usually those who stick to old habits, old traditions and old privileges. This applies to art, politics and life. Stripping the Museum of that church atmosphere that excludes the uninitiated, stripping the paintings of their 'aura' to present the work of art as 'work,' highly specialized, but still work; presenting in a way that can be understood by the uninitiated, by the people from Guarulhos, so different from the elegant visitors of the great traditional museums, whose 'auras' are always preserved even in modern arrangements. Seeing thousands of people walk among the paintings with an almost familiar, non-auric air ... is frightening, like a prophecy of fundamental changes. The Museu de Arte de São Paulo is popular and cannot be superficially judged in a pseudo-brilliant article written according to the rules of whining bellettrism.⁵¹²

When we dissect the cultural politics of display, we find that different motives and values come into play with installation design. In no way are museum installations neutral. Instead, the histories, theories, and skills of the people who design the installation are entangled with the viewer's perception of the works of art. This dissertation has shown that the talents, training, and education of architects help to create installations entirely separate from those of installation designers with no architectural training. Each of these architects who have either created meticulous compositions or vague non-compositions have contributed aesthetic choices, values, and motivations that have affected ideas of museum art history. Yeon's displays embody the Arts and Crafts movement's devotion to refined materials and Asian aesthetic principles. Speyer characterizes the International Style movement's sleek "modern" look. His museum work was absent of elaborate decoration. Bo Bardi's freeing art from the walls unveils a synthesis of Italian

⁵¹² Lina Bo Bardi, "Explanations on the Museum of Art," *O Estado de S. Paulo*, (April 5, 1970), published in Adriano Pedrosa, Luiza Proença, Museu de Arte de São Paulo Assis Chateaubriand, 137.

and Brazilian art and politics. If more scholarship focused on museum installation design, then we would have a more comprehensive understanding of museums and art history.

APPENDIX A

JOHN YEON: MUSEUM DISPLAY



Figure A.1. *100 objects from the Avery Brundage collection of Oriental Art*, (1960), courtesy of the Asian Art Museum, San Francisco, duplicate image for reference only



Figure A.2. *100 objects from the Avery Brundage collection of Oriental Art*, (1960), courtesy of the Asian Art Museum, San Francisco



Figure A.3. *100 objects from the Avery Brundage collection of Oriental Art*, (1960), courtesy of the Asian Art Museum, San Francisco



Figure A.4. *100 objects from the Avery Brundage collection of Oriental Art*, (1960), courtesy of the Asian Art Museum, San Francisco



Figure A.5. *100 objects from the Avery Brundage collection of Oriental Art*, (1960), courtesy of the Asian Art Museum, San Francisco



Figure A.6. *100 objects from the Avery Brundage collection of Oriental Art*, (1960), courtesy of the Asian Art Museum, San Francisco



Figure A.7. Brundage Collection, M.H. de Young Memorial Museum, view of Japanese Tea Garden, Golden Gate Park (1966), courtesy of the Asian Art Museum, San Francisco, duplicate image for reference only



Figure A.8. Brundage Collection, M.H. de Young Memorial Museum, view of Golden Gate Park (1966), courtesy of the Asian Art Museum, San Francisco



Figure A.9. Brundage Collection, M.H. de Young Memorial Museum, view of installation by John Yeon (1966), courtesy of the Asian Art Museum, San Francisco



Figure A.10. Brundage Collection, M.H. de Young Memorial Museum, view of installation by John Yeon (1966), courtesy of the Asian Art Museum, San Francisco



Figure A.11. Brundage Collection, M.H. de Young Memorial Museum, view of installation by John Yeon (1966), courtesy of the Asian Art Museum, San Francisco



Figure A.12. Brundage Collection, M.H. de Young Memorial Museum, view of installation by John Yeon (1966), courtesy of the Asian Art Museum, San Francisco



Figure A.13. Brundage Collection, M.H. de Young Memorial Museum, view of installation by John Yeon (1966), courtesy of the Asian Art Museum, San Francisco



Figure A.14. Brundage Collection, M.H. de Young Memorial Museum, view of installation by John Yeon (1966), courtesy of the Asian Art Museum, San Francisco



