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High and low: Contemporary architecture and popular culture

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HIGH AND LOW:
CONTEMPORARY ARCHITECTURE AND POPULAR CULTURE

by
Steven E. Nichols

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OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE
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ABSTRACT

High and Low:
Contemporary Architecture and Popular Culture

by

Steven E. Nichols

In America, the debate between high modern art and certain aspects of popular culture (most often referred to as kitsch) has been raging since the 1960's. Now, in the 80's and 90's, the dialogue has been extended to include the realm of architecture as well as art. The role of the serious questioning architect is becoming more and more important as he/she attempts to better negotiate and integrate the two coexistent factions through the use of irony, collage, discontinuity and super-agacency.

The vehicle of this architectural discussion is The Elvis Presley Museum and Memorial; a proposed edifice that will be used to help define the evolution of a new, hybrid building form of the late twentieth century, the pop museum. The goal is to design, from a critical and intellectual standpoint, a contemporary museum that will allow for and embody a multiplicity of levels of meaning in order to speak about this subject matter and even more importantly, allow the subject matter to speak for itself. Obviously, at the same time, it must also functionally and aesthetically appeal to the visitors for which it was designed.
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HIGH AND LOW:
CONTEMPORARY ARCHITECTURE AND POPULAR CULTURE

KITSCH

kitsch (kich) n. [G., gaudy trash < dial. kitschen, to smear] art, writing, etc. of a pretentious, but shallow kind, calculated to have popular appeal –kitsch’y adj.¹

[Kitsch is] . . . a degraded form of the high art of the past, coarsened and mass-reproduced to serve the world of popular entertainment in an explicitly commercial way. Such corruptions have their own special qualities. They can schematize or make more vivid a property only dimly latent in the original item; and by making that aspect, like a freed atom, available for bonding with other things, they can spur the creation of new, unexpected synthesis.²

The term kitsch is, like the concept it designates, quite recent. It came into use in the 1860’s and 1870’s in the jargon of painters and art dealers in Munich, Germany and was employed to designate cheap artistic stuff. It was during the first decades of the twentieth century that kitsch became an international term. As frequently happens with such rather loose and widely circulating labels, its etymology is uncertain. Some authors believe that the German word derives from the English “sketch,” mispronounced by artists in Munich and applied derogatorily to those cheap images bought as souvenirs by tourists, especially the Anglo-Americans. According to others its possible origin should be looked for in the German verb verkitschen, meaning “to make cheap.” There is also the hypothesis that links kitsch to the German verb kitschen, in the sense of “collecting rubbish from the street;” while in

¹Gural 778.
²Varneroe, High 242.
another part of Germany the same verb could mean "to make new furniture from old."

These three main etymological hypotheses, even if not entirely correct, seem equally suggestive of certain basic characteristics of kitsch. First, there is often something sketchy about kitsch. Second, in order to be affordable, kitsch must be relatively cheap. Last, aesthetically speaking, kitsch may be considered rubbish or junk.

Whatever its origin, kitsch was and still is a strongly derogatory word, and as such lends itself to the widest range of subjective uses. To call something kitsch is in most cases a way of rejecting it outright as distasteful or repugnant. Kitsch cannot be applied, however, to objects or situations that are completely unrelated to the broad domain of aesthetic production or aesthetic reception. Generically, kitsch dismisses the claims or pretensions of quality of anything that tries to be "artistic" without genuinely being so. It may, then, apply derogatorily to architecture, interior decoration, painting, sculpture, music, cinema, television, literature, and virtually anything subject to judgements of taste.

Earlier this twentieth century when modernism's "victory" over pompier academicism (one of the most self-righteous forms of kitsch) and other similar corruptions of taste seemed irreversible, the worlds of art and architecture indulged in the optimistic illusion that the benevolent and sinister monster of kitsch would never again haunt their hallowed halls. After a period of partial success in the domain of high art and what we will call high architecture, kitsch was believed to be safely confined to the flea market or to the obscure -- albeit thriving -- industry of cheap imitations,

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3Calinescu 234.
humble religious art objects, vulgar souvenirs, and the "tacky" strip stands that housed them.

In his *Five Faces of Modernity* Matei Calinescu provides us with a character description of the consumer of this "fake" art. *Kitsch-man*, as Calinescu not so subtly suggests, is one who tends to experience as kitsch even non-kitsch works or situations, one who involuntarily makes a parody of aesthetic response. In the tourist's role, for instance, "*Kitsch-man* will 'kitschify' not only cultural monuments but also landscapes, and especially great sights, such as the Grand Canyon, which are advertised as wonders or freaks of nature." What seems to characterize *Kitsch-man* most is his inadequately hedonistic idea of what is artistic or beautiful. For reasons that Calinescu analyzes in historical, sociological, and cultural terms, *Kitsch-man* wants to fill his spare time with maximum excitement (derived from, among other things, *high culture*) in exchange for minimum effort. For him the ideal is thoughtless, effortless enjoyment.

This polymorphous monster of pseudo-art and pseudo-architecture, however, had a secret and deep-rooted power that few modernists were aware of -- the power to please, to satisfy not only the easiest and most widespread popular aesthetic nostalgias but also the middle class vague ideal of beauty, which still is, in spite of the angry reactions of various avant-gardes, the commanding factor in matters of aesthetic consumption and, therefore, production.

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4Calinescu 259.
IRONY

From even the greatest of horrors irony is seldom absent.\(^5\)

Other factors and influences have helped the recent reappearance of kitsch in the domain of high art and high architecture. An extremely important “strategic” advantage has been the tendency of kitsch to lend itself to irony. Arata Isozaki said it this way:

For the first twenty years of my career as a professional architect, I believed that architecture could only be accomplished by irony.

It made it possible to create architecture as criticism.

It could admire the vulgar against the noble, the secular against the sacred, without shame.

A style of wit, a sense of humor and paradox adopted.\(^6\)

Especially in the realm of architecture, however, irony can become irritating or at least lose its critical value when overplayed. As critic Albert Pope states, “A crumbling wall, a keystone supported by pilasters, a chain-link pavilion could offend a routine reading over the lifetime of a building. The sense easily loses its edge, becoming dated or reduced to the sight gags we have come to expect from any Best showroom.”\(^7\) In architecture, the comingling of ironic or even just paradoxical elements is often called super-adjacency. From Rimbaud’s praise of “poetic crap” and “stupid paintings” through Dada and surrealism, the rebellious avant-garde of the art world has made use of a variety of techniques and elements directly borrowed from kitsch for their ironically disruptive purposes. Thus, when the avant-garde became

\(^5\)H.P. Lovecraft.
\(^6\)Stewart 9.
\(^7\)Pope 55.
fashionable, especially after World War II, kitsch came to enjoy a strange kind of negative prestige even in some of the most sophisticated intellectual circles. This seems to be one of the main factors in the emergence of the curious camp sensibility, which, under the guise of ironic connoisseurship, can freely indulge in the pleasures offered by the most awful kitsch. Camp cultivates bad taste -- usually some trendy bad taste of recent past -- as a form of superior refinement. It is as if bad taste, consciously acknowledged and pursued, actually could outdo itself and become its own clear-cut opposite. This is at least what Susan Sontag suggests in her “ultimate” statement on camp, namely, “It is beautiful because it is awful.” Externally, however, camp is often hard, indeed impossible, especially to the layman, to distinguish from kitsch. In addition, today it is even difficult to distinguish kitsch and/or camp from the recent “intellectual whimsy” of such architects as Graves, Gehry, Stern, and even Venturi; this dilemma will be discussed a bit later.

