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The Spatial Dialectics of Authenticity

Amir Ameri

The question of authenticity in art appears historically and directly linked to the question of art's place and the modalities of its placement. The protracted practice of removal and collection of authentic works of art in a sequestered place, of which the art museum is the modern manifestation, is directly linked, in turn, to Western ideational trepidations about art and representation. To trace these links, I will begin with an overview of the history of the place and the placement of art, beginning with the cabinet of curiosities, to the founding of the art museum as a building type in Berlin during the third decade of the 19th century. The elaborate spacing and the experiential journey of disjointure that were codified in Berlin and since have been the persistent measures of success in art museum design are, I contend, a humanist institutional response to the enigmatic place of art and its inherent supplemental and paradoxical character as a mode of representation. The fabrication of the art museum as a disjoined space is, persistent as it has been, a cultural substitute for what is fundamentally missing and missed: an outside to representation. As an institution and a building type, the art museum effectively fabricates an outside to representation. It substitutes a formal, spatial, and experiential clarity of place for the very spatial and temporal dimensions that painting and sculpture fundamentally put in question. The institution of the art museum is, I contend, an instituted resistance to representation. Spacing is authenticity's indispensable alibi. The museum is its incessant realization.

I. A Place for Art

Museums are, as one contemporary account has it, "really last-ditch solutions to the problem of knowing what to do with artworks when they have been moved from their original homes for any number of reasons" (Bossaglia 1990: 287). It is, we are told, "really as desperate as that. Our civilization has come up with no better solution than to pigeonhole artworks and lock them safely away" (ibid.).

Curious as this determination may be, it speaks to the same logic as the following account ascribing the inception of the museum to two causes: "a level of physical wealth which allows an abundant production of art," and "a form of culture in which this art is seen as a kind of surplus not immediately wanted in

any everyday secular or religious activity” (Brawne 1965: 8). Both accounts assume, and theirs is a pervasive assumption, that the museum is a response to a spatial displacement. Presuming that those works of art that fall outside “everyday secular or religious activity” or “their original homes” present a “*problem*,” both see the museum as a solution, desperate or otherwise, to arts’ want of a place—i.e., of having to have a designated place. Once displaced, works of art have to be re-placed, and not in *any* place, but a place that, according to another account, “must surely be set apart in the sense of being a special place, where life takes on a different dimension and there is time and space to think and feel, and room for . . . silence” (Powel 1991, X). This relocation is relatively recent and western in origin.¹

Unlike the library and the theater with their long history of development, the art museum is little more than 200 years old. It dates back to the Decree issued by the Revolutionary Convention in Paris on July 27, 1793 for the creation of the “Museum of the Republic” at the Louvre. It opened on November 9, 1793.² The spatial and formal consequences of this act were not to be fully realized at the Louvre for another 190 years. Elsewhere, the spatial and formal development of the museum as a building type had to await the heated debates and final codification of the type in Germany and, to a lesser extent, in England, in the decades of 1810s to 1830s.

The constitution of the “Musée Central des Arts,” as the museum at the Louvre Palace was renamed in 1796, is significant insofar as it marks a first in the appropriation of art by a then newly construed entity - the “public.” In its sphere the museum would remain henceforth. This is to say that the history of the museum is thoroughly implicated in the history of the public and its self-constitution as a sovereign entity. Taking charge and exercising control over art as a body of objects delegated to a “special” place was assumed and continues to be one expression of this sovereignty.

Significant and peculiar as the public’s initial and continuing preoccupation with gathering and administering art is—and we will have to return to this subject later—it is important to note that the practice of collecting art had precedent in Europe. The public assumed, then re-defined, and thoroughly re-organized a private practice that traces its history back to the onset of the Renaissance. The practice of collecting art objects, public or private, presupposes, of course, their designation as *collectibles*. The history of this classification, recent as it is, is not patently different in duration from the history of art itself and it is not all certain which classification came first.

The “Middle Ages,” Malraux reminded us back in 1953, “were as unaware of what we mean by the word “art” as were Greece and Egypt, who had no

word for it" (53). What we understand by "art" was the invention of the Renaissance, or rather of a people who, over time, begun to see in the "Virgin" a statue and in the "classical statue" not a "heathen idol or a mere puppet" (Ibid.), but the embodiment of a universal ideal: the beautiful. The invention and the ensuing re-classification of Paintings and statues as art required them to relinquish, in Benjamin's terms, their "cult value" to assume in its place "exhibition value" (224).

The designation of art objects as *collectibles* did not exclusively depend, however, on their newly acquired "exhibition" or aesthetic value. The transformation of the cult referent into a subject had distinct spatial ramifications, and these as well bore directly on the classification of art objects as *collectibles*. The first spatial ramification had to do with the recognition of two- and three-dimensional graphic representations as autonomous objects. As cult objects, paintings and statues were meant to establish a visual link between the viewer and the cult referent. They were meant to be seen, not looked at. They functioned as intended - making the absent referent present - so long as they remained invisible as objects. As works of art, on the other hand, paintings and statues held their newly acquired status so long as they retained a distance from both the viewer and the place they happened to occupy. Taking note of the object and not the referent entailed taking note of the distance and the space between the observer and the observed. As cult objects, paintings and statues collapsed space; as art objects, they imposed it.

The spacing that constituted an insular frame all around the art object, in effect, displaced paintings and statues from their allocated place at home, in the palace, the church, etc. The price of autonomy was the loss of place.³ This is the loss Valéry was to deplore at the end of his essay "The Problem with Museums," to which we will turn later. For now, we should note that the autonomy that set paintings and statues adrift as autarchic self-referential objects transposed them into *collectibles*.

Once dispossessed of their place, paintings and statues were collected, re-classified, and re-located to a new and specific place: the "repositories" that in various forms were popular among the European ruling elite in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.⁴ The logic that saw to the reclassification and replacement of these placeless *representations* in various repositories is fundamentally the same logic that had seen to their initial placement as cult objects, and in time would see to their re-placement in the museum. Deciphering it will be our focus for the remainder of this work.

Beginning in the sixteenth century, we find dislodged paintings and statues repositied in places that over the course of the succeeding two centuries would

develop into two distinct realms: the “cabinet” and the “gallery,” or else the *Wunderkammer* and the *Kunstammer*⁵ The collections’ titles vary over time, and there were considerable overlaps in their holdings. What distinguished one collection from another was not so much its label, as its distinct collection practice. The distinction between the “cabinet” and the “gallery” is useful, in other words, only insofar as it serves to distinguish not two specific repositories, but two distinct practices, often accompanied by two correspondingly distinct spatial formulations. The gallery, often a long rectangular room, served as a repository for paintings and statues gathered there for their aesthetic and iconographic value. These works were often tightly integrated with the decoration of the room, together forming a path with a multiplicity of views along the way.

The cabinet, on the other hand, was a designated *place* wherein, as Francis Bacon put it in 1594, “whatsoever the hand of man by exquisite art or engine has made rare in stuff, form or motion; whatsoever singularity, chance, and the shuffle of things hath produced; whatsoever nature has wrought in things that want life and may be kept; shall be sorted and include.” (cited in Impey and MacGregor, 1).

The bafflingly heterogeneous body of objects encountered in these cabinets appears to have one thing in common. Rare, singular, or wanting of life, the objects of the cabinet eschewed reproduction. They fell outside the normal cycle of (re)production, where they were deemed collectible. Divided, as Caspar Neickel suggests in his 1727 treatise, *Museographia*, into the two categories *naturalia* and *curiosa artificialia*, the collectibles in the cabinet were, by nature or design, out of place in the domain of the ordinary. Most had their origin in *other* times and *other* places. Whether a horn of a unicorn, a nautilus shell, cameos and intaglios, Egyptian and Roman antiquities, American feather works, or oriental calligraphy, the objects in the continental cabinet were unique productions, not necessarily in origin, but in where they were collected, the one place outside of which they had no immediate place.