Figure A.15. Brundage Collection, M.H. de Young Memorial Museum, view of installation by John Yeon (1966), courtesy of the Asian Art Museum, San Francisco



Figure A.16. Brundage Collection, M.H. de Young Memorial Museum, view of installation by John Yeon (1966), courtesy of the Asian Art Museum, San Francisco



Figure A.17. Brundage Collection, M.H. de Young Memorial Museum, view of installation by John Yeon (1966), courtesy of the Asian Art Museum, San Francisco



Figure A.18. Brundage Collection, M.H. de Young Memorial Museum, view of installation by John Yeon (1966), courtesy of the Asian Art Museum, San Francisco



Figure A.19. Brundage Collection, M.H. de Young Memorial Museum, view of installation by John Yeon (1966), courtesy of the Asian Art Museum, San Francisco, duplicate image for reference only



Figure A.20. Brundage Collection, M.H. de Young Memorial Museum, view of installation by John Yeon (1966), courtesy of the Asian Art Museum, San Francisco, duplicate image for reference only



Figure A.21. Chinese Decorative Arts Gallery, original installation, view of the *k'ang* in the back “formal” room, image courtesy of Mr. Richard Louis Brown, Watzek House Archives



Figure A.22. Chinese Decorative Arts Gallery, original installation, view of the informal bedroom in the background, *Canopy Bed with Alcove*, Chinese, 16th century. Huanghuali wood with 19th century painted soft wood base and canopy, silk gauze curtains and silver hooks, 91 x 86 1/4 x 84 1/4 inches, courtesy of Mr. Richard Louis Brown, Watzek House Archives, duplicate image for reference only



Figure A.23. Chinese Decorative Arts Gallery, designed by John Yeon, courtesy of Mr. Richard Louis Brown, Watzek House Archives



Figure A.24. Chinese Decorative Arts Gallery, "Formal Room," designed by John Yeon, courtesy of Mr. Richard Louis Brown, Watzek House Archives



Figure A.25. Chinese Decorative Arts Gallery, original installation, view of the informal bedroom, the Canopy Bed with Alcove, Chinese, 16th century. Huanghuali wood with 19th century painted soft wood base and canopy, silk gauze curtains and silver hooks, 91 x 86 1/4 x 84 1/4 inches, courtesy of Mr. Richard Louis Brown, Watzek House Archives



Figure A.26. Chinese Decorative Arts Gallery, original installation, designed by John Yeon, courtesy of Mr. Richard Louis Brown, Watzek House Archives



Figure A.27. Chinese Decorative Arts Gallery, 2014, photo credit: Melinda McVay



Figure A.28. Chinese Decorative Arts Gallery, 2014, photo credit: Melinda McVay



Figure A.29. Album leaves installed above horizontal scroll cases, original installation of the Chinese Painting Gallery at the Nelson-Atkins Museum in Kansas City, image courtesy of Mr. Richard Louis Brown, Watzek House Archives, duplicate image for reference only



Figure A.30. View of the display cases in the Chinese Painting Gallery, album leaves installed above horizontal scroll cases in the background, the entrance is to the right, freestanding cases in the middle. original installation of the Chinese Painting Gallery at the Nelson-Atkins Museum in Kansas City, image courtesy of Mr. Richard Louis Brown, Watzek House Archives



Figure A.31. View of the vertical scroll freestanding cases from right of entrance, Chinese Painting Gallery, image courtesy of Mr. Richard Louis Brown, Watzek House Archives



Figure A.32. Side view of the freestanding vertical scroll cases from behind the entrance, Chinese Painting Gallery, image courtesy of Mr. Richard Louis Brown, Watzek House Archives



Figure A.33. Side view of the freestanding vertical scroll cases, facing doorway entrance (left front), Chinese Painting Gallery, image courtesy of Mr. Richard Louis Brown, Watzek House Archives



Figure A.34. Yeon's horizontal scroll cases displaying album leaves, Chinese Painting Gallery, Nelson-Atkins Museum, Summer 2012, photo credit: Melinda McVay



Figure A.35. Museum visitors view Chinese vertical scroll painting while others examine the album leaves in the horizontal scroll cases, 2012, Chinese Painting Gallery, photo credit: Melinda McVay