The new camp fashion, born in the sixties and seventies in intellectual circles in New York City, rapidly swept over the entire United States and has contributed substantially to the kitsch Renaissance in the world of high art and high architecture. Still, one has reason to be surprised when one learns that a unanimously esteemed museum -- with one of the best collections of modern art in the world (MOMA) -- can house a show consisting mainly of magnificent kitsch, as redeemed by the sensibility of camp.

In his New York Times review of the big exhibition of contemporary American art organized at the Art Institute of Chicago in the summer of 1974, Hilton Kramer suggestively grouped the numerous painters representative of the camp spirit (the “grand master” being Andy Warhol) under the label of

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8Calinescu 229.
"The Flea Market School." He writes with acerbity "... I have passed many hours in real flea markets where the visual rewards were far greater." Such examples of the proliferation and encroachment of kitsch in the domain of high art justify Kramer's rather melancholy reflection, which applies equally as well to architecture as to art, that "there are now no pockets of bad taste or vulgar display ... that are not ready for exhumation."

If the avant-garde and camp fashions can resort to artistic forms and techniques clearly related to the most obvious varieties of kitsch, kitsch in turn can mimic with profit the appearance of avant-gardism. This is another explanation of kitsch's constantly renewed power of survival within the domain of what is commonly regarded as high art and high architecture. Certainly, the kitsch artist or architect mimics the avant-garde only to the extent to which the latter's unconventionalities have proved successful and have been widely accepted or even turned into stereotypes. For kitsch, by its very nature, is incapable of taking the risk involved in any true avant-gardism.

The possibility of the avant-garde's using kitsch elements and, conversely, of kitsch's making use of avant-garde devices is just an indication of how complex and plural a concept kitsch is. It is one of the most bewildering and elusive categories of modern aesthetics. Like art itself, of which it is both an imitation and a negation, kitsch cannot be defined from a single vantage point.

Kitsch uses avant-garde procedures for purposes of what we may call "aesthetic advertising."  

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9Calinescu 231.
10Calinescu 231.
As early as 1956, British architects Alison and Peter Smithson recognized the impact of the new advertising and commercial force, and saw it as a positive challenge to which art and architecture had to respond.

Ordinary life is receiving powerful impulses from a new source. Where thirty years ago architects found in the field of popular arts, techniques and formal stimuli, today we find advertising. Mass production advertising is establishing our whole pattern of life -- principles, morals, aims, aspirations, and standard of living. We must somehow get the measure of this intervention if we are to match its powerful and exciting impulses with our own.

In boldface type, like a poem, the Smithsons set down a credo of change within continuity:

Gropius wrote a book on grain silos
Le Corbusier one on aeroplanes,
And Charlotte Periand brought a new object to the office every morning;
But today we collect ads.11

In England the Smithsons had been founding members of the Independent Group (I.G.), a small circle of artists, critics, and architects who formed a splinter association of the Institute for Contemporary Art. Operating on the premise that they would make better and more original art if they knew more about the world around them, the group devoted itself to lecture series and group discussions that featured, along with considerations of science and philosophy, material from a wide range of popular culture. The kind of popular culture that most excited them, however, had little to do with the British working-class traditions that were close at hand; instead, the members of the I.G. were fascinated by the more colorful, sexier, and gaudier exotica of consumer life they saw, at a distance, as the imagery of postwar American society (i.e. that which our high art society had declared "kitsch.")12

11Smithson 49.
12Varne d oe, High 319.
In the introduction to their book of essays related to the exhibition *High and Low: Modern Art and Popular Culture*, held at the Museum of Modern Art, New York, in the autumn of 1990, Kirk Varnedoe and Adam Gopnik explain that one of their main goals was, "not just to chronicle and celebrate but also to understand in greater depth the dialogue between high modern art and certain aspects of popular culture, such as advertising, graffiti, comics, and caricature -- to grasp the origins of that interchange, its development, and its recurring structures, in order to see what that history might tell us about ... [pop culture]."13

Irving Lavin goes on in *High and Low* to explain not only that "low" art as a separate, identifiable realm could be defined only against the example of a secure high art tradition, but that the high tradition was itself the begetter of that low tradition; "high needs low, as Lear needs his Fool." From the beginning, Lavin demonstrates, the relationship between the high and low has been one of dance and dialogue rather than one of opposition and contamination. As a consequence, what may look to us like bold modernist transgressions of the familiar decorum of high and low often turn out to represent the long-postponed repossession of forms and visual strategies that had belonged to the high-art tradition all along. "What may seem the invasion of an alien visitor can often turn out to be the return of a prodigal."14 Denise Scott Brown proposes that the same evolution must occur in architecture in order to avoid the social harm that the language of post-modernism can bring about, and the new vocabulary must have a respectable lineage. "Hence, if the popular environment is to provide that

13Varnedoe, Modern 11.
14Varnedoe, Modern 12.
vocabulary, it must be filtered through the proper processes for its acceptance. It must become a part of the high-art tradition; it must be last year's avant-garde. This is another reason to submit the new landscape to traditional architectural analysis: for the sake of its acceptance by the establishment. They can't learn from pop until Pop hangs in the academy.  

Further exploding the flawed "dialectic" of high and low, critic Robert Storr proposes that we transcend the absurdity of authoritarian criticism on art and architecture and put in its place not a nihilism but a genuine engagement with the particulars of history and the contradictions of modern experience (pop culture).

So just what role can "A"rchitecture play in American pop culture? In her essay Learning from Pop Denise Scott Brown asks what the questioning architect of integrity can learn from the artifacts of pop culture, "A . . . reason for looking to pop culture is to find formal vocabularies for today which are more relevant to people's diverse needs and more tolerant of the untidiness of urban life than the "rationalist," Cartesian formal orders of latter-day Modern architecture." As she more pragmatically asks, "If 'high-style' architects are not producing what people want or need, who is, and what can we learn from them?" Artist Claes Oldenburg stated it this way:

I am for an art that grows up not knowing it is art at all, an art given the chance of having a starting point of zero.
I am for an art that embroils itself with the everyday crap & still comes out on top.
I am for an art that imitates the human, that is comic, if necessary, or violent, or whatever is necessary.