For all its ambition to “behold and collect into one place,” as Peter Munday noted in 1634, more oddities, rarities, and singularities than “a man ... should see if hee spent all his life in Travel,” the cabinet was not meant as a place of exhibition or public display (cited in Impey and MacGregor, 150). The objects in the cabinet were not meant to be seen. On occasion foreign dignitaries may have been taken there to impress upon them the sovereign reach of the ruler.⁶ The cognoscenti were also given permission to examine and study the cabinet’s contents. For the most part, however, the cabinet was secluded, and inaccessible to the public. The impetus behind the collection was not to make oddities, rarities, and singularities visible, but to render them invisible. What the cabinet

accomplished was not only the preservation of the rare and the singular, but also the institution of a distinct domain that kept the rare and the singular out of circulation and out of the places to which it did not belong. The spatial control exerted over these authentic objects may well be what made the cabinet suitable for the occasional display of sovereignty to foreign dignitaries. On display was not so much the objects in the cabinet, as the spatial control exerted over them—i.e., the collection.⁷

Among other oddities, rarities, and singularities, paintings and statues were included in the cabinets of curiosities, but not because of any aesthetic or monetary value. Paintings and statues accounted for little as compared to such prized collectibles as the horn of a unicorn.⁸ However, neither was placed in the cabinet on account of price. Had the monetary value outweighed an object's value as a unique and rare object, it was more likely to be placed in the treasury than the cabinet of curiosities. Objects in the cabinet had additional properties: their singularity where they happened to be. What made paintings and statues fit for inclusion in the cabinet in the company of other oddities, rarities, and singularities was their authenticity and historicity, i.e., what Walter Benjamin was to term "aura" or that which "even the most perfect reproduction of a work of art is lacking ... its unique existence at the place where it happens to be" (220).

Although the authentic and auratic objects collected in the cabinet eschewed reproduction, this is not to say that they were not reproduced. An entire underground industry was formed in Italy and elsewhere to feed with fake reproductions and forged singularities the appetite of the European ruling elite for rare and singular collectibles.⁹ In response, another industry was formed to safeguard against the first. It had the task of identifying, authenticating, and certifying the collectibles as such. A branch of this industry would be consolidated in time into the field of art history. It is important to note, however, that both industries owe their development to the European ruling elite's search for the singular and the authentic, instigated by the desire to collect them in one place. The desire to open up and set aside a space for authenticity and singularity appears to be independent of the presence of collectibles as evidenced by the active search for collectibles. Even if it meant having to search, locate, and import authentic and singular objects, no seat of power in Europe during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, it seems, could be without a cabinet, and no claim to power could go without opening room and instigating a realm from which the inauthentic and the ordinary were to be carefully and meticulously excluded.

The desire to collect curiosities in one place raises, of course, the question of motive. Why this preoccupation with the spatial control of the singular and the authentic, and why is it linked to questions of sovereignty and power? Why

were the European ruling elite interested in collecting these peculiar objects with such diligence and concern for authenticity, passing this concern on to the public when it declared its own sovereignty? To postulate an answer, we need to follow the development of the cabinet into the museum. For the time being, it is important to note that the emphasis in the cabinet on the authentic, as a salient feature of its collection practice, is what sets this practice apart from the prevalent collection practice in the gallery.

Inasmuch as the aesthetic and iconographic concerns of the gallery were impertinent to the cabinet, the latter's preoccupation with authenticity was irreverent to the gallery. Unlike the cabinet, the space of the gallery included the copy and the reproduction. Where and when aesthetic and iconographical concerns figured paramount, as they did in the gallery, the question of authenticity did not. Germain Bazin recounts that Charles de Brosses, *Président du Parlement de Dijon*, did not "fret over acquiring originals by the great masters" (116). Confessedly, he preferred "beautiful copies of famous paintings," to "having originals by minor masters" (*ibid.*). President de Brosses's preference was not the exception. An entire industry, dedicated to the commissioned replication of famous works of art, produced endless copies of Old Masters for the galleries of the European elite throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The gallery and the cabinet had, in other words, two distinct purposes, reflecting two different, though not mutually exclusive, criteria for valuating art. The gallery, conceived more or less as a *path* for viewing, housed aesthetics; the Cabinet, conceived as a *place* predicated on the spatial dialectics of center and edge, housed authenticity. In time, the two practices would coalesce into the museum, though the logic of the cabinet would prevail over the gallery.

The transformation of the cabinet and the gallery into the art museum occurred through the gradual division of the cabinet of curiosities into specialized cabinets in the eighteenth century, including the formation of cabinets devoted exclusively to art. This was, of course, in keeping with the greater divisional and organizational tendencies of the Enlightenment and its distinct worldview. The institution of cabinets devoted exclusively to works of art (*Kunstkammer*) was, in a manner, an initial step toward consolidating the cabinet and the gallery into one homogeneous and exclusive space for art. However, the question of authenticity was to remain a divisive criterion in keeping separate the two modes of collecting and administering art for a time to come.

The transformation of the place of art from the exclusive cabinets and the galleries of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries to the public museums of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries was to closely follow the trajectory of the two major parallel political developments of the late eighteenth century. It went

in tandem with the development of nation-states, and the fashioning of a new social identity for state citizens, on the one hand, and on the other, with the gradual emergence of a new mode of organizing and exercising power centered on exposure and visibility as a new strategy of control, the modalities of which Michel Foucault has extensively traced in various contexts.¹⁰

Art was to the emerging nation states an effective instrument for public education, and for the forging of a new national identity and state citizenry. The charter of virtually every major art museum, since the museum's inception, identifies education of the public as a primary mission.¹¹ Works of art did and continue to validate and substantiate the historical claims and the distinct mythos of the new state—i.e., to synthesize aspects of its worldview and ethos. The concerns here are thematic, and focused on works of art and their instrumental exhibition. In this respect, the state took over the function of the gallery and continued its thematic and aesthetic concerns with a new agenda.

The evolving exhibition practices in museums and the motivations behind these practices over time have been the subject of a number of recent studies on museums.¹² The architecture and the distinct spatial experience of the art museum itself have been tangential to these studies, given the focus on the museum's subject. Admittedly, the exposure and public visibility afforded art in the museums of nineteenth and twentieth centuries is an indispensable part of its instrumentality to the state, and can readily be taken for granted. However, this exposure took place in a new space and a distinct place whose development was as instrumental and influential in the public reception of art as the exhibition practices within.

The questions of how to house art and how to shape its place once it entered the public realm were first addressed in France in the last quarter of the eighteenth century. The inquiries coincided with Comte d'Angiviller's plans for a public art museum at the Louvre, and led to the assignment of the museum as a speculative design problem for the Prix de Rome competition in the Académie d'Architecture on a number of occasions between 1778 and 1810.¹³ Boullée and later his student Durand, both affiliated with the Académie, offered designs for an ideal museum in their influential theoretical works of the period. Conceptually and experientially, the library appears to be what the designers of these early prototypes had in mind as a model for the museum—i.e., a place to gather, organize, and study art with all that this act spatially and ritualistically entails.¹⁴ In 1819 for instance, Jacques-Nicolas-Louis Durand, in comparing the museum to a library, distinguished it from the latter only on account of having a number of different works to display as compared to only one in the library (215).

The initial modeling of the museum on the library stems in part from a valuation of art that was deeply rooted in the cabinet—i.e., viewing art as a rare and unique document and not necessarily or primarily as an aesthetic object. Christian von Mechel, who was put in charge of re-arranging and cataloguing the Imperial collection in Vienna in 1779, summed up this sentiment well in his introduction to the collection's catalogue. "Such a large, public collection," he wrote, "intended for instruction more than for fleeting pleasure, is like a rich library in which those eager to learn are glad to find works of all kinds and all periods" (cited in Pevsner, 1976, 121). The antiquarian Alois Hirt was to echo Mechel's sentiment in his appeal to Friedrich Wilhelm II in 1797 for a public art museum attached to the academy of art as a research and instructional resource. In the final count, however, the design of the museum would follow a different trajectory. The decisive period was the second decade of the nineteenth century. Mechel's distinction between "instruction" and "fleeting pleasure" was to form the basis of the heated debates between the artist / archeologist Johan Martin Wagner and the architect Leo von Klenz in Munich and latter between Alois Hirt on one side and the architect Karl Friedrich Schinkel and the art historian Gustav Friedrich Waagen, on the other. The debates were over the conception of the art museum as an experiential variation on the theme of the library, or as something entirely different, if not new. The outcome of these debates, to which the heads of the respective states and a host of other concerned officials were party, determined the ground rules for the design of the art museum as a building type.