Figure A.36. View of the Chinese Painting Gallery, 2012, horizontal scroll displayed in horizontal case to the left of image, left, facing the entrance, photo credit: Melinda McVay



Figure A.37. View of the Chinese Painting Gallery, 2012, horizontal scroll displayed in horizontal case to the right, right, facing the entrance, photo credit: Melinda McVay



Figure A.38. View of the Chinese Painting Gallery, 2012, vertical scrolls displayed on the right fabric covered wall, facing the entrance, photo credit: Melinda McVay



Figure A.39. View of lower lighting, vertical scrolls displayed on the right fabric covered wall, facing the entrance, photo credit: Melinda McVay



Figure A.40. View of upper lighting, vertical scrolls displayed on the right fabric covered wall, facing the entrance, photo credit: Melinda McVay



Figure A.41. Original installation of the Japanese Screen Gallery by John Yeon, *Kemari Scene from the Tale of Genji*, eighteenth-century, the screen was on loan from John Yeon, now in the collection of Minneapolis Institute of Arts, Gift from the Clark Center for Japanese Art and Culture, (2013.29.12), image courtesy of Mr. Richard Louis Brown, Watzek House Archive



Figure A.42. Original installation of the Japanese Screen Gallery by John Yeon, curated by John Yeon, image courtesy of Mr. Richard Louis Brown, Watzek House Archives



Figure A.43. *River Bridge at Uji*, one of a pair of six-fold screens, ink and color over gold-foil ground on paper, Original installation of the Japanese Screen Gallery by John Yeon, curated by John Yeon, image courtesy of Mr. Richard Louis Brown, Watzek House Archives, duplicate image for reference only



Figure A.44. Original installation of the Japanese Screen Gallery by John Yeon, curated by John Yeon, image courtesy of Mr. Richard Louis Brown, Watzek House Archive



Figure A.45. Japanese Gallery, Nelson-Atkins Museum, 2012, photo credit: Melinda McVay



Figure A.46. Japanese Gallery, Nelson-Atkins Museum, 2012, photo credit: Melinda McVay



Figure A.47. Japanese Gallery, Nelson-Atkins Museum, 2012, photo credit: Melinda McVay



Figure A.49. The installation appears cluttered with labels in the Japanese Gallery, Nelson-Atkins Museum, 2014, photo credit: Melinda McVay



Figure A.50. Close up of the millwork for the cases in the Japanese Gallery, 2014, photo credit: Melinda McVay



Figure A.51. Close up of the millwork for the cases in the Japanese Gallery, 2014, photo credit: Melinda McVay

APPENDIX B

A. JAMES SPEYER: MUSEUM DISPLAY

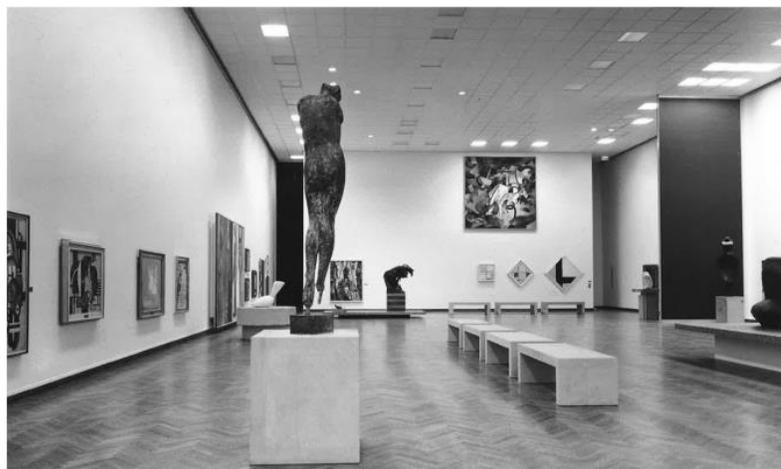


Figure B.1. Morton Wing, installation designed and curated by James Speyer, Speyer installed Edtaonisl (1913) by Francis Picabia, he hung the painting high, seen here on the back wall above and to the right, Morton Wing Archives, A. James Speyer Collection, photo credit: Hedrich-Blessing, Box FF, courtesy of AIC archives