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15Venturi, A View 32.
16Storr in Varnedoe, High 242
I am for an art that takes its form from the lines of life itself, that twists and extends and accumulates and spits and drips, and is heavy and coarse and blunt and sweet and stupid as life itself.\textsuperscript{18}

And artist Roy Lichtenstein this way: "Pop art looks out into the world; it appears to accept its environment, which is not good or bad, but different -- another state of mind. 'How can you like exploitation?' 'How can you like the complete mechanization of work?' 'How can you like bad art?' I have to answer that I accept it as being there, in the world."\textsuperscript{19}

Venturi and Scott Brown's \textit{Learning from Las Vegas} was perhaps the first important book to champion everyday (as opposed to Disney) pop culture architecture in a spirit less of rebellion than of stoical resignation. "It was the put-down of the Borscht Belt comedian offered as a philosophy of art: Hey, folks, these are the jokes. This strip, these bright lights, these signs, these big decorated sheds and buildings shaped like ducks are ours, the real forms of American life as it is lived."\textsuperscript{20}

\textbf{THE MUSEUM VS. POP CULTURE}

For the laymen of this generation of MTV, fast-food, and rapidly decreasing attention span, there is proving to be an unexpected resultant effect from the "pop museum"-going to the likes of \textit{The World of Coca-Cola}, \textit{Ripley's "Believe it or Not" Museum} and \textit{The Rock 'n' Roll Hall of Fame}: high art museum-going! An explanation for this rapid increase in popularity is that, through exposure to various kinds of art, the laymen's appetites have been wetted and they have begun to acquire an educated appreciation for art

\textsuperscript{18}Oldenburg 97.  
\textsuperscript{19}Coplans 52.  
\textsuperscript{20}Varnerdoe, \textit{High} 370.
in its various incarnations. Another unexpected result of this activity may be the continued erosion of the stigma associated with the aloof appreciation of high-art and the sombre intimidation often given off by "classical" museums. In 1957, modernist architect William Lescaze wrote about a dissatisfaction with most of the museums of the past:

Most museums that we know are classic, monumental and perhaps, imposing. A great flight of wide steps forebodingly leads to a great door foretelling a dimmed and hushed interior where life has been given its quietus into an inescapable morgue of dead art. Such buildings are neither inviting nor do they fulfill their purpose, and only the most audacious warily finds himself within of his own volition.\textsuperscript{21}

Now that there are few activities that are increasing in their appeal so rapidly as museum-going,\textsuperscript{22} it is clearly no longer just for the upper-class or intellectuals anymore. This has come about as a result of, among other things, a combination of high art becoming more popular and pop art becoming more respected or intellectualised, for example the aforementioned "High-Low Exhibition" in New York or the "validation" of Elvis movies on page [28].

In The Romantic Garage J.B. Jackson refers to the contemporary museum as just that, The Romantic Garage. The word garage is of French origin and means storage space, and it, in turn, relates to the English ware, as in warehouse, and an equally appropriate term such as warage could have been derived. Our borrowing from the French, however, was an indication of the exotic and high class nature of early automobile culture as an art form or an important status symbol in popular society.\textsuperscript{23}

\textsuperscript{21}Darragh 55.
\textsuperscript{22}Coolidge xi.
\textsuperscript{23}Jackson 104.
DISNEY

This brings us to a discussion of an apparent polarity in architecture and one that is currently as equally desirable to pursue as well as debate by architects and theorists alike; that is the condition of whimsical or entertainment architecture. This brand new incidence of a high/low relationship in architecture asks basically the same question Denise Scott Brown posed concerning the Architect’s role in American pop culture. This time the question refers to the flood of “world class” architects working for various Walt Disney projects all over the world and is best phrased by New York Times critic Paul Goldberger, “where does big-time architecture fit into all of this? Is there room for intellectual and aesthetic challenge in the Disney experience?”

Los Angeles Times critic Leon Whiteson, on the other hand, says people like Goldberger have made an egregious error before even entering the discussion. He says the mistake is to apply the designation architecture to the Disney work, when, in fact we need to use a new classification that acknowledges the true motivation and intention of such designs. He calls it hokey-tecture. Rather than in kitsch or the purely derogatory sense of outright phoniness, Hokey is used here, as defined by the Random House dictionary as “obviously contrived, especially to win popular appeal or support.” Whiteson says Hokey-tecture has its own criteria:

* Like Disneyland’s Sleeping Beauty’s Castle, it always has a theme, an obvious visual narrative or “script” that dominates the design, overriding any purely formal aesthetic concept.

24Goldberger 23.
* The images it projects are always secondhand, drawn from the movies or television or mass-media memories of a nostalgically better or more exciting past.  
* Not only are its images secondhand, they are never transformed by the designer's imagination — unlike populist imageries re-imagined by "serious" architects such as Frank Gehry, or the often ironic use of historic references in the Post Modern style.  
* Its construction materials are often cheap imitations of classier finishes it can't or won't afford.  
* It is never ironic, seldom means to be serious and displays its essential hokery upfront.25

As to the popularity of Disney as a "client" in the architectural community, for better or worse, it is the new corporate giant. This newfound Architectural popularity is due in total to the genuine interest and aggressive recruiting done by Disney chairman, Michael Eisner, "the Lorenzo de Medici of hokey-tecture." He has had no trouble enlisting such major talents as Michael Graves, Frank Gehry, Robert Stern, Antoine Predock, Arata Isozaki and others (Ross Miller calls them the deans of High Architecture). In his six years at Disney, Eisner has transformed the company from a builder of theme parks to one of the most ambitious patrons of "serious" architecture in the world. Goldberger has equated the new Walt Disney Company with Cummings Engine, Johnson Wax and IBM -- corporations that have made architecture an essential part of their image -- as a patron of "big-time architecture" and found the results add an "intellectual and aesthetic challenge" to the Disney experience.26 "Yesterday, every architect in America dreamed of building office towers for enlightened developers," said New York design critic Suzanne Stephens. "Today they want to work for Michael Eisner."

25Whiteson 2.  
26Hardy 91.
In 1991, The New York Times included the following in a list of humorous architectural predictions:

May 10: The Walt Disney Company, which has become the nation's most aggressive corporate client of serious architecture over the past few years, announces that it has commissioned Peter Eisenman to build a new theme park based on the notion that confusion and angst can be fun.

Dec 1: The real reason for Mr. Eisner's reluctance to buy the Stern firm leaks out: Disney is negotiating to buy the entire American Institute of Architects. "I've already got most of them at retail -- why not get the whole shebang at wholesale rates?" Mr. Eisner says.27

Eisner has been interested in architecture since his school days and carries with him the saying that "architecture is a magnet; if it's good it draws you in." It is appropriate, then, that he works for Disney, a company that stands for attractiveness and entertainment -- even in its buildings. Just what "entertainment architecture" means, however, is not so simple. It is not a particular aesthetic, but a set of different strategies for delighting and comforting users. The Disney reputation for humanely superior planning is so strong that the only things a "genius" architect could contribute are those that Disney seems to have proven unnecessary to commercial success, things valued in the world of High Architecture: intellectual content, academic allusion, irony, and ambiguity.28

Eisner's real genius in the Disney transformation -- and the reason everything he is doing is much more significant than it at first appears to be -- lies in the way in which he cannily figured out that architecture itself was undergoing a vast change in the last decade, a change that could dovetail perfectly with Disney's corporate needs. In the 1950's and 60's when IBM was

27Goldberger 37.
28Branch 78.
commissioning well-known architects to design its buildings, most serious works of architecture were modernist in style and cool and austere in tone. But by the early 1980's, the pendulum had swung towards a much more sensual kind of architecture, an architecture that, like the Disney Company itself, was concerned with entertainment and image.