The counter argument to the conception of the art museum as a "public collection intended for instruction" and the point of view that was to ultimately shape the art museum, was summarized by Leo von Klenz in a 1816 memo written in response to Wagner's objections to his proposed design for a sculpture museum in Munich: the Glyptothek. A "museum," he wrote, "is not a place for artists' training, an '*akademischer Kunstzwinger*,' but a place in which to show a number of treasures of art to all kinds of visitors in a manner to be worthy of the objects and to create pleasure in them" (cited in Pevsner, 1976, 126). Klenz's sentiment was later echoed in the catch-phrase of Schinkel and Waagen, "first delight, then instruct." This was formulated in response to objections raised by Hirt to Schinkel's design for the Berlin museum. "The principal and essential purpose" of the museum in the opinions of Schinkel and Waagen was "to awaken in the public the sense of fine art as one of the most important branches of human civilization ... All other purposes, concerning individual classes of the population, must be subdued to this. Among these the first is to give an opportunity to artists to manifold study; only after that comes the interest of the scholar, and

finally and lastly the museum will facilitate the acquisition of information on the history of art among all and sundry." (Pevsner, 1976, 128)

All parties to these early debates over the museum's purpose, it is important to note, assumed that the place of art is instrumental to its appreciation, be this as an aesthetic object or an object of study. All parties assumed that the space where delight came first was different from the space where instruction came first. The point of contention was whether to spatially and experientially construe the museum to render art an object of study or an aesthetic object primarily. The former presumed penetration and analysis, the latter, distance and reflection. One entailed an emphasis on arrival, the other an emphasis on departure. Nonetheless, all parties were keenly aware that any given perception of art is, to a good measure, spatially construed.

The perception of art that found its spatial realization in Altes Museum, among others then and since, may appear to have its emphasis on aesthetics in common with the perception of art prevalent in the galleries of the previous generation. However, there are fundamental differences between the two points of view. In the same vein, the differences between the parties to the debate over the purpose of the museum are over-stated by the parties. Both parties, for instance, rejected iconography in favor of chronology for the organization of the works of art in their proposed museums. Iconography, a prevalent organizational principle in the gallery, was unacceptable to the new generation, in part because its external focus on the subject degraded the autonomy of the art object. Frieherr von Rumohr, the art historian who was, along with Waagen and Schinkel, responsible for the arrangement of art works in Altes Museum condemned the practice because to organize art iconographically, he asserted, is "to seek art outside the field of art" (Pevsner 1976, 128). Looking at art, one was not to take note of the subject that was "outside" it, but of what was inherent and internal to the object and gained it a unique place in the historic chronology of art.

The chronological organization, agreed upon as it was, presented a unique dilemma to both parties. Every chronologically organized collection is bound to have "true and significant gaps" as Wilhelm von Humboldt, chair of the court-appointed Museum Commission in Berlin, noted with regret in 1829. Whether the purpose of an art collection is defined as the elevation of national character through exposure to high art, as Schinkel and Waagen did, or the education of artists who contributed to the elevation of national manufacture and industrial products, as Hirt did, the "true and significant gaps" of any collection inevitably detract it from fully accomplishing its mission. The gaps are counter-productive to the instrumentality of the work of art. To alleviate the problem and enhance the museum's efficacy, Hirt had hoped to use casts to complete the historic

sequence in the Berlin collection, and later Humboldt suggested the purchase of copies to fill the gaps in the painting collection. Rumohr was quick to remind Humboldt, however, that “all the value of a painting turns around the idea of originality.” The purchase of copies was out of the question and Hirt’s casts were exiled from the collection (Bergdoll, 86).

Ever since, the art museum has been, like the cabinet before it, a place adamantly exclusive of the copy. This is to say that to the hierarchy of missions outlined by Schinkel and Waagen, we must add one that superseded all others and was so obvious as to require no elaboration: a sanctuary for the original, the singular, and the unique, around which idea purportedly turns “all the value of a painting.” No painting, regardless of its aesthetic value, can be assigned a domicile in the art museum if it is not authentic. The copy that had a place in the gallery and even the museum that aimed to educate, has had no place in the museum that has aimed to “delight.”

Of the two initial executed designs for the museum, Klenz’s Glyptothek or sculpture museum in Munich of 1815-30 and Schinkel’s Altes Museum in Berlin of 1823-30, the latter, having the advantage of hindsight, played the more decisive role in shaping the space that was to render authentic art the object of aesthetic appreciation. We should briefly follow its development, as it would hitherto set the criteria by which the success of an art museum design is judged.

Alois Hirt’s initial appeal for a public museum in 1797 was unheeded until 1822 when, first Friedrich Rabe, and later Karl Friedrich Schinkel were asked to submit designs for an art museum attached to the Berlin Academy. Schinkel’s initial design of four enveloping arms around a central courtyard was in the spirit of Hirt’s vision and earlier French speculative museum designs. In the subsequent three years, a number of significant changes to the initial plan were to radically alter the shape of the museum, and along with it, the experience of art in the public realm.

The first departure occurred on January 7, 1823 when Schinkel made the unsolicited proposal to separate the museum from the Academy building and move it away from Unter den Linden, in the center of town, to a new site opposite the royal palace on an island in the Spree River (Spreeinsel). The new free-standing building was to occupy the site of an existing canal at the end of the Lustgarten, opposite the palace and away from the urban fabric (Fig. 1). This was the first of a series of spatial and formal manipulations that were to create a highly ritualized path to the resting place of art.

Schinkel’s vision for the place where delight was to come before instruction consisted of a free standing rectangular building, raised on a high podium above the Lustgarten. Reaching the art works put on display for public “enjoyment

and appreciation" (*Genuß und die Erkenntnis*) required venture on a journey that was, if not deliberately arduous, meticulously elaborate. The ritual procession out to the new place for art, approached from the initial proposed site on Unter den Linden, required one to leave the dense city fabric behind, cross the Spree on a bridge near the palace, to enter the large open plaza of the island bordered by a church opposite the bridge, and on the sides by the palace and the museum. Having reached the island and entered the plaza in front of the palace, one had to then turn left, and on transverse axis, cross the immense void of the plaza,

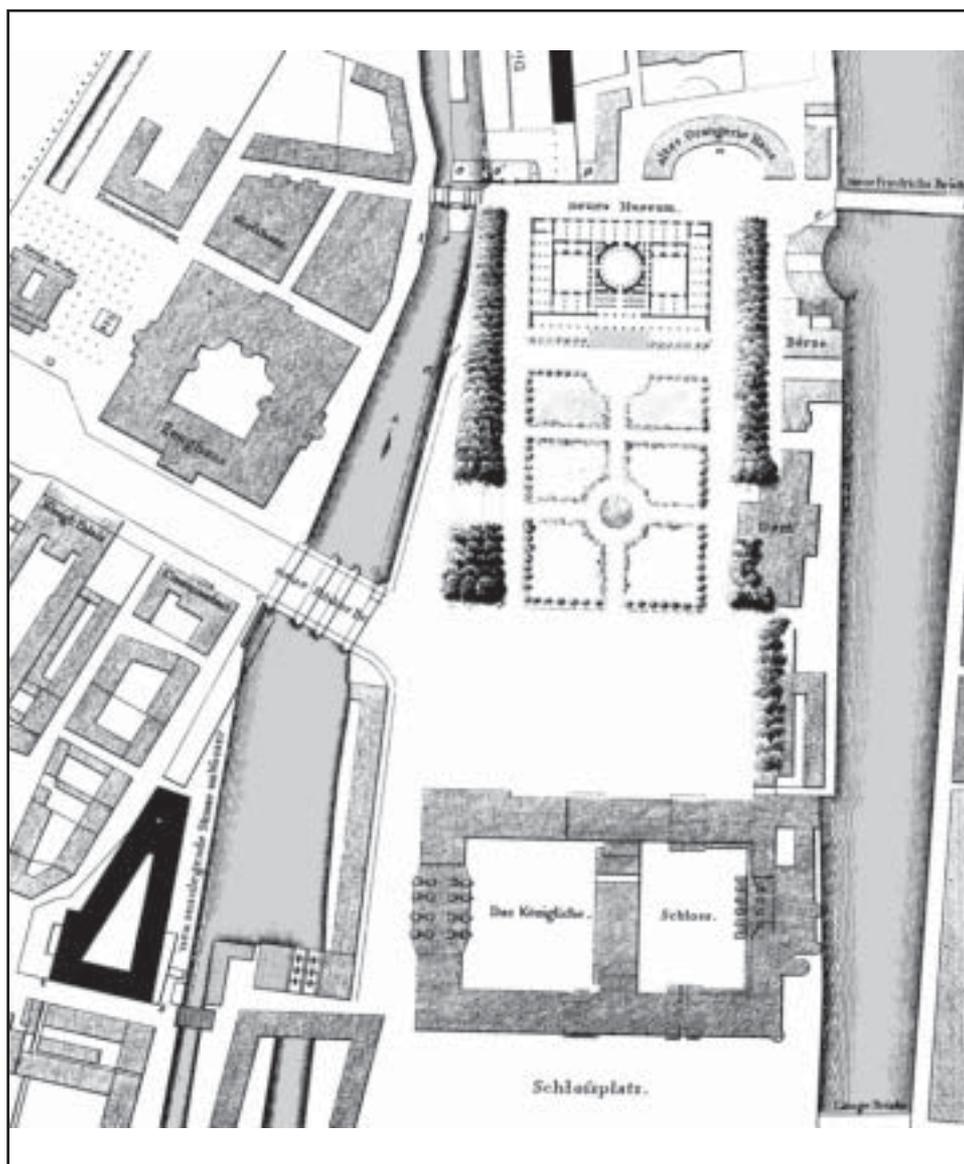


Figure 1. K.F. Schinkel, *Master Plan for Central Berlin, 1816-41* (Karl Friedrich Schinkel, *Collection of Architectural Designs*, Princeton Architectural Press, 1989).

terminated by the ceremonial staircase and the long monumental colonnade behind which the main body of the museum was carefully withdrawn. Ascending the staircase in front of the columnar screen, one was led past this monumental threshold and through the depth of the colonnade to the central recessed vestibule, and from there, on axis, through a constricted passageway under the pyramidal mass of the vestibule staircase to the expansive space of the rotunda, which put a dramatic end to the first leg of the journey. Much as the colonnade marks the beginning of a new territory, the rotunda is, in a manner, the gateway to this *other* world. To reach it from the rotunda, one in turn had to continue on axis past another constricted passageway, having now traversed the width of the building, to enter the galleries branching out in transverse and opposite directions.