Figure B.2. Morton Wing, installation designed and curated by James Speyer, Morton Wing Archives, A. James Speyer Collection, photo credit: Hedrich-Blessing, Box FF, courtesy of AIC archives



Figure B.3. Morton Wing, installation designed and curated by James Speyer, Morton Wing Archives, A. James Speyer Collection, photo credit: Hedrich-Blessing, Box FF, courtesy of AIC archives



Figure B.4. Morton Wing, installation designed and curated by James Speyer, Morton Wing Archives, A. James Speyer Collection, photo credit: Hedrich-Blessing, Box FF, courtesy of AIC archives



Figure B.5. Morton Wing, installation designed and curated by James Speyer, Morton Wing Archives, A. James Speyer Collection, photo credit: Hedrich-Blessing, Box FF, courtesy of AIC archives



Figure B.6. Morton Wing, installation designed and curated by James Speyer, Morton Wing Archives, A. James Speyer Collection, Box FF, photo credit: Hedrich-Blessing, courtesy of AIC archives



Figure B.7. Morton Wing, installation designed and curated by James Speyer, Morton Wing Archives, A. James Speyer Collection, Box FF, photo credit: Hedrich-Blessing, courtesy of AIC archives



Figure B.8. Morton Wing, installation designed and curated by James Speyer, Morton Wing Archives, A. James Speyer Collection, Box FF, photo credit: Hedrich-Blessing, courtesy of AIC archives



Figure B.9. Morton Wing, installation designed and curated by James Speyer, Morton Wing Archives, A. James Speyer Collection, Box FF, photo credit: Hedrich-Blessing, courtesy of AIC archives



Figure B.10. *Mies van der Rohe* was a retrospective exhibition organized by James Speyer at the Art Institute of Chicago, image courtesy of AIC archives



Figure B.11. Mies van der Rohe was a retrospective exhibition organized by James Speyer at the Art Institute of Chicago, image courtesy of AIC archives



Figure B.12. Mies van der Rohe was a retrospective exhibition organized by James Speyer at the Art Institute of Chicago, image courtesy of AIC archives



Figure B.13. Mies van der Rohe was a retrospective exhibition organized by James Speyer at the Art Institute of Chicago, image courtesy of AIC archives



Figure B.14. Mies van der Rohe was a retrospective exhibition organized by James Speyer at the Art Institute of Chicago, image courtesy of AIC archives



Figure B.15. Mies van der Rohe was a retrospective exhibition organized by James Speyer at the Art Institute of Chicago, image courtesy of AIC archives



Figure B.16. Mies van der Rohe was a retrospective exhibition organized by James Speyer at the Art Institute of Chicago, image courtesy of AIC archives



Figure B.17. Mies van der Rohe was a retrospective exhibition organized by James Speyer at the Art Institute of Chicago, image courtesy of AIC archives



Figure B.18. Mies van der Rohe was a retrospective exhibition organized by James Speyer at the Art Institute of Chicago, image courtesy of AIC archives, duplicate image for reference only



Figure B.19. Mies van der Rohe was a retrospective exhibition organized by James Speyer at the Art Institute of Chicago, image courtesy of AIC archives



Figure B.20. Mies van der Rohe was a retrospective exhibition organized by James Speyer at the Art Institute of Chicago, image courtesy of AIC archives, duplicate image for reference only



Figure B.21. Mies van der Rohe was a retrospective exhibition organized by James Speyer at the Art Institute of Chicago, image courtesy of AIC archives

APPENDIX C

LINA BO BARDI: MUSEUM DISPLAY



Figure C.1. Lina Bo and Pietro Maria Bardi inspect exhibition panels for the Museum of Art of São Paulo Sete de Abril location, image courtesy Museum of Art of São Paulo library archives, Baixa e marca: 15-1947 - Exposições Didáticas II



Figure C.2. Exhibition panels for the Museum of Art of São Paulo Sete de Abril location, image courtesy Museum of Art of São Paulo library archives, Baixa e marca: 14 - Exposições Didáticas I



Figure C.3. Exhibition panels for the Museum of Art of São Paulo Sete de Abril location, image courtesy Museum of Art of São Paulo library archives, Baixa e marca: 15-1947 - Exposições Didáticas II