So it is not only that Disney has come closer to the mainstream of architecture -- it is also that the mainstream of architecture has become more like Disney. Just as the popularity of museum-going in general has increased, so too has the popularity of architecture as an art form increased, in fact, to a higher level today than at any point in our lifetime. Its alliance with Disney, therefore, has an ironic yet natural logic to it; architecture is a perfect vehicle to allow Disney to expand its reach and excite a more sophisticated consumer.

Could Disney have been so zealous a patron of architecture in an age when the profession was dominated by Mies van der Rohe, Eero Saarinen and SOM? It is hard to imagine Walt Disney hunkering down with Walter Gropius in the same way that Eisner raps with the likes of Graves and Stern. For Disney truly is the IBM of the post modern age, the ideal client for a time when architecture has come to appeal to a bigger audience than ever before.

No company has ever tried to market "serious" architecture to the masses the way Disney is now doing. That is why, whatever the buildings turn out to be like, there can be no doubt that Disney is a force to be reckoned with in architecture in this final decade of the 20th century -- a corporate patron like no other, past or present. It is through Disney that the worlds of architecture and entertainment, which have been moving closer to each other for years, have achieved their most powerful intersection yet -- becoming so intimately intertwined that it is sometimes impossible to tell any
longer which is which. It is a convergence that already means a lot for Disney, and it may turn out in the end to mean even more for architecture. 29

To Vincent Scully, the distinguished Yale architecture historian and critic, the coming together of high(-brow) architects and Disney was fated to be. “Most great architects work in tension between the vernacular they grew up with and architectural rhetoric,” he observes. “American popular culture has conquered the world. In a sense, what is happening here is part of a movement -- an important one -- in which fundamental public feelings are beginning once again to affect architecture.” 30

Whiteson concludes by saying that as long as we understand the intentions of hokey-ecture and refrain from confusing it with formal architecture, it has a valid place in the urban scenario. So, while Eisner says, “I want to do buildings that challenge,” 31 that does not mean they cannot be fun. In “real-world” buildings, of course, fantasy is rarely the main purpose. They have to accommodate everyday activities and coexist with the structures next door. But certain fictions are useful: A facility for abused women may be treated as if it were a miniature village, for instance, or a school may be focused on a space modeled after ancient ritual structures. Some measure of make-believe is needed, in the minds of architects and clients, to produce architecture where we would otherwise have mere building. 32 Obviously, all architecture does not have to be serious, important and intellectually demanding. Given that we must live with architecture in a way that we do not have to live in constant exposure to serious art, literature or music, it is

29Goldberger 24.
30Brown 68.
31Bernstein 85.
32Dixon 8.
perfectly reasonable that it not challenge us intellectually at every turn. But if the architecture that surrounds us does not exist primarily to make the intellectual demands upon us that high art does, neither is it merely a passing piece of entertainment, there to play on our emotions and then be forgotten. At its best architecture is a nurturing and civilizing force, and it is with us not for a passing moment, but forever. It is worth remembering that the best architecture today -- the work of architects like Venturi, Gehry and Stirling, to name but three -- follows no precise models. It is consistently energetic visually, but it is also consistently challenging.33

COLLAGE AND DISCONTINUITY

Since 1966 when Robert Venturi celebrated this notion of contradiction in architecture, the idea of discontinuity has been a conscious tactic of Post-Modernists. Even before this, in the late 1950's, Pop Artists such as Richard Hamilton and Robert Rauschenberg made it a part of their poetics of assemblage and collage. For architects and theorists such as Colin Rowe, collage had the virtues of pluralism, cultural autonomy and all the qualities which might be put in antithesis to minimalism and the Modernist drive towards universalism. An inclusive architecture, it was argued, was better able to deal with social realities than a reduced utopian approach. Modernism and the aesthetics of integration and 'good taste' inevitably led, so the argument went, to the repression of minority cultures. It was crypto-imperialist, or at least smug and middle-class, the veiled hegemony of a ruling bureaucratic taste.

33 Goldberger 38.
Even if this assertion were not entirely true, it had a good deal of statistical evidence behind it: the examples of bureaucratic planning, Park Avenue in New York City and almost any rebuilt downtown area. For artists the position was parallel: the Late-Modern abstraction of Pollock, Rothko and Newman became a kind of aesthetic orthodoxy, upheld by museums and corporate clients, which suppressed the tastes of all but the chosen few. Eero Saarinen's CBS Building in New York (Figure 1), finished in 1965, epitomized

Figure 1: Columbia Broadcasting System Headquarters Building, New York. Model.
both tendencies. Perfectly integrated in its abstract art, simplified architecture and bland furnishings, its good taste was rammed down the throat of every secretary and junior executive.

More recently the French philosopher Jean-Francois Lyotard has defined 'the Post-Modern condition' as a kind of perpetual warfare of different language games against each other. Arguing that [there] are no 'meta-narratives' of religion, politics, social vision or aesthetics that can command universal assent today, he pushes the notion of pluralism to an extreme and decides, rather predictably, that this contentious battleground of 'differences' is a good thing and ought to be supported. While one can well agree with his emphasis on tolerance, his 'war on totality' is so obsessive that it leads to a new form of orthodoxy and one which is as oppressive as his enemy the bureaucratic French culture of consensus. Emphasizing differences, 'otherness,' discontinuity and plural languages, leads finally to a confusing babble; not the competition of language games, but rather their cacophony and mutual cancellation.

CASE STUDIES

It is against such a background that recent work of James Stirling and Jeremy Dixon will be looked at -- specifically, their discontinuous architecture proposed for London -- and the paintings of David Salle and Robert Longo, the parallel movement in art. All of this work taken together amounts to a paradigm of discontinuity where one language confronts another, where one theme contradicts another, where cultural pluralism is celebrated as an end in itself. Salle characteristically uses the diptych to set up a dualism of themes that are self-cancelling (Figure 2). Images lifted equally from pulp fiction and
high art are juxtaposed, not synthesized, and presented with a studied neutrality. Exotic photographs of the figure are overlaid with graffiti, maps, modern furniture, quotes from Modern art, and all of these contrasts are heightened by the flat, acid colors associated with advertisements. It's a presentation of the contradictory values purveyed through television, or any British Sunday newspaper color supplement, with no editorial line to supply the meaning, because there isn’t any significance in this age of the consumer. So far, so good (or bad, as Salle is on the edge of that tradition valued today as 'Bad Painting'): and as Venturi and Stirling believe that in architecture it’s up to the viewer to supply the interpretation and ultimate judgement. Is this a telling indictment of our Faustian predicament, or a cathartic presentation of opposed forces; an allegory about the frustration of consumer nihilism, or an appropriation of its methods? You, the neutral Salle or Stirling implies, should tell him.34

34Jencks 6.
As a case study of this discontinuity, James Stirling* is now interested in the virtues of super-agacency or "inconsistency", a set of discontinuities generated by contrary urban pressures and internal requirements. His additions for the Tate Gallery (Figure 3), for example, take inconsistency to a new level of poetry. Instead of simply providing a different front, back and sides, as any good urban building celebrated by Venturi might do, Stirling even breaks up these consistent parts into opposed zones. He has called the Clore Gallery extension "a garden building", hence its symbolic trellis-work and pergola, and hence its episodic informality which is almost picturesque. In general, however, a garden building as we have come to know it does not change its formal theme seven times nor make those breaks often in the

* Incidentally, at the time of this writing Stirling is the only internationally recognized architect that has refused Michael Eisner's invitation to work for Disney (Bernstein 92).
middle or near the side of a facade. Conventionally one changes theme and material at the corner where two planes meet and can be separated by an edge stop. Not Stirling, however; in nearly every case he has emphasized discontinuity by breaking a theme at an unexpected point. This is true as much in the details as in the larger compositional areas, so one can be sure there is a polemical intention behind the discontinuities, but one might not be sure what they tell us.