What Schinkel in effect instituted in the name of “enjoyment and appreciation” of art is a distinct and separate domain for art, disjoined from the city by a deep and elaborate borderline. This was to be the legacy of Altes Museum. It transformed the conceptual distinction between art and non-art on the one hand and the authentic and the inauthentic on the other, into a spatial experience of separation and disjointure played out at the conceptual edge of the city. It created a place for and located the aesthetic and the authentic on the outside, separated from the city by a deliberate journey. The art that was withdrawn from circulation and made invisible inside the city before, now became visible outside the fabric that characterized the city. This outside, it is important to note, was neither literal nor a given, but construed and fabricated by the journey and the experience of disjointure that would become the distinguishing marks of the art museum as a building type.

The carefully orchestrated experience of disjointure from the city, as the place of habitation, and the museum, as the place of visitation, was significantly enhanced by four major modifications to the initial design proposal, between 1825 and 1828. The last and most elaborate modification was to the design of the plaza bordered by the palace and the museum. Schinkel had initially conceived of the plaza as a unified space connecting the palace, the church, and the museum together into one integrated composition, or what he called a “regulated whole” (*regelmässiges Ganzes*) (Pundt, 152). Crossing the bridge from the city, one would have had the distinct impression of entering a different realm encompassing in its totality the palace, the church and the museum (Fig. 2). Wilhelm III rejected the proposal in favor of a scheme that disjoined the museum from the palace and turned the plaza, previously conceived as a distinct place into a ceremonial path across layers of space to the museum. Following Wilhelm’s instruction, Schinkel divided the plaza in two and turned the area bordered by the palace and the bridge into an open space whose experiential role is similar to

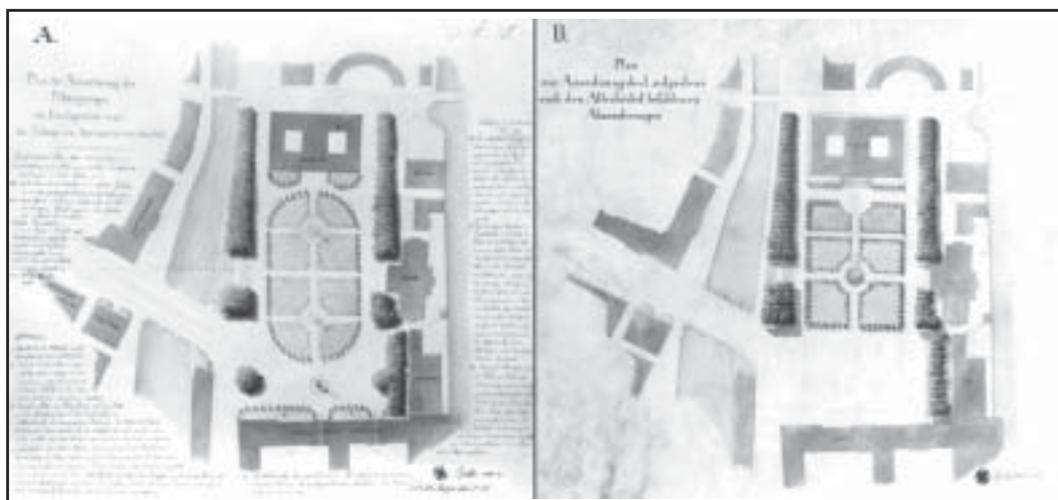


Figure 2. K. F. Schinkel, Lustgarten, Berlin, A. First Landscaping Proposal, B. Second Landscaping Proposal, 1828 (Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, SM 21c. 161 &162).

the rotunda of the museum. It, too, is placed at the nexus of two paths, here at the terminus of the access line from the city across the bridge and the point of

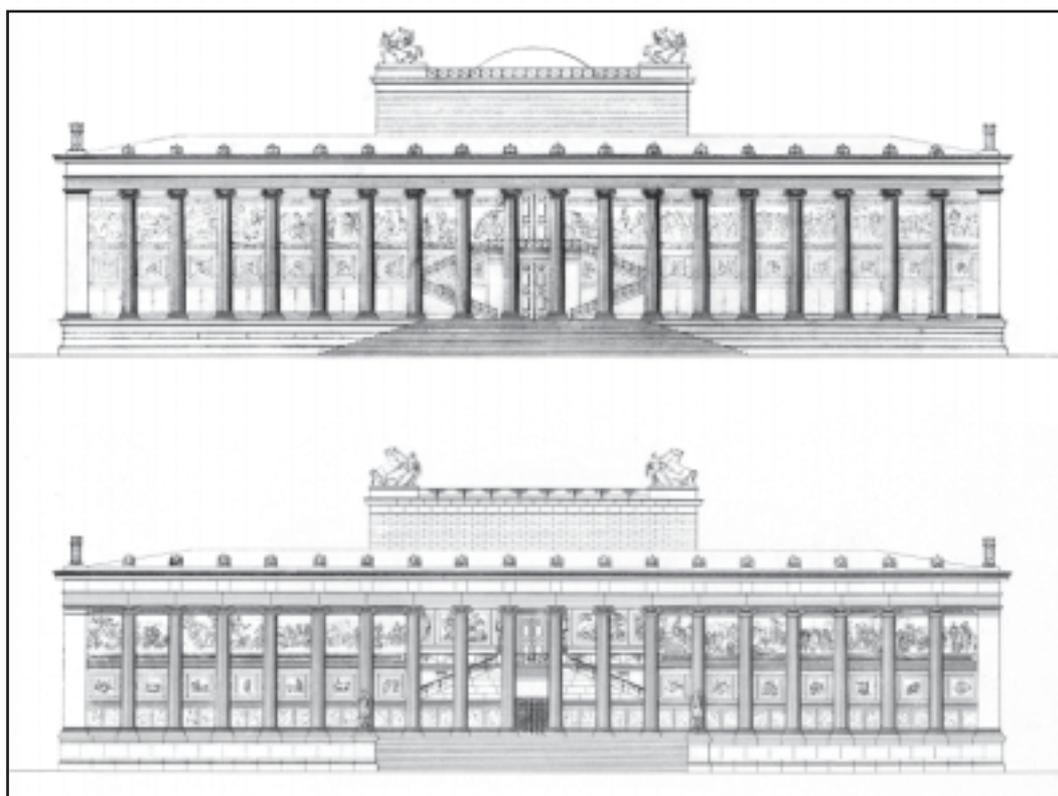


Figure 3. K.F. Schinkel, Altes Museum, Berlin, top: First elevation design, 1823, (Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, SM 21c.155), bottom: Second elevation design, 1825 (Karl Friedrich Schinkel, *Collection of Architectural Designs*, Princeton Architectural Press, 1989).

initiation for the path that journeys to the museum through cross-axial layers of space.

As the modifications to the plaza further disjoined the museum from its broader context, the other three modifications furthered disjoined the place of “enjoyment and appreciation” from its immediate context. The rotunda dome that was visible in the initial proposal acted as a central visual terminus to the path that leads through the center of the building to the gallery spaces. Its visible presence placed greater emphasis on the destiny of the path than the journey along the way (Fig. 3). The suppression of the dome in the final proposal shifted the visual focus of the visitor in the plaza from a focal point in the background to the foreground colonnade and the backward layering of the compositional elements along the path. The visitor in the plaza no longer had a destination in sight, but was focused instead on the spatial layers and the thresholds that had to be crossed along the way.

