

The background of the cover is a detailed sculpture of a horse's head. The horse has a large, expressive eye with a brown iris and a dark pupil. The fur is rendered with fine, light-colored hairs. The muzzle and lower part of the face are covered in thick, colorful paint splatters in shades of green, orange, red, and yellow, giving it a textured, abstract appearance.

The History Book

On Moderna Museet 1958–2008

MODERNA MUSEET Steidl



Transformation and Transit Moderna Museet and its Buildings

Think of a museum, and you see a building. In our imagination, buildings and activities are so closely associated that they are practically synonymous. In consequence, the museum building has a strong symbolic value. As soon as you walk through the doors the building sets the atmosphere. This could be familiar or formal, inviting or venerable. The architectonic design gives the museum an identity that we perceive immediately. But in fact, a museum is not a building but an activity, which is carried out by those who work there. And for them the building defines the framework in a more practical and concrete way. It provides potential or sets limits for what can be done within its walls. In many different ways, the building and the museum activities are closely related and influence one another mutually.

Moderna Museet in Stockholm has appeared in a variety of architectonic guises over its fifty years of existence. Every change in the building has been prompted by an underlying idea or need firmly related to the museum's activities and purpose. The occasionally heated debates on the building issue have also been tightly interwoven with differing opinions on the role of culture and the identity of the museum. Various parties, from the museum management to politicians, government sponsors, artists, critics and the interested general public, have had different opinions on this topic, and this has been reflected in the debate. Moreover, and perhaps most essentially, the museum's capacity for various kinds of identity has differed widely over the years, depending on changes in the zeitgeist. The history of the Moderna Museet buildings that we will chronicle here is ultimately a tale that reveals the shifts in the Swedish cultural climate over the past half-century.¹

The Idea of a New Museum is Born

Growing collections and lack of space to show them have often been the reason why new museums are built. Nationalmuseum had been struggling with small premises from the start, and these got gradually worse. In the 1800s, there were already discussions about creating a museum especially for crafts. Soon, there was also talk of a separate museum for modern art, an issue that grew increasingly urgent in the 1930s, when the collections of modern art started to expand rapidly. In 1944, a *Nationalmuseum Committee* (Nationalmuseiutredningen) was appointed to solve the problem of shortage of space and to discuss how the government body (the National Art Collections) should be organised. One of its main issues concerned a possible new museum for modern art. In addition to the museum director Erik Wettergren, the

committee included the former director Axel Gauffin, the professors Axel Romdahl and Otte Sköld, and the architect and urban planning director Sven Markelius. Their final report was delivered in 1949.²

The committee concluded that Nationalmuseum contained material for several separate museums, including one for modern art. The original building did not have sufficient space for such a museum, nor was it suitable for this purpose, according to the committee:

It is obvious to the committee that a museum for the modern, struggling art must work under other, freer conditions than a museum for the old, established art, which, unlike modern art, consists of a carefully selected elite collection that is not involved in the same way in contemporary debate on art politics.³

The basic idea was that the new modern art museum would be a transitional museum. Together with Nationalmuseum it would form a unity of two different but interacting institutions. One museum would cover older art, the other modern art. Eventually, the works in the modern museum that were found to be of lasting value would be transferred to the "elite collection" at Nationalmuseum, according to the so-called Louvre-Luxembourg system. How to deal with crafts was a subject for debate. The committee finally arrived at the conclusion that these collections should be divided into an older part in Nationalmuseum and a modern part that would be included in the new museum for contemporary art – an idea, however, that was never implemented.

New Ideas on Museum Building Design

The Nationalmuseum building has a traditional design. It was built in the 1860s, like many museums in major European cities at the time. Art, learning and culture were valued highly by the bourgeois society that evolved in the nineteenth century, and museum buildings were designed with high ambitions. As a rule, they were given a palatial architecture with monumental stairs, light wells and suites of magnificent galleries. Nationalmuseum in Stockholm, drawn by the German architect Friedrich August Stüler, is no exception to this continental matrix.