Figure C.4. Exhibition panels for the Museum of Art of São Paulo Sete de Abril location, image courtesy Museum of Art of São Paulo library archives, Baixa e marca: 15-1947 - Exposições Didáticas II



Figure C.5. Exhibition panels for the Museum of Art of São Paulo Sete de Abril location, image courtesy Museum of Art of São Paulo library archives, Baixa e marca: 15-1947 - Exposições Didáticas II



Figure C.6. Similar to Franco Albini's installation for the Pinacoteca di Brera (Brera Art Gallery). Mostra Scipione e del Bianco e Nero (Scipione & Black and White Exhibition), Milan, 1941, Bo Bardi's installation design for the Museum of Art of São Paulo Sete de Abril location, image courtesy Museum of Art of São Paulo library archives, Baixa e marca: 22-1947 - Pinacoteca 7 de Abril



Figure C.7. Exhibition panels designed by Bo Bardi, Museum of Art of São Paulo Sete de Abril location, image courtesy Museum of Art of São Paulo library archives, Baixa e marca: 15-1947 - Exposições Didáticas II



Figure C.8. Similar to Franco Albini's installation- Mostra Scipione e del Bianco e Nero (Scipione & Black and White Exhibition), Milan, 1941, Bo Bardi's installation design for the Museum of Art of São Paulo Sete de Abril location, image courtesy Museum of Art of São Paulo library archives, Baixa e marca: 22-1947 - Pinacoteca 7 de Abril



Figure C.9. Similar to Franco Albini's installation for the Pinacoteca di Brera (Brera Art Gallery). Mostra Scipione e del Bianco e Nero (Scipione & Black and White Exhibition), Milan, 1941, Bo Bardi's installation design for the Museum of Art of São Paulo Sete de Abril location, image courtesy Museum of Art of São Paulo library archives, Baixa e marca: 22-1947 - Pinacoteca 7 de Abril



Figure C.10. Bo Bardi includes foliage in her installation design for the Museum of Art of São Paulo Sete de Abril location, image courtesy Museum of Art of São Paulo library archives, Baixa e marca: 22-1947 - Pinacoteca 7 de Abril



Figure C.11. Bo Bardi's installation design for the Museum of Art of São Paulo Sete de Abril location, image courtesy Museum of Art of São Paulo library archives, Baixa e marca: 22-1947 - Pinacoteca 7 de Abril



Figure C.12. Bo Bardi's installation design for the Museum of Art of São Paulo Sete de Abril location, image courtesy Museum of Art of São Paulo library archives, Baixa e marca: 22-1947 - Pinacoteca 7 de Abril



Figure C.13. Bo Bardi's installation design for the Museum of Art of São Paulo Sete de Abril location, image courtesy Museum of Art of São Paulo library archives, Baixa e marca: 22-1947 - Pinacoteca 7 de Abril



Figure C.14. A chair of Brazilian cherry and simple boards is more acceptable than a couch with trimmings, curated and designed by Lina Bo Bardi, Museum of Art of São Paulo, courtesy of Museum of Art of São Paulo library archives, Baixa e marca: 33-1948- Exp da Cadeira



Figure C.15. Lina Bo Bardi's inaugural glass easel project, Image courtesy of Museum of Art of São Paulo library archives, Baixa e marca: 156 - 1968 - Pinacoteca I



Figure C.16. Bird's eye view of the Museum of Art of São Paulo installation, Lina Bo Bardi, interior installation display, 1957—68, Museum of Art of São Paulo. Photograph: Paolo Gasparini. Courtesy Instituto Lina Bo e P.M. Bardi and Paolo Gasparini, available online: <http://www.afterall.org/journal/issue.26/this-exhibition-is-an-accusation-the-grammar-of-display-according-to-lina-bo-bardi> 1



Figure C.17. Lina Bo Bardi's inaugural glass easel project, Image courtesy of Museum of Art of São Paulo library archives, Baixa e marca: 156 - 1968 - Pinacoteca 1



Figure C.18. Lina Bo Bardi's inaugural glass easel project, Image courtesy of Museum of Art of São Paulo library archives, Baixa e marca: 156 - 1968 - Pinacoteca I