First, as Stirling says in descriptions, they relate the relevant parts to adjacent buildings -- the cornice and materials of the Tate, and the brickwork of the existing lodge and hospital. His “pergola” relate to the Tate’s rusticated base and many building lines, and proportions are also related if not matched. A more literal approach would have produced a more striking incongruity: an unresolvable battle between the Edwardian-Baroque and a brick structure: palace versus house. Instead we find two things which mediate this clash: Stirling’s new “order” of a neutral stone grid and a series of overlapping themes which avoid a clear break, or cataclysmic confrontation.

Both of these tactics are significant contributions to the philosophy of pluralism and the practice of contextualism. They may not be the final word on fitting into a disparate environment, but they begin to formulate a new rule for this most typical of urban problems. This can be contrasted with the nineteenth century schizophrenic approach of simply having a public front and private back. It can also be contrasted with the Modernist tabula rasa or classical integration, which would have papered over the differences between surrounding buildings and denied a valid pluralism. Stirling speaks of “an architectural conversation” between different parts of the building, and the different buildings, and since at least three sides of his context are speaking
different languages, he has plausibly invented a fourth language game -- the square stone order -- which can speak parts of all three dialects: Baroque classical to the left, brick vernacular to the right, and Bauhaus functional in back. The fourth language, like Esperanto, is not yet as conventional as the other three, but it is based on current technologies and plausible, functional analysis. As if to underscore its unconventionality as well as represent popular or working-class society, Stirling has inserted a set of discordant punctuations, as he did at Staatsgalerie, (Figure 4) -- particularly the angular bay windows, bright green metal doors and glazing bars. These are even more discontinuous with the surface and adjacent material than the square "order" is with the adjacent buildings. Finally, in case anyone thinks this discontinuity is accidental, it is underlined by breaking up the "order" itself
into 1/3 bay rhythms on either side of the entrance and by absent stonework just where it is visually expected on the glazed corner. Here brickwork hangs miraculously in tension (as at Leicester), revealing its symbolic, not structural, role. On the inside the square order is repeated again both in its unity and discontinuity, to divide up the wall like a set of pilasters and give proportion and measure to space. The space is a cross between Le Corbusier and Aldo Rossi, the violent triple-height contrasts of the one set against set against the severe serenity of the other. Again as at Staatsgalerie, color harmonies at a large scale are penetrated by disharmonies at a small scale, an overall peach and cream is surprised by a pink hand-rail, or an ultramarine and turquoise archway. Only on the inside of the Turner galleries do these contrasts and discontinuities calm down, as they should, to a muted contrapunto. The color and material here is virtually harmonious throughout, with only the doorways and overhead roof lanterns providing accent.

Stirling’s work has developed a tendency to integrate the abstract lines of architecture (Modernism, Constructivism, De Stijl, etc.) with the figurative, formal, and popular components of the historical tradition. This explains the variety of spaces, syntax and materials used in the Staatsgalerie Extension in Stuttgart, Germany: stone masonry next to glazed surfaces and rhetorical metallic structures; neo-romantic windows and eaves of Egyptian style next to curtain walls, free-plan and formal enfilade plan, etc.

This **hybrid** element — the conscious mixing of styles — is also present within the exhibition halls themselves: by means of a highly sophisticated technology, with multiple castings and a diversity of materials; the quality and form of the traditional hall is recaptured with homogeneous top lighting. Also internally, the green rubber flooring — (as alternative to the normal
highly polished stone) reminds that museums today are also places of popular entertainment.

Finally, this museum for modern art, which attempts to be both abstract and representational, monumental (the monument is necessary within the city) and informal (people have to feel attracted to the building -- recall Eisner and Disney), traditional (through its shape, spaces and materials) and high-tech, achieves an excellent result that expresses the tension and richness of an orderly, symmetrical solution while also being autonomous and dispersed.

Some may question whether all this duality, juxtaposition and discontinuity make for a good museum, but it does make an important contribution to Post-Modern urbanism and is a lesson from which several other designers are learning, if not directly following.35

Among the better of these designers, Jeremy Dixon, also British, achieves many of the same discontinuities in his proposal for the Royal Opera House addition (Figure 5). As does the Tate, it also changes language three times around four sides of a complex urban site in London. At the same time, without going into detail, the facades are broken up into five discontinuous, yet coherent, themes. By doing so Dixon has given them not only an urbane coherence -- impossible in an integrated aesthetic at this scale -- but a symphonic quality. It can be seen as a kind of musical score which reads in either direction, and a symphonic ordering can be understood, the sonata allegro form, which has a climactic finale at both ends. This musical analogy, which has developed from Stirling's scheme for the Meineke Strasse, Berlin, 1976 -- the introduction of the theme, exposition, development, reca-

35Jencks 7.
pitulation and coda -- has become one of the strongest paradigms of current urbanism. Its virtues are no doubt superior to the totalizing model which still prevails in Late-Modernist circles, but like all paradigms it has obvious limits. Discontinuity and fragmentation without an ordering principle and final goal create their own kind of totality, their own style of boredom, every bit as predictable as *La Ville Radieuse*. It is becoming apparent that all these strategies of collage need a complimentary hierarchy and ordering system to be fully effective. Here can be noted a "fault" in both Stirling's Tate and Dixon's Opera House scheme: there is no symbolic and ornamental progression to a climax, no clear iconographic program, no developed succession of orders (Doric to Ionic to Corinthian), no clear center and sense
of climactic arrival. It is true that there are two minor centers and climaxes to Dixon's scheme, but they still lack an ornamental and symbolic progression that prepares for them.

This problem characterizes, of course, most architecture today and is not an inherent fault of the collage strategy, although it may be accentuated by this method. Where one uses many styles and motifs, there is a danger of these languages taking over the plot. "Intertextuality", the cliche of Post-Modern literature, shows that where there are too many texts there is no author. Critic Charles Jencks believes, "In architecture of any size the client and architect must work out the plot together, and be quite explicit about it, or the story will degenerate into a collage of professional language games, that implicit war which Lyotard asserts is the condition of Post-Modernism." The plausibility of his arguments rests in the idea that no one, and no ideology or religion, has any great authority in our time. The consequences of this, however, need not be an art and architecture of frustration, of mutually incompatible and self-cancelling acts, because there is still a great deal of shared interest and values between different people and taste-cultures. The challenge is to find this area and successfully give it artistic and symbolic expression.