In the same vein, turning the vestibule staircase behind the colonnade 180 degrees, to no advantage other than its visual impact, radically changed the perception of the vestibule from a multidirectional space to a unidirectional path through the imposing mass of the staircase. The changes to the ceremonial staircase in front of the Colonnade had much the same impact on the colonnade. Schinkel had initially conceived the staircase in front of the museum as a multidirectional pyramidal mass, gathering up to a landing that lined up with the recessed vestibule behind the colonnade. The strong and funneled visual connection between the two stairs had a negative impact on the perception of the colonnade’s depth. Changing the staircase to a unidirectional path that forcefully cuts through a mass projected from the podium and extending the stairs in both directions past the vestibule space behind, severed the visual tie between them, had the staircase confront the colonnade directly, and reinforced the latter’s depth as the imposing threshold it was meant to be.

What these changes, minute as some may be, clearly indicate is that the journey of disjuncture past the multiplicity of thresholds imposed in front of the galleries was carefully contemplated and deliberate in the minute. It was also a collective consideration that had its opponents along the way. The most vocal opponent was, of course, Alois Hirt, who submitted a lengthy dissenting opinion to the museum commission.

Hirt’s objections to Schinkel’s design are telling and predictable, given their differences over the purpose of the art museum. Hirt objected to the new site for the art museum, to the staircase and the podium over which the museum was raised, to the monumental colonnade in front, and to the rotunda that he

regarded, along with the other elements, as unnecessary luxuries (*pracht*). Hirt objected, in other words, to every major element in Schinkel's proposal that served to locate and place art at a distance in a distinct and disjoined domain—i.e., every element that distinguished the art museum from a library. This is not to say that Hirt objected to the delegation of art to a distinct and separate domain. Rather, he had a different form and experience of separation in mind—one internally focused on the experience of penetration and arrival as opposed to Schinkel's external focus on the experience of departure and disjuncture.

Schinkel, of course, dismissed Hirt's criticism and emphatically defended the elements in question and the rotunda in particular as being essential to preparing the visitor for the proper "enjoyment and appreciation" of art. Hirt was to subsequently resign from the commission whose members were by and large in agreement with Schinkel.

Deferring for the moment the question of why the enjoyment and appreciation of authentic art should have the ritual of spacing as a precondition, it is important to note that the logic of the spacing that saw its first expression in Altes Museum has since informed and characterized the art museum as a new and unique building type. The manifestations of this logic have been diverse and particular to each context. They have been as dramatic and elaborate as the Philadelphia Art Museum (Traumbauer, Borie, and Zatzinger, 1911-28)¹⁵ or as minimal and subtle as the Whitney museum (Marcel Breuer, New York, 1966).¹⁶ Another vivid example is to be found in the recent corrective renovations and additions to the Louvre palace (I.M. Pei, 1989) where our museum history began.¹⁷ The changes, in effect, have belatedly turned the Louvre, which was not designed as a museum, into a *proper* museum. Lacking at the Louvre were the requisite spacing and the ensuing journey out. Although clearly defined and well marked off from the city, the Louvre was a palatial realm to be penetrated rather than journeyed to. The alterations that remedied the problem are as telling as they are compelling. The least conspicuous change, all the more effective for it, is the alteration to the exterior walls of the palace. Through its exterior walls and monumental doorways and portals, one can no longer enter the palace, because they have been sealed off and turned into an impenetrable limit.¹⁸ The facade has become a tableau to be contemplatively looked at from a distance; no matter how close one gets to it.¹⁹ Devoid of its function as the point of entry and exit, the facade has assumed the role of an imposing and monumental limit that inconsolably separates the worlds instituted on its sides. To reach the world within the impenetrable shell of the old palace, one must now make one's way to and through the forecourt, to the pyramidal glass entry in the middle that marks the nexus point of the world below the ground plane and the one above. The

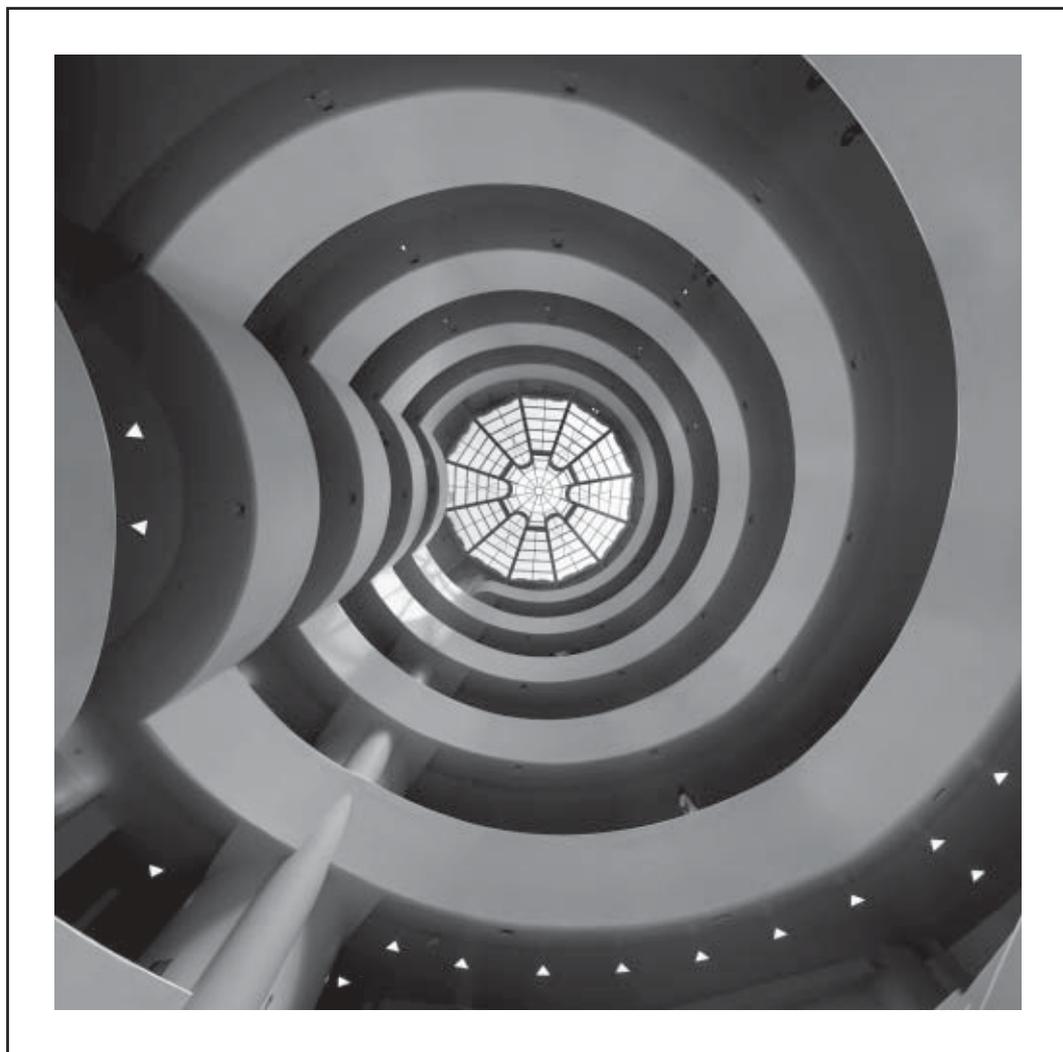


Figure 4. Frank Lloyd Wright, *Guggenheim Museum, New York, 1959* (author's collection).

ritual of disjuncture and the journey out continues through the pyramidal glass, past the imposing threshold of the ground plane, down twisting stairs beneath the court to the Louvre's equivalent of the rotunda at Altes Museum and from there through a sequence of mediating thresholds up into the meandering maze of the gallery spaces.²⁰

Much as compliance with the museum's ground rules is expected, deviations from the norm are severely criticized and condemned. The failures are, in this respect, as instructive as the success stories. Frank Lloyd Wright's Guggenheim museum (New York, 1959) is a case in point (Fig. 4).²¹ Criticized from its inception as an unsuitable *place* for art, the Guggenheim fails on crucial counts. It fails to distance itself from the fabric of the city, and thereafter it fails to simulate the experience of an other, distinct, and separate world for art behind its facade.

The novelty of the Guggenheim's form effectively divorces it from its context and it has been commended for it. The "buildings around it," Ada Louis Huxtable noted in 1959, "are not big enough to be overbearing; instead the Guggenheim cheerfully dominates their discreetness ... In a civic sense, it is a brilliant success" (336). That same year, Lewis Mumford wrote, "Despite its dull color ... this great monolith stands out boldly from the flat, anonymous apartment houses in the neighborhood, the positiveness of the form offsetting the all too congenial mediocrity of tone. The building is so definitely a thing apart, so different from every other one in Fifth Avenue" (110).