Figure C.19. Lina Bo Bardi's inaugural glass easel project, Image courtesy of Museum of Art of São Paulo library archives, Baixa e marca: 156 - 1968 - Pinacoteca I



Figure C.20. Lina Bo Bardi's inaugural glass easel project, Image courtesy of Museum of Art of São Paulo library archives, Baixa e marca: 156 - 1968 - Pinacoteca I



Figure C.21. Lina Bo Bardi's inaugural glass easel project, Image courtesy of Museum of Art of São Paulo library archives, Baixa e marca: 156 - 1968 - Pinacoteca I



Figure C.22. Lina Bo Bardi's inaugural glass easel project, Image courtesy of Museum of Art of São Paulo library archives, Baixa e marca: 156 - 1968 - Pinacoteca I



Figure C.23. Lina Bo Bardi's inaugural glass easel project, Image courtesy of Museum of Art of São Paulo library archives, Baixa e marca: 156 - 1968 - Pinacoteca I



Figure C.24. Lina Bo Bardi's inaugural glass easel project, Image courtesy of Museum of Art of São Paulo library archives, Baixa e marca: 156 - 1968 - Pinacoteca I



Figure C.25. back panels, Lina Bo Bardi, image courtesy of Museum of Art of São Paulo library archives, Baixa e marca: 156 -1968 - Pinacoteca I, duplicate image for reference only



Figure C.26. back panels, Lina Bo Bardi, image courtesy of Museum of Art of São Paulo library archives, Baixa e marca: 156 -1968 - Pinacoteca II, duplicate image for reference only



Figure C.27. Lina Bo Bardi's inaugural glass easel project, image courtesy of Museum of Art of São Paulo library archives, Baixa e marca: 156 – 1968- Pinacoteca 1



Figure C.28. Lina Bo Bardi's inaugural glass easel project, Museum of Art of São Paulo, image courtesy of Museum of Art of São Paulo library archives, Baixa e marca: 156–1968- Pinacoteca 1



Figure C.29. Lina Bo Bardi's inaugural glass easel project, Museum of Art of São Paulo, image courtesy of Museum of Art of São Paulo library archives Baixa e marca: 156–1968- Pinacoteca 1



Figure C.30. Lina Bo Bardi's inaugural glass easel project, Museum of Art of São Paulo, image courtesy of Museum of Art of São Paulo library archives, Baixa e marca: 156 – 968-Pinacoteca I



Figure C.31. Lina Bo Bardi's inaugural glass easel project, Museum of Art of São Paulo, image courtesy of Museum of Art of São Paulo library archives, Baixa e marca: 156–1968- Pinacoteca I



Figure C.32. Lina Bo Bardi's inaugural glass easel project, Museum of Art of São Paulo, image courtesy of Museum of Art of São Paulo library archives, *Baixa e marca: 157–1968-Pinacoteca II*



Figure C.33. Lina Bo Bardi's inaugural glass easel project, Museum of Art of São Paulo, image courtesy of Museum of Art of São Paulo library archives, *Baixa e marca: 157–1968-Pinacoteca II*



Figure C.34. image courtesy of Museum of Art of São Paulo library archives, Baixa e marca: 157 - 1968 - Pinacoteca II



Figure C.35. image courtesy of Museum of Art of São Paulo library archives, Baixa e marca: 157 - 1968- Pinacoteca II



Figure C.36. image courtesy of Museum of Art of São Paulo MASP library archives, Baixa e marca: 157 – 1968- Pinacoteca II



Figure C.37. image courtesy of Museum of Art of São Paulo library archives, Baixa e marca: 157 – 1968- Pinacoteca II



Figure C.38. image courtesy of Museum of Art of São Paulo library archives, Baixa e marca: 158 - 1968 - Masp Pinacoteca - Publica



Figure C.39. image courtesy of Museum of Art of São Paulo library archives, Baixa e marca: 158 - 1968 - Masp Pinacoteca - Publica



Figure C.40. Lina Bo Bardi's inaugural glass easel project, Image courtesy of Museum of Art of São Paulo library archives, Baixa e marca: 156 - 1968 - Pinacoteca I



Figure C.41. Lina Bo Bardi's inaugural glass easel project, Image courtesy of Museum of Art of São Paulo library archives, Baixa e marca: 156 - 1968 - Pinacoteca I