What we have learned from this discussion may be that collage and discontinuity are legitimate, if limited, strategies for art and architecture in a pluralistic age. They can express our "contradictions" and "inconsistencies", as Venturi and Stirling insist, but it is a necessarily incomplete method until it is supplemented by a symbolic program or some unifying "plot." 36

36Jencks 8.
ROLE OF THE MUSEUM

[Museums are] Cemeteries of the arts.37

Museums are the receptacles of lost sounds. Museums are the sarcophagi of past thoughts and are the covenants with sacred cultures. Museums are meant as havens for the solitary travellers. In their time they function as the guardians to loneliness. They protect the soul.38

Layer upon layer, past times preserve themselves in the city until life itself is finally threatened with suffocation; then, in sheer defense, modern man invents the museum.39

The dictionary defines a museum as a place for learned occupation, an institution devoted to the procurement, care, study, and display of objects of lasting interest or value, a place where objects are exhibited. A museum is a repository for artifacts. As such, a museum with its collection is a microcosm of society. It thus reflects the ideals and aspirations of society.40

For Johannes Cladders the museum itself has become a discontinuous type -- a recreational facility that has assumed a great many features attributed to other institutions in former periods of history. The result is a varied, complex whole characterized by a wide range of spatial individuality which, as an aesthetic environment, stands in fundamental opposition to traditional museums. Critic Ignasi de Sola-Morales sees the modern museum as a place where art and historical artifacts are ordered and presented, and it therefore must have a hermeneutically efficient architectural form capable of revealing to the public its sacred contents. Thus the museum, in the material and architectonic organization of its spaces, is the mediator of a formless reality, of

37 Alphonse de Lamartine.
38 John Hejduk, introduction to Kleihues x.
39 Mumford x.
40 Darragh 108.
a multitude of objects, of knowledge and the meaning given to it by the way it is presented. The museum itself, in fact, can be a work of art. It no longer has to be a neutral space container with neutral backgrounds for the exhibits, but can exercise an influence of its own on the exhibits by providing as suitable a background as possible.

A museum distinguishes itself from all other art-presentation media in that it shows the work of art itself. This defines the museum's task. It is primordial, irreplaceable and indispensable. The museum can only be measured by the degree to which it fulfills this task.

In our century the museum has assumed the role of art's ritual cave, temple precinct, cathedral and palace.

The art of the 20th century is internationally museum-oriented.

By facing up to this intention, museums come into conflict with the competitive claims of art of the museum of architecture.

Art is basically, always and in every way of a space-defining nature. After having separated itself from architecture, art became an autonomous claim that had to be put forward in a separate way.

Architecture detached from art claims to be an autonomous work of art.

This conflict culminates in the museum. The museum can only come to terms with this conflict -- and thus also with itself -- to the extent in which it declares itself to be a work of art.

The museum is the potential total work of art of the 20th century.

It becomes such to the extent in which it succeeds in uniting the spatial claims of architecture with those of art.42

The increased popularizing and popularity of the museum coincides with a renewed enthusiasm on the part of architects to design the

41 Montaner, The Museums 7.
42 Johannes Cladders in an exhibition catalog of the Galerie Ulysses, Vienna, 1979 in Klotz x.
contemporary museum (which, in turn, coincides with their enthusiasm to work for Disney). Philip Johnson explains it so: "Purely aesthetically speaking, the museum is an architect's dream. He has -- as in a church -- to make the visitor happy, to put him in a receptive frame of mind while he is undergoing an emotional experience. We architects welcome the challenge." Now some would argue that the emotional affect of a church should not necessarily be to make one happy, but rather contemplative and respectfully humble. This raises a broader question about the meaning of museums. They embody the characteristics of several other cultural "institutions." The hospital and the museum are not so distant cousins; the hospital attempts to heal the body, while the museum attempts to heal the soul. Also, as has been noted, the museum has traditionally been a kind of secular cathedral or cemetery in our culture, a place to worship the sacredness of art. But, as the previously discussed museums suggest, such institutions also offer reminders and metaphors of Modern life, where much is visible or available to us, be it through the glass of a museum display case or the glass of a television tube, but where we have no physical connection to what we see and little opportunity to affect or alter it. In one sense, the media have turned us all into museum-goers, examining the world like so many artifacts from behind glass.

THE MUSEUM VS. THE TELEVISION

In the early seventies it seemed increasingly that the life of American culture had become polarized into two rival citadels that, "like medieval

43Johnson 22.
44Kleihues 37.
45Thomas Fisher 102.
fortresses in wartime, pulled all their former dependencies inside" -- on one side, the devouring television cable box; on the other, the large box of the museum. And in the space between there was not much of anything. There was a small independent subculture struggling to survive almost underground -- comics culture or revival-house movie culture or the equivalent. But these things existed only as inheritors and unconscious parodists of the vanished life of the avant-garde. For the most part, you chose between the little box or the big one, and it seemed at times that even the struggle between these two towers was a bit of a sham. As perhaps in all cold wars, the ideology of hostility increased in inverse proportion to the plain fact of coexistence.

By the early eighties, a new art had appeared which took up the old pop icons and methods in a new spirit of disaffection, and this art was supported by a rhetoric as vengeful and suspicious as any that modern art had previously directed at commercial culture. Something was conjured into being for the purposes of allowing artists to dissect and condemn it, and this was the "media image," an undifferentiated ribbon of undifferentiated imagery set down with purposeful affectlessness; Venturi's unmodulated strip seen through Smithson's entropic eye.46

Now, in the nineties, especially with the advent of new technologies, we now look at architecture itself almost the way we look at television -- demanding new images, new pictures, new scenes, all the time. Image is not only more important than reality; in a sense image is reality in our culture, a reality that comes faster and faster, in even more facile form.47

46Varnedoe, High 372.
47Goldberger 38.
MASS MEDIA, TELEVISION AND MYTH

Most of modern myth-making, in fact, as well as the descriptions of those realities which are beyond the immediate experience of any individual or community, is done through the medium of television. The way most Americans come to know their heroes and heroines is by watching television. The reality of events occurring in a machine which can be turned off at will, however, is difficult to determine. The difference between metaphor and reality, between image and reality is blurred and all but lost in the modern telling of a tale.

Access to the tellers of tales has always been essential to heroism. Access to the mass media is essential to the creation of contemporary heroism (whether the hero is fictional, like the heroine of Scruples, or "real," like Elvis Presley). Only through the media can anyone hope to become known enough to be widely acknowledged or approved by Americans -- as anyone who wishes to be a star or to change society believes implicitly. Andy Warhol's fifteen minutes of fame are almost always directly related to the television in some manner. The contemporary media, however, are also devoted to the promotion of consumption. Advertising sells goods and, it has been discovered, also sells candidates, heroes, Presidents, and pop stars. The distinction between the consumption of goods and the moral of a heroic story, between politics and athletic games, has been as much blurred as the distinction between fiction and reality.48

The modern teller of tales concentrate on people; stories about abstract ideas or physically remote events are often personified (to make them more

48 Robertson 207.
real). News, advertising, commentary, non-fiction as well as fiction, are personified and dramatized in order to provide human meaning and human impact. Heroes and heroines, real ones, are essential to the image makers in modern American society. And it is particularly difficult to distinguish between the real persons and the images, between the myths being conveyed and the truth being told. Is Telly Savalas the American Hero? or is it Kojak, the role Savalas plays? Or is it the policeman-detective, the part Kojak plays?49 Was Elvis Presley a musician, an actor, an Average American, a role being played, a hero, a martyr, an image, or a reality? Was he real or was he something made up, or both?