Although successful in divorcing itself from its context, what the Guggenheim lacks as an art museum is the requisite distance and the ritual disjuncture from that context. The Guggenheim's is a journey *in*, distinct from the requisite journey *out*. The unceremonious entry sequence is abrupt and fails to simulate the requisite departure across sequentially layered thresholds to an *other* space. In compensation for the missing distance, Guggenheim's critics wished it had been moved "out of the city," or "relocated" across the street in central park where the Metropolitan museum is located at a visible distance from the city fabric (Huxtable, 16).²²

The lack of sufficient separation that translates in compensation into a wish for Guggenheim's relocation has had no simple solution, and it bears on the interior. "Once inside," Huxtable tells us, "you understand an art critic's anger. The interior is not really a museum, but a place for merchandising art, and it oversells" (336).

The elements here are familiar. Their juxtaposition is not. The circular glass entrance vestibule of the museum opens onto the familiar and here aggrandized rotunda space circumscribed by an outwardly cascading spiral ramp that marches past the gallery alcoves on a downward spiral. As opposed to being sequentially layered into a chain of discrete experiences, the familiar elements here form a single or "total space." Art is placed here not past the nexus point, but at the nexus point.

Unlike the labyrinth common to many temporary shows, the path (ramp) exists in a comprehensible total space. Although the spectator continually moves he is never lost and can see where he has been and where he is going. The entire area has a single, unifying character that is never lost sight of. (Lee, 1975: 50)

From the "story told in the spiral," according to another critic, there is "virtually no escape." The Guggenheim is not "really a museum" because in it there is no *other* space, only a "comprehensible" space that one can never leave behind to enter a world proper to art. "Spreading all the merchandise before the

eye," Mumford tells us, "is a ruinous one for a museum" (115). This is not because one can see everything in a glance. One cannot. Rather, the ruin is brought about by everything being in an inescapable, comprehensible space, where movement produces no alterity. What is in perpetual sight in this space is not the art works per se, but where one has been and where one is going: the one and the same space. In this space art cannot be at home. The merchandising analogy that is all too prevalent in critiques of the Guggenheim has a temporal implication. It speaks to the transitory nature of the merchandise as such—a commodity in transit rather than at home, a commodity for external consumption rather than internal preservation. The measure of home is, of course, what is "really a museum" which as Fisher observes:

... is made up of rooms and paths. Once the pictures face us in a line on the wall we can convert rooms to paths by moving sideways from the entrance around the room, flattening it out, in effect, onto the wall. Viewing the pictures sequentially as we move from room to room, we follow the room numbers, the centuries, the schools. In so far as the museum becomes pure path, ... it becomes a more perfect image of history, or rather of the single linear motion of history preferred since Winckelman. (9)

In what is "really a museum," there are, past the requisite nexus point, rooms and paths—i.e., a sequential unfolding of discrete spaces through which one travels as though on a journey through a seemingly infinite land. The rooms are not there to be occupied, but crossed, flattened out, and converted into a "pure path." The sequential continuity of the space along the path is essential. In praise of the Walker galleries, Goldberger notes, "most galleries offer a view of the neighboring rooms, one-third level up or one-third level down, providing a degree of spatial interest that, rather than detracting from the experience of viewing art, enhances it" (34). The experience of viewing art is enhanced when there is no sense of termination to the space, when one has in view its continuation. When there is no sense of continuity, when the space is comprehensible and total, there is a crisis, and the space ceases to be "really a museum," e.g., the Guggenheim Museum. The ideal art museum is a space whose boundaries escape comprehension. It is, to a measure, an unfamiliar, ulterior space to the extent that in it one stands the chance of getting lost. It is a space that leaves something to incomprehension. The ideal art museum unfolds as a path through a seemingly infinite world—a seemingly boundless space of intertwining rooms ad infinitum—a limitless resource. It is a place where everyone is, by design, a tourist away from home in search of the authentic in an *other* space.²³ Guggenheim does not and is not. It is, in Huxtable's words, "not really a museum."

To compensate for Wright's glaring blunders, the museum director, Huxtable tells us, "pulled the canvases from the shell of the building by suspending them inward from the walls on horizontal rods. They now seem to float in free space like sculpture, entirely remote from the building" (337). Then, we are told, "Sweeney poured torrents of light ... both in front of and behind the paintings, further nullifying the structure, making it just a vessel" (ibid.). Since the museum does not divorce itself from its wider context as it should, the only corrective course of action is, it seems, to divorce the work from this place in compensation.

II. Separating Reality and Representation

Thus far I have tried to point out that there has been a deliberate and persistent logic to the design of the art museum from its inception. Between the public and the artwork, the art museum has insinuated, by design, an elaborate and deep threshold that mediates and oversees the passage to and from the seemingly infinite world that it fabricates to contain art, and the "real" world from which it is sequestered. This spacing, deliberate as it has been, constitutes the criterion by which the successes and the failures are persistently measured in the critical dialogues that have played an indispensable role in the perpetuation of the type. The lingering question is, of course, why the persistent spacing and the disjointure of art over the course of the art museum's short history. Overtly, there is nothing about paintings and statues that would remotely suggest the elaborate ritual of visitation that is the art museum. Much less is there anything about the enjoyment and the appreciation of art that mandates the journey of disjointure. Much of our contact with art is in fact delimited to replicas and copies that are adamantly excluded from the space made proper to art. What then sees to this fabrication? What exactly is at stake in the spacing of art? What logic sees to the persistent spacing and the exclusive space of the authentic?

Over the course of its history, Western culture's relationship to painting, writing, and other forms of graphic representation, has been an ambivalent one. According to a pervasive myth that ascribes the invention of painting to the Corinthian youth, Butades,²⁴ the site of painting from its presumed inception has been the site of a desired presence that it cannot judiciously fill. As such, painting has been, Derrida reminds us, the subject of simultaneous condemnation and praise for its ability to duplicate and perpetually conjure an absent or invisible referent (*Dissemination*). Prescribed and/or proscribed as a mimetic device that substitutes memory for perception, painting has been persistently deemed to follow and fall short of the presence it conjures in absence. This would not change with the transformation of painting into art. The referent merely gave way to a subject that retained all the privileges of the former vis-à-vis the painted image.

Whether painting is seen as the representation of an absolute ideal (as it was by the theoreticians of the Renaissance),²⁵ or as a mode of expression that renders painting in particular and art in general, “nothing but a noble and expressive language, invaluable as the vehicle of thought, but by itself nothing,” as Ruskin wrote in 1843 (8), up to and including the conception of painting as the “revelation” of the “concealed truth” of the subject or the “reproduction of a thing’s general essence” as Heidegger defined it, (37), the priority and radical alterity of what is painted as compared to the painted image has not been a question.

The above determination has been maintained and perpetuated, in turn, through a host of distinct ritual practices and institutions. Of these, the art museum, invented as it was at a particular point in time, is an indispensable element. The art museum as an institution and a building type, along with the institutions and practices it supplanted, are indispensable to western culture and its “logocentric” determination, because the determination is, as any, a fragile and volatile determination. Its greatest challenge does not come, however, from other worldviews or competing determinations. Although these challenges can affect profound changes, they only amplify the call for the institutional practices, both formal and ritual, that forge a new synthesis and constitute a new reality, where the determinations about the world, changed as they may be, are again transposed into an experience of them.²⁶ The reality that a culture forges can successfully undergo radical change, so long as all traces of fabrication can be perpetually erased from it. The greatest challenge that this reality faces is not, in other words, to its shape or content, but to its authority and its ability to assume the guise of inevitability. The challenge, where it is faced, is to the reality of the real. Construed as it is in the West to appear as the non-contingent *other* of representation, this virtual or cultural reality faces a constant challenge to its authority as a self-referential or non-representational inevitability from its representational *other*.

The intermingling of reality and representation in the West is a fatal affair. John Ruskin offers us a pertinent example. His is particularly noteworthy in this context as his views on art belong to the first museum age.²⁷ Ruskin’s encounter with the fatal co-habitation of the real and the copy takes place, interestingly enough, on the steps of the British Museum.

Discussing the “utterly base and inadmissible” practice of “painting of surfaces to represent some other material,” Ruskin (1849: 51) writes:

I have made it a rule in the present work not to blame specifically; but I may, perhaps, be permitted, while I express my sincere admiration of the very noble entrance and general architecture of the British Museum, to express also my regret that the noble granite foundation of the staircase should be mocked at its landing by an imitation, the more blameable

because tolerably successful. The only effect of it is to cast suspicion upon the true stones below, and upon every bit of granite afterwards encountered. (ibid.)