Figure C.42. Lina Bo Bardi's inaugural glass easel project, Image courtesy of Museum of Art of São Paulo library archives, Baixa e marca: 156-1968-Pinacoteca I



Figure C.43. back sides of paintings, Lina Bo Bardi, image courtesy of Museum of Art of São Paulo library archives, Baixa e marca: 156 - 1968 - Pinacoteca I



Figure C.44. *A Mão do Povo Brasileiro (Hands of the Brazilian People)* (1969), Courtesy of Museum of Art of São Paulo library archives, Baixa e marca: 160 - 1969 - A M | fo do Povo Brasileiro



Figure C.45. *A Mão do Povo Brasileiro (Hands of the Brazilian People)* (1969), Courtesy of Museum of Art of São Paulo library archives, Baixa e marca: 160 - 1969 - A M | fo do Povo Brasileiro, duplicate image for reference only



Figure C.46. *A Mão do Povo Brasileiro (Hands of the Brazilian People)* (1969), Courtesy of Museum of Art of São Paulo library archives, Baixa e marca: 160 - 1969 - A Mão do Povo Brasileiro



Figure C.47. *A Mão do Povo Brasileiro (Hands of the Brazilian People)* (1969), Courtesy of Museum of Art of São Paulo library archives, Baixa e marca: 160 - 1969 - A Mão do Povo Brasileiro



Figure C.48. *A Mão do Povo Brasileiro (Hands of the Brazilian People)* (1969), Courtesy of Museum of Art of São Paulo library archives, Baixa e marca: 160 - 1969 - A M | fo do Povo Brasileiro



Figure C.49. *A Mão do Povo Brasileiro (Hands of the Brazilian People)* (1969), Courtesy of Museum of Art of São Paulo MASP library archives, Baixa e marca: 160 - 1969 - A M | fo do Povo Brasileiro



Figure C.50. *A Mão do Povo Brasileiro (Hands of the Brazilian People)* (1969), Courtesy of Museum of Art of São Paulo library archives, Baixa e marca: 160 - 1969 - A Mão do Povo Brasileiro



Figure C.51. *A Mão do Povo Brasileiro (Hands of the Brazilian People)* (1969), Courtesy of Museum of Art of São Paulo library archives, Baixa e marca: 160 - 1969 - A Mão do Povo Brasileiro, duplicate image for reference only



Figure C.52. *A Mão do Povo Brasileiro (Hands of the Brazilian People)* (1969), Courtesy of Museum of Art of São Paulo library archives, Baixa e marca: 160 - 1969 - A M | Fo do Povo Brasileiro



Figure C.53. *A Mão do Povo Brasileiro (Hands of the Brazilian People)* (1969), Courtesy of Museum of Art of São Paulo library archives, Baixa e marca: 160 - 1969 - A M | Fo do Povo Brasileiro

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- Yarian, Caleb. "News Articles and Thoughts Design Questions with Randy Gragg." *Design Week Portland*, accessed September 2, 2015, available online: <http://designweekportland.tumblr.com/post/97062583914/design-questions-with-randy-gragg-randy-gragg-is>
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- . John Yeon Personal Archives. Richard Brown, Keeper. Watzek House. Portland, Oregon.

———. John Yeon Folder, Portland Art Museum Archives, Portland, OR.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Melinda Roxanne McVay has a B.A. in Sculpture from the University of Dallas where she was awarded the Board of Trustee Scholarship (1999), and an Eternal Cities grant to study art and architecture in Greece and Italy (2001). McVay earned her M.A. in Humanities, Aesthetic Studies from the University of Texas at Dallas. During her studies, she had studied Spanish language, art and culture in Cuernavaca, Mexico (2006). Both her B.A. and M.A. degrees required an exhibition of McVay's studio work. The B.A. exhibition, titled simply "Melinda McVay," consisted of large wooden organic forms, and the M.A. exhibition, "Space Invaders," was an installation project where McVay hung over 100 small, hand-sized plaster sculptures covered in bees wax. McVay was awarded travel funds to research for this dissertation where she combed through private and museum archives and visited museums in: San Francisco, Portland, Eugene, Kansas City, New York, Chicago, São Paulo and Salvador, Brazil, and Munich, Germany. She was honored to be awarded one of the inaugural Edith O'Donnell Institute of Art History Fellowship at the University of Texas, Dallas (2014-2016). In addition, Melinda was the inaugural Evelyn Kelly Lambert intern at the Nasher Sculpture Center in Dallas, Texas, and had served as a "Guggie" at the Peggy Guggenheim Collection in Venice, Italy, where she was able to research Italian installation design and travel to Milan, Padua, and Genova to examine installation from the Italian rationalists. McVay has taught Art Appreciation, Humanities, and Developmental Writing for Richland Community College in Dallas, Texas.