In addition to the television and other mass media popularity, the managers of performers like the Beatles and Elvis Presley were quick to realize that they could command live audiences equal in size to the audiences for sports like football and baseball. Due to this emergence of pop music as a major cultural force, the 60’s saw massive investment in covered arenas and outdoor stadia to add to and replace pre-war facilities. It was natural for the managers and concert promoters to experiment with presenting bands in these buildings. The initial rebellious nature of pop music and the excitement of the audiences meant that the genteel attributes of conventional concert or dance-hall venues were inappropriate. At the same time, the music was based on the use of electronically amplified instruments, which allowed the bands to play in larger venues. Pop concerts were organized in sports arenas in the early 60’s, and bands were soon playing to audiences of more than 10,000 on tours in the USA. When these large numbers of people (now as many as 60,000 or more) pay good money to assemble in the usual

49Robertson 208.
conditions of discomfort and inconvenience their meeting is a demonstration of something which is more important to them. The performer is the focus of their shared identity, and the stadium becomes a temporary but tangible monument to these ideas, the background to a tribal rite.50

ELVIS

This is what Elvis and the memory of Elvis Presley mean to patrons of the proposed museum. The museum is only the background for the performer; at the heart of the museum is Elvis, his music, and his fans, not the theoretical issues raised in this thesis. "Elvis Presley . . . changed the patterns of everyday life -- raised its stakes -- all over the world. If what (he) did led to no official revolutions, it made life all over the world more interesting, and life continues to be more interesting than it would have been had (he) never appeared. In a book about movements in culture that raised no monuments, about movements that barely left a trace -- making life more interesting is the only standard of judgement that can justify the pages they can fill."51 Today, however, most anything related to the memory of Elvis Presley is unfortunately discussed in terms of the definitions of kitsch at the beginning of this thesis; even though, obviously as a pop cultural artifact it is much, much more.

[Elvis Presley's presence] drew a line between itself and everything that came before it.52

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50Mark Fisher 47.
51Marcus, Lipstick 148.
52Marcus, Lipstick 27.
It was exciting (to hear Elvis Presley as a kid), but there was an element of fear as well — you thought, 'Can this be real?'... there was a feeling that you were participating in something that had come from another planet, it seemed so remarkable at all.

BBC disk jockey John Peel 1986.53

[Elvis'] was the dance that was so strong it took an entire civilization to forget it. And ten seconds to remember it.54

A king's ransom

Elvis Presley's former manager has sold 35 tons of mementos to the singer's estate in Memphis, Tenn. The estate described Col. Tom Parker's 70,000-pound collection as a record of Elvis' career. Graceland officials would not reveal specific artifacts in the collection but said they will unveil selected pieces. The "multimillion-dollar" acquisition, as officials put it, appears to indicate that Graceland executives are continuing with plans to build a museum near Graceland by 1993. Display space is limited to the trophy room at Graceland and a small museum among souvenir shops across the street. Parker, 81, of Las Vegas, is credited with getting the career of The King of rock 'n' roll off the ground.

53 Marcus, Lipstick 41.
54 Marcus, Lipstick 27.
BUILDING PROPOSAL ABSTRACT

Museums are the receptacles of lost sounds. Museums are the sarcophagi of past thoughts and are the [time-capsules of] cultures.

JOHN HEJDUK

Graceland officials in conjunction with the Elvis Presley Foundation have announced plans for the commission of the design of a new and comprehensive museum to be built near Graceland by the year 1993. Currently having only the "trophy room" at Graceland and two small museums among the strip of souvenir shops across Elvis Presley Boulevard to house artifacts and memorabilia, the proposal calls for a single new museum that can consolidate the items from these spaces as well as the huge, recently acquired collection of Elvis Presley's former manager, Colonel Tom Parker. In addition to exhibition space, the museum complex is to also include an auditorium, radio station, theaters, library and shops.
BUILDING RESEARCH ANALYSIS OUTLINE

I. Analysis of traditional language, style, typology of the high/low.
   A. HIGH, artistic, classical, serious, critical, rigorous, (tragic).
   B. LOW, exploitive, vernacular, whimsical, pop(ular), "polite,"
      (comic).

II. The "classical" (high) museum.
   A. Museums: as neutral display space, as "cemetery," as warehouse of memory.
   B. Case studies
   C. Death:
      1. Funerary architecture, memorial, cenotaph,
      2. Actual entombment of remains, meditation garden,
         "Death Week," candle-light vigil.

III. Propose and define the idea of the evolution of a new, twentieth century architectural Form, the pop museum:
   A. Case studies: Venturi's Football Hall of Fame, The World of Coca-Cola, The Rock 'n' Roll Hall of Fame, Disneyland, The Smithsonian (wing of American History), Ripley's "Believe It or Not" Museum, other museums for twentieth century "objects,"
      (cars, appliances, the Beatles, comic books, etc.).
   B. Critical discussion of Pop Architecture.
      1. J.B. Jackson, Venturi, etc.
2. Discussion of "Significant" contemporary architects working for Disney: Graves, Stern, Isozaki, Gehry, Venturi, etc.

3. Relation to commercial industry of popular artifacts (Coke, prints of fine art, Elvis memorabilia, etc.).

IV. The hybrid museum:

A. Venturi's Allen Memorial Art Museum Addition at Oberlin.
B. Stirling's Addition to the Staatsgalerie in Stuttgart.
C. East Wing of the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.
D. Museum of Fine Arts, Houston.
E. Vitra Design Museum, Los Angeles.

V. The Building as artifact or work of art in the urban museum of the city (both the object in the museum and the museum itself as elements which can stand alone but also serve as essential fragments to their respective greater wholes).

VI. Elvis Presley:

A. Twentieth century American myth / hero, (icon).
B. Music, television, cinema, merchandise, pop culture.
C. Symbolism.
D. Memorabilia.

VII. Site: Memphis, Tennessee, USA:
A. History, urban fabric, future growth, tourism, symbols, Mississippi River, stones from ancient Egypt, (namesake connection to Memphis, Egypt, (Necropolis), (Great American Pyramid)).