What forces Ruskin to voice an uncharacteristic blame is the un-demarcated presence of the real and the copy, or the self-referential and the representational in the same space.²⁸ He directs his blame at the imitative representation not for being a bad representation, but for being “tolerably successful.” He condemns it not because it deceives or hides anything from him, but because it reveals too much of itself and in effect too much about its *other*. The successful mock threatens Ruskin’s grip on the reality of the real. It casts suspicion on the authenticity of the original. What distinguishes for Ruskin the reality of the real from its mere representation is an original and causal link between the *appearance* and the substance of the real.

If “real” stone can become suspect in the company of its mock, if its stone appearance can be taken for an imitation in this company, then this appearance must necessarily have nothing to do with the “real presence” of stone, otherwise neither suspicion nor imitation would be possible. What the “effect” of the successful mock indicates, what in effect is the condition of its possibility as well as the possibility of repetition, imitation, or representation, is the independence of representation from the presence or absence of the signified referent in “reality” as it is in representation. What it indicates is that “real presence” is itself a *representation*, that only as a representation can “real presence” ever be subject to suspicion. Reality offers no greater hold on its appearance and no greater link to its substance than the mock.

Considering that it is the cohabitation of the real and the mock and not the individual appearance of either that threatens our grip on appearance, Ruskin recommends we contain the “effect” of the mock by framing and separating it from the real. The framing can be either conceptual or literal. It is imperative, Ruskin tells us, either to conceptually distance the copy by making its appearance fall noticeably short of the real, and as such, inexchangeable with it, or else to literally distance the copy by framing it.

Ruskin’s recommended spacing is, of course, a widespread and time-honored practice. Our encounters with graphic representation in the wider cultural realm are perpetually mediated, carefully controlled, and spatially segregated. We find the logic of spacing and a multi-layered demarcation of the place of representation in the picture frames and book covers that mediate our experience and condition our access to their representational content. We find it in greater supplemental force in institutional building types that serve as exclusive domiciles for various forms of representation. Of these, the art museum is a prime example,

since it plays a vital role in objectifying our assumptions about the nature of the relationship between reality and art.

Ideally, there would be no representation to “effect” our hold on the reality of the real and the truth of the true. “I sometimes wish,” Ruskin, the great advocate of art, tells us, “that truth should so far literally prevail as that all should be gold that glittered, or rather that nothing should glitter that was not gold” (*Seven Lamps*, 53). Nevertheless, faced with the inevitability of representation, much as he wishes its impossibility, what Ruskin assumes—and what the broader tradition he represents has consistently assume—is that there is an *outside* to representation, or, conversely, that representation falls outside of a norm characterized by the presumed attributes of the real. This outside is construed variously, though consistently, both conceptually and literally.

Conceptually, working along previously-traveled lines, Ruskin first demotes representation as compared to the “real,” only then to elevate and idealize a form of it as a second-order reality. The form that is inevitably reproducible and reproduced in art is, he tells us, “worthless.” Art’s “worth” lies solely in its bearing the direct “seal” or “impress” of the creator’s “thoughts” and “intents,” through the agency of the creator’s hands. Ruskin was, in other words, in full accord with von Rumohr’s assertion that “all the value of a painting turns around the idea of originality.” Only the original bears the decisive seal or impress. This presumably irreproducible seal may be variously conceived. Benjamin, for instance, put it in broader temporal terms. “The authenticity of a thing is,” he noted, “the essence of all that is transmissible from its beginning, ranging from its substantive duration to its testimony to the history which it has experienced” (221). This “all that is transmissible” is inclusive, of course, of the testimonial impress left by hand, as it were, in the “beginning.” Regardless of the scope of the definition, the irreproducibility and the causality that the seal stands for is the constant decisive criteria in the incessant distinction between the original and the reproduction, or the authentic and the duplicate. It is precisely in the name of this irreproducible seal that an *outside* to the sphere of reproduction and/or representation is presumed and in turn fabricated.

The absence that is exorcised from the original in the name of an irreproducible seal incessantly returns, however, to haunt it. Much as the “successful” imitation of the real threatens its reality, the “successful” duplication of the original threatens its originality. This construct is, like the “real” with which it has much in common, fragile and tenuous. What threatens it with collapse is the possibility of production in the absence of engraving thoughts and intents—e.g., mechanistic and/or mechanical re/production.²⁹ The condition of this possibility is the impossibility of an impressed and sealed original, i.e., of a direct and causal link between thoughts and forms on the one hand and the subjection

of the latter to the presence of the former, on the other. Hence, there can be no substitute for the original, because what would be irretrievably lost in the transaction is the original. This is precisely why the art museum has been, like the cabinet before it, a domain adamantly exclusive of the “successful” reproduction from inception.

The history of our preoccupation with painting and sculpture as *art* is, as I have described above, inseparable from the history of our preoccupation with the question of art’s place and placement. The museum is merely one historic response to the question that has loomed large since the inception of painting and sculpture as art. This preoccupation is, of course, in no small measure a reflection of the undifferentiated and undifferentiable space of graphic representation. Art has no decidable place, inasmuch as every place assumes boundaries and outer limits—i.e., an outside. Art at once exceeds and defies any sense of place or any act of placement, predicated upon, in the simplest terms, a clear boundary separating two opposite terms—*here* and *there*, *inside* and *outside*. Art has no outside, since outside every presumed or presumable place for representation, one finds only more representation. This is precisely what the successful mock forcefully and problematically brings to light.

To curtail the ever-looming danger of exposure and displacement in the company of art, it is essential to put in place, institutionally and literally, what art defies and denies conceptually: a sense of place. The fabrication of the museum as an *other* space is, persistent, as it has been, a cultural substitute for what is missing and missed: an outside to representation. Within the confines of the picture frame, provisionally, and within the confines of the museum, permanently, art assumes an outside. The logic of spacing at work in the making of the museum puts the relationship between art and all that is to escape its grip in the proper cultural perspective.

From the ever-present picture frame to the cabinet and the museum, the preoccupation with a place for art is primarily a preoccupation with a place from which all that is to escape its “effect” can be safely withdrawn.³⁰ It is a preoccupation with preserving the presumed alterity of art as measured against the real. Opening up a place for art is tantamount to opening up a place for its presumed other—and for otherness as such—to representation. At stake is authoritative control over the determined superiority and anteriority of reality over representation, the imitated over the imitator, the original over the copy. At stake in placing art is, in other words, the presumed order of appearance in the world, which is, in a manner, order itself. If our construed cultural reality is to assume the authoritative guise of inevitability and truth, then the decisive exorcise of representation is not a choice that can be readily avoided. If, from the princely and monarchical courts to the *public* realm, authoritative control over

representation and its potentially destructive effect is entrusted to the state and delegated to specific institutions, it is precisely because of what is at stake. The institution of the museum is an instituted resistance to representation. No claim to power can go without evidential control over the alterity of representation as measured against the real. To control representation is to control not necessarily what is real, but the possibility of its authoritative being and presence as a non-representational, self-referential entity.

As an institution and a building type, the museum effectively differentiates the undifferentiated space of graphic representation into two distinct realms separated by an elaborate journey. Between the seemingly infinite world that contains art and the “real” world from which it is sequestered, the museum insinuates an elaborate and deep threshold that mediates and oversees the passage to and from the worlds it fabricates as such. It thereby offers the visitor - by design - a spatial experience that is profoundly alien to art as the space of a non-place. The logic that shapes the museum is fundamentally a totemic logic.³¹ Past the careful delineation, separation, and processional transitions that are the hallmarks of a successful museum, art is given to stand in the same relationship to its presumed other, as inside stands to outside, *here* to *there*, and as do all other binary spatial and formal terms that are called on to shape the museum into an *other* space. Should one even wish to conceive of the relationship between art and the world from which it is sequestered, in any terms other than in binary terms, one must confront and contradict the immediate experience of the museum. Much as art resists a sense of place, the museum successfully resists its defiance of a sense of place, to the point of invisibility.

The exorcism that the art museum implements architecturally is a two-fold practice. On the one hand, the art museum, as an institution and a building type, exiles the inherent representational characteristic of the real in the name of mimesis and art to the museum. In turn, it curtails the inherent reproducibility that is art in the name of authenticity, through the exclusion of the mock. In the world outside the museum, the copy may thereby proliferate without undermining the alterity of the real, because its face is turned toward the authentic in that other place where the copy has no place, by design. What makes room for the docile cohabitation of the real and the reproduction is the designated and exclusive place for the authentic on the outside. The copy poses no apparent threat so long as it is in reference to another reality, at the end of a journey, in an other place—i.e., so long as its origin is on the outside.³² The museum is, in other words, the indispensable *reserve* to the economy that regulates the widespread and free circulation of images outside the museum.