CURRICULUM VITAE

Melinda Roxanne McVay

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(214)826-7636

EDUCATION

University of Texas, Dallas, Richardson, TX, 2003-2016
Ph.D. Humanities Aesthetic Studies, degree expected 2017, Specialization: Museum Studies
M.A. Humanities Aesthetic Studies, 2006

University of Dallas, Irving, TX, 1999-2003
B.A. Sculpture, 2003

FELLOWSHIPS, SCHOLARSHIPS, AND GRANTS

Edith O'Donnell Institute of Art History Fellowship, 2014-2016

Texas Curatorial Fund, awarded funds for research trip to museums and universities in San Francisco, Portland, Eugene, and Kansas City, Summer 2012

University of Texas, Dallas, Arts and Humanities Student Travel Grant, awarded funds for research trips to museums and institutions in São Paulo and Salvador, Brazil (January).
Awarded travel funds for research trip to Art Institute of Chicago (June). Awarded travel funds for research trips to the Metropolitan Museum and MoMA in New York (July), 2014

Texas Curatorial Fund, awarded funds to research at the Pinakothek der Moderne in Munich, Germany, December 2014

University of Dallas Eternal Cities Rome Office funding, granted partial funding to study abroad in Greece and Italy, 2001

University of Dallas, Board of Trustees Scholarship, 1999

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Richland College, Dallas County Community College, Dallas, TX
Arts Appreciation, Fall 2013-Spring 2014
Humanities, Fall 2013
Developmental Writing, Spring 2008-Fall 2013

Montessori Children's House and School, Dallas, TX
Art Teacher/ Assistant Classroom Guide November, 2004-June 2005

ACADEMIC SERVICES

University of Texas, Dallas, Arts and Humanities Graduate Student Representative, Hiring Committee, Central Track Director of Artist Residency, 2007

CONFERENCE AND WORKSHOP PRESENTATIONS

Research and Writing Conference, University of Texas, Dallas, Presented “Lina Bo Bardi and the cultural politics of display” Spring 2016

Edith O’Donnell Workshop Talk, University of Texas, Dallas, “John Yeon—Museum Installation,” Fall 2015

Research and Writing Conference, University of Texas, Dallas, Presented “Frank Lloyd Wright: Anarchist Architect” Spring 2014

Research and Writing Conference, University of Texas, Dallas, Presented “NOW/THEN/AGAIN: installation design at the Dallas Museum of Art” Spring 2012

Course-Redesign, Guest Speaker at the Dallas County Community College’s Developmental Studies Summit: The Foundation for Student Success, Dallas, TX, Fall 2010

MUSEUM EXPERIENCE

Nasher Sculpture Center, Dallas, TX, 2015

Peggy Guggenheim Collection, Venice, Italy, 2014

Dallas Museum of Art, Public Relations Summer Volunteer, 2003

EXHIBITIONS

Off the Grid, work published on brochure and exhibited with Temporary Services, Neuberger Museum of Art, SUNY Purchase (March 30-September 14, 2008)

Personal Plastic, Online exhibition with Temporary Services, http://www.temporarieservices.org/personal_plastic_2008.pdf (2007-present)

Space Invaders, curated and installed, University of Texas at Dallas (January 12-February 16, 2007)

Melinda McVay, University of Dallas (May 2003)

Ellipsis, co-curated and exhibited, group show, University of Dallas (March 6-22, 2002)

PUBLICATIONS

“The Life and Legacy of Evelyn Kelly Lambert,” *The Nasher Magazine*, (June 2015)