B. Graceland:

1. Immediate context, existing shops and museums.

2. History, topography, Elvis Presley Blvd., The "Wall of Love."
BUILDING PROGRAM

Public Entry Facilities
Since the museum will be visited by large numbers of the general public, sizable facilities must be provided for their needs as outlined below. The unprogrammed spaces will serve the purposes of entrance, orientation, meeting, waiting and control. Security control and ticket access must be provided from a central lobby to the exhibition galleries, auditorium and theaters. From this lobby free access should be available to information, the museum shop, cafe/lounge, toilets and coat room. The building plan should be arranged so that special event access may be limited to the auditorium, theaters, and library.

| * Lobby / Waiting Area       | 2,000 sf |
| * Lobby Support (security control, coats, storage) | 500 sf |
| * Tickets / Information (working space for 4 people) | 300 sf |
| * Toilets                    | 500 sf |
| * Cafe / Lounge              | 1,300 sf |
| * Gift Shop                  | 1,300 sf |
| PUBLIC SUBTOTAL              | 5,900 sf |

Exhibition Spaces
The permanent exhibition spaces are to be sequentially linked in "enfilade" fashion in order to present a comprehensive experience of the museum. Each is to be a flexible space at least 20 feet high with controlled natural light. Various partitions and dropped ceilings may be built within the spaces for each exhibit. It would be best to situate the exhibition spaces with a northern exposure.

| * Origins / Music           | 3,500 sf |
| * Art (high)                | 3,500 sf |
| * Exploitation (low)        | 3,500 sf |
* Death / Memorabilia 3,500 sf
* Honors / Awards 3,500 sf
* Exhibition Support (carpentry shop, materials 2,000 sf
 storage, painting room, signage/graphic
 storage, design area, office)
* Exhibition Staging Area and Secure Storage 750 sf
EXHIBITION SUBTOTAL 20,250 sf

Collection Storage

These rather large, probably subterranean, spaces are to be for preservation, cataloging, overflow storage of the rest of the extensive collection (with Halon fire suppression systems). Also, there is to be space for receiving, registration, and photography area.

STORAGE SUBTOTAL 10,000 sf

Theaters

Three movie theaters are to be designed as follows: 1) a theater to seat 150 people to show live concert footage, studio recording footage, rehearsal footage, etc.; 2) a theater to seat 100 people to show any of the 29 Hollywood movies in which Elvis starred, and 3) a theater to seat 75 people to show experimental, documentary, artistic, avant-garde, and other films perhaps in conjunction with the temporary exhibition space. The theaters must be able to operate at times when the galleries may be closed.

* Concert Footage Theater 1,500 sf
* Hollywood Movie Theater 1,300 sf
* (Con)Temporary Film Theater 900 sf
* Total Equipment Storage / Work Area (for projectors, film/tape, work/editing/mixing space) 750 sf
* Lobby (tickets, refreshments, rest rooms, etc.) 750 sf
THEATER SUBTOTAL 5,200 sf
Library

The Library is to be located off of the main tour proper, yet very easily accessible and open to the public. It is to house a diverse range of books, video and audio recordings related to the origins and history of rock ‘n’ roll, Elvis’ life, influences, and aftereffects; also sheet music, scripts, clippings, periodicals, etc.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Space</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Public Stacks</td>
<td>2,000 sf</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reserve Book / Video/Music Storage</td>
<td>1,000 sf</td>
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<tr>
<td>Personal Reading, Viewing and Listening Spaces</td>
<td>1,300 sf</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Archive / Limited Access Room</td>
<td>500 sf</td>
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<tr>
<td>Librarian’s Office and Desk</td>
<td>300 sf</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIBRARY SUBTOTAL</td>
<td>5,100 sf</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Radio Station

This facility should also be separate from the tour proper, yet open to the public to encourage interest and education. It is to be in proximity to the library so as to facilitate the shared usage of audio and reference material. It is to broadcast only music that is in some way related to Elvis Presley and the “Memphis sound” of Beale St. blues and early rock ‘n’ roll.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Space</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reception / Office Space</td>
<td>225 sf</td>
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<tr>
<td>Broadcast Studio</td>
<td>300 sf</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library / Stacks</td>
<td>200 sf</td>
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<tr>
<td>Business Office</td>
<td>125 sf</td>
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<tr>
<td>Production Room</td>
<td>300 sf</td>
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<tr>
<td>News Room</td>
<td>225 sf</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lobby</td>
<td>350 sf</td>
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<tr>
<td>RADIO STATION SUBTOTAL</td>
<td>1,725 sf</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Auditorium

This 200 seat auditorium is to be used for live musical acts, especially blues, rock and adult contemporary; lectures, plays, performance art, etc. (Tributes
allowed, but please, no impersonators). It must also function at times when
the galleries may be closed. Requisite public facilities will be needed off of the
lobby as well as backstage support facilities. Of course, adequate fire safety
stairs and exits must be provided.

* Auditorium 3,000 sf
  * Back Stage (dressing, rest rooms, green room,
    storage, etc.) 725 sf
  * Lobby (coats, rest rooms, tickets, etc.) 1,250 sf
AUDITORIUM SUBTOTAL 4,975 sf

Offices
Office space is to be divided into two main areas for administration and
curatorship with common support spaces. Offices for other museum
functions are to be located with their respective area (library, radio station,
theater, auditorium, exhibition). These spaces should have good daylight and
views with easy access to all other functions of the building.

  * Administration 500 sf
  * Curatorship 500 sf
  * Other Staff/Support 300 sf
  * Staff Lounge Area 200 sf
OFFICE SUBTOTAL 1,500 sf

AREA SUMMARY
  * Public 5,900 sf
  * Exhibition 20,250 sf
  * Collection Storage 10,000 sf
  * Theaters 5,200 sf
  * Library 5,100 sf
  * Radio Station 1,725 sf
  * Auditorium 4,975 sf
  * Offices 4,800 sf
TOTAL NET AREA 57,950 sf
GROSS AREA (circulation, mechanical, maintenance, elevators, stairs, walls, etc. – 25%) 14,485 sf

BUILDING AREA TOTAL 72,435 sf

Parking for 5 buses and 175 cars.

SITE
The site is a wooded and oddly shaped property of approximately 8 acres about 10 miles south of downtown Memphis, Tennessee, just outside “the loop” of highway 240. It is bounded on the north by lower-middle class apartment blocks; on the east by upper-middle class single-family residences; on the south by Graceland and the Elvis Presley Foundation; and on the west by Elvis Presley Boulevard and its souvenir and other strip shops. The Mississippi River is about 5 miles due west and Arkansas lies just on the other side. About 9 miles north-west is the area of Beale Street where the strong influences on Elvis Presley of the early blues and rock ‘n’ roll originated. Sun Studio is also located one block from Beale Street -- where Elvis and many other early rock ‘n roll stars made most all of their first recordings. Also at the north-west end of Beale St. is Elvis Presley Plaza and a larger-than-life bronze statue of Elvis.
GRACELAND

Graceland. Memphis, Tennessee.

Beale Street. Memphis, Tennessee.
Elvis Collage III: Exploitation (low/strip)

Elvis Collage IV: Death (memory)
Vicinity Map: Memphis, Tennessee

Site Analysis Diagrams
Preliminary Site Footprint Studies

Preliminary Sketches
Longitudinal Section and Southern Elevation

Western Elevation and Sections
Building Diagrams

Axonometric
Site Model: 1/100 Scale
BIBLIOGRAPHY

ART, ARCHITECTURE / POP CULTURE


Izenour, Steven, and David A. Dashiell III. "Relearning from Las Vegas." Architecture October 1990: 45-51.


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ELVIS PRESLEY, POP CULTURE / MUSIC:


MUSEUMS:


**MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE:**


**DEATH:**


**MISCELLANEOUS:**