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Notes

1. For a discussion of the Western roots of the museum see Malraux 1978 and Bazin 1967.
2. Biasini 1989: 15; Pevsner 1976: 120.
3. Whether they served a religious cult or the cult of remembrance, what had thus far given paintings and statues a place in the world of things, and what had also kept them in that place was their specific cult referent. Once they eschewed their referent, they surrendered their place.
4. For a discussion of this subject see: *The Origins of Museums: the Cabinet of Curiosities in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-century Europe* (Impey and MacGregor 1985), *Collectors and Curiosities: Paris and Venice 1500-1800* (Pomian 1990), and *A Cabinet of Curiosities: Inquiries into Museums and their Prospects* (Weil 1995).
5. See Basin 1967: 129, Impey and MacGregor 1985: 3. Also the *Kunstkammer* is not, it is important to note, the exact equivalent of the gallery as it was often used to designate a specialized version of the *Wunderkammer*.
6. See Kaufmann, *From Treasury to Museum: The Collections of the Austrian Hapsburgs*, 145.
7. There was a further distinction between collecting and viewing within the cabinet. The occasional contact with the objects in the cabinet was often subject to a divisive spatial dialogue between the center and the edges of what was generally a simple rectangular room. As Caspar Neickel suggests, the objects in the cabinet were to be variously kept on the periphery of the cabinet and moved to a table placed in the center of the room for examination. The requisite spatial ritual of retrieval and return from periphery to center and back, in effect, further distanced the resting place of the curious and its point of contact with the outside world on the examination table.
8. According to Bazin, 1967, a collector at the time was likely to pay 30 florins for a van Eyck or 3 florins for a work by the sculptor Desiderio da Settignano against 6000 florins for the horn of a unicorn.
9. See Mark Jones, ed., *Why Fakes Matter: Essays on Problems of Authenticity*, for a detailed discussion of the subject.
10. See Foucault, *Madness and Civilization* and *Discipline and Punish*.
11. For a detailed discussion of the subject see Lee, 106-107, and Alexander, 31-36.
12. See Bennett, Elsner and Roger 1994, Sherman and Rogoff, and Luke.
13. See McClellan 8-9, and Pevsner, 1976:118.
14. See Amir Ameri, "On The Logic Of Encampment," *Issues in Architecture Art and Design* 4, (1995).
15. For complete account of the museum's design history, see Brownlee. The Philadelphia art museum was given its place, after much deliberation, and careful examination, on top of a hill (a former reservoir), outside the city fabric, at the borderline of the city and the Fairmont park. The disjointure and the spacing of the Philadelphia art museum begins at City Hall in the center of the city and traces a path that leads out to the city's edge on a diagonal axis, along a ceremonial parkway that was dramatically and forcefully cut through the city's grid to reach the park at its edge.
 Much as the sequence of thresholds in front of the Philadelphia museum is a dramatic expression of the logic of spacing at work in front of the Altes museum, the museum building offers, in turn, its own unique interpretation of the key sequestering components in the Altes museum. The role of the colonnade of the Berlin museum is played in the

Philadelphia museum by the end pavilions and the forecourt that institute a deep, layered, translucent threshold, past the landing of the front stairs and the encircling passageway, all of which has to be ceremoniously crossed before reaching the base of the staircase in front of the central pedimented portico of the back wing. One must then continue the ascent, cross the columnar screen of the portico and go past two tall vestibules, to arrive at the central staired hall or the Philadelphia equivalent of the nexus point in the Altes museum: the rotunda.

16. In contrast to the Philadelphia Museum, the Whitney Museum offers an abridged, though equally effective expression of the logic of spacing. Having a corner site within the dense urban fabric of New York City, the building forcefully disjoins itself from its context through the introjection of tall concrete retaining walls that effectively frame and separates the site from its immediate context. Pulling the cubical core of the building away from the wall relieves the core of visual attachment to the city fabric from the sides. A similar sequence of frames, in turn, divorces the building from the sidewalk. Here, the disjoining frames are a low retaining wall and a deep moat, over which hovers the cascading and recessing facade of the museum. The moat whose perceptual depth is made manifold by the weight of the cascading facade on top is as effective in disjoining and placing the museum at a distance from its context as the monumental sequence of the island and the plazas in Berlin or the prolonged sequence of the parkway and the hill in Philadelphia.
17. For a complete description of the project see Biasini.
18. The protracted discussions over the removal of the Ministry of Finance from the north wing (Rue de Rivoli) are indicative of the importance of the total delimitation of the realm. I.M. Pei went so far as to compare the museum to a man without an arm, should the north wing not be procured and sealed off (Biasini, 31).
19. The connection here between the seat of power and the seat of art is across the timeline.
20. One could, of course, site numerous other examples in which the logic of spacing finds a new and different expression pending the unique circumstances of the context. Among the more celebrated recent examples one that readily comes to mind is Staatsgalerie in Stuttgart, Germany (James Stirling, 1984) with its elaborate entry sequence of stairs and ramps that lead up the slopes over which the museum is carefully lifted. Another example is the High Museum of Art in Atlanta (Richard Meier, 1981). Here the journey of disjuncture follows the literal path of a long, ceremonial ramp that leads up, on a diagonal axis, to a terrace on the second floor of the building and from there on a twisting and meandering path through the entrance lobby to the Atlanta's equivalent of the Berlin rotunda. We find an even more exaggerated expression of the Atlanta journey in the recent Getty Museum in Los Angeles (Richard Meier, 1997) where to reach the museum that is located far away from the city, on top of a hill, the visitor must traverse the distance from the bottom to the top of the hill on a monorail train.
21. See Huxtable.
22. We may note a related problem at the Brooklyn Museum (McKim, Mead and White, 1893-1907) that was rectified in the mid 1930s. Although the Brooklyn Museum is properly located away from the city fabric in Prospect Park, it was initially linked to the avenue in front by a grand staircase that led directly from the sidewalk to the main entrance on the third level. The problem with the staircase was its appearance as a connector rather than a separator. Without the intermediate voids and spatial thresholds found, for instance in the Philadelphia Museum, the staircase here appeared to link rather than disjoin the world inside from the world outside the museum. It was

- removed at considerable expense in the mid 1930s, to leave in its place a void that is patently more effective in separating the museum from its context.
23. See MacCannell.
 24. See Rosenblum.
 25. Alberti's treatise on painting is an apt example (1972).
 26. The invention of the art museum is a case in point.
 27. Ruskin's own art museum, Walkely, was located on "a hill, in the midst of green fields, and in command of a fine view" (Ruskin 1907:xlii). He reasoned: "the Climb to knowledge and truth is ever steep, and the gems found at the top are small, but precious and beautiful" (ibid.).
 28. Ruskin's experience is uncanny in as much as the latter points to transgression of borderlines and the displacement of the diametrically opposed.
 29. The myth of the original is particularly vulnerable, it is important to note, to mechanical reproduction in the broader sense of the term. Ruskin vehemently condemned the "substitution of cast or machine work for that of hand" as an "imposition, a vulgarity, an impertinence, and a sin" not on account of form, but on account of reproducing the seal without the engraving thought. The only "effect" of "cast or machine works" is, he noted, "to cast shame and suspicion" over every "work of hand" in their company (Ruskin 1843:58). Mechanical reproduction, as Benjamin pointed out later, not only renders the question of originality impertinent to its production, but in the process, it also and critically challenges the viability and authority of the original as a sealed production. It is not coincidental, therefore, that the proliferation of the museum has gone in tandem with the proliferation of mechanical and now digital reproduction. Both add a critical dimension to the preservation of the sanctity and the authority of the original. If, on the other hand, the aura of the work of art, i.e., its authenticity and historicity, has not withered in the age of mechanical and digital reproduction, contrary to Benjamin's prediction, this is in part because the "effect" of the latter is successfully curtailed by the museum (Benjamin 1978:221).
 30. The customary and celebrated view out from the museum, the one that transforms the world outside into a picture, is the consummation of this withdrawal.
 31. See Lévi-Strauss, *Totemism*.
 32. The allocation of an exclusive place to the authentic, in effect displaces the copy from every place. It dispossesses the copy of a place because inside the museum it has no place and outside it, it is out of place: an outsider. In the company of the real, the copy is an import, i.e., a substitute for what is at a safe distance elsewhere.