In the early 1930s, Sweden was about to embark on a major extension of several museums, and new ideas had emerged on how such buildings should be designed, something that naturally inspired the architects. Accordingly, in an issue of the journal *Byggmästaren* (The Master Builder) from 1933 the director-general of the Central Board of National Antiquities (Riksantikvarieämbetet) Sigurd Curman discusses how new museum buildings should be designed in general.⁴ Although his article primarily concerned museums of cultural history, it is nevertheless worth giving a brief description of his principles, since some of these feature in the architectural history of Moderna Museet.

← The Royal Navy's drill-house before 1953

From the exhibition *American Pop Art*, 1964

Firstly, Curman proposed that a modern museum building is, or should be, a “building with a fairly strong social emphasis, on account of the changed approach to the museum’s work”.⁵ A modern museum should be a *living institution*, not just a warehouse for objects, he maintained. It should make its collections available to the general public, and give interested visitors opportunities to study the works by means of specialised exhibitions. The collections of a museum (of cultural history) had a dual purpose, according to Curman: to provide material for scientific research and to present it in an interesting way to give the broader public “knowledge and enjoyment”. Thus, the museum had two different target groups that related to the collections in different ways. The question was how it should be organised in order to fulfil this dual purpose.

The solution lay in dividing the collections into three categories: *collections for display*, *collections for study*, and *warehouse collections*. The collections for display would comprise a carefully selected, limited number of objects that would be arranged educationally for the general public. The collections for study purposes would contain material for more in-depth study for researchers and people with a special interest, and would be arranged according to systematic principles. The warehouse collections would contain material that need not be readily available. The two public collection categories would interrelate to some extent within the museum building, with the display collection in the centre and the study collections in the immediate vicinity – as a sidetrack to the main succession of galleries. Moreover, a museum should have a suitably located gallery for temporary exhibitions, and ideally be equipped with an auditorium for lectures. These premises should be just inside the museum entrance.

How should the galleries be designed? Since it had proved difficult to remodel the solid permanent gallery fittings and interiors in the museums of old buildings, it was imperative now to avoid lumbering future generations with the same problem, according to Curman. Consequently, new museum buildings should be planned to give the greatest possible freedom to alter the floor plan and interior. “The more freedom the fixed building structure allows for the museum interior design, the better it will fulfil its purpose as a modern museum building,” Curman insisted. A basic recipe, thus, was that the building should be flexible. Museums should, he summarised, “in some respects be built like a modern department store, where the fittings for exhibiting and storing goods have to be easy to change and modify according to requirements.”⁶

It is interesting, here, to draw a comparison with the Museum of Modern Art in New York (MoMA), which was founded in 1929, but did not move into its specially-designed premises until 1939. The museum was seen as a model, on account of its radical approach to culture and extrovert programme of guided tours, lectures, study circles and children’s activities and generous opening hours even in the evenings. In 1931, the museum had shown the legendary architectural exhibition that coined the term “International Style”. The new building was designed in a style that was consistent

with the modernist principles, by the architects Philip Goodwin and Edward Stone. Visitors walked straight in from the street, without encountering a monumental stairwell as in a traditional museum, the interior was characterised by light and spaciousness, and this was further enhanced by the spacious style of hanging applied by the museum. The building featured large, side-lit galleries, where the direct light was softened by the special glass used in the façade; it also had a sky-lit sculpture gallery. The galleries did not have any permanent walls – an early example of the principle of flexibility. A basic precept was also that the architecture should form a neutral background for the exhibited works.

The Nationalmuseum Committee was aware of MoMA and even included a short report on its multifaceted activities. In 1950, Otte Sköld became director of Nationalmuseum. He had been on the Committee and was the person who, in practice, became the driving force behind the new museum in Stockholm and had a decisive influence on its design. The first concrete issue concerned its location and premises. The Nationalmuseum Committee had suggested a few alternative locations, primarily, the so-called stone barn at Gärdet (where Swedish Radio now has its buildings) as a provisional solution. Another alternative was the Nobel Park at the end of Strandvägen, near the bridge to Djurgården. The architect Sven Ivar Lind had presented a draft for this location, attached to the report, applying Curman’s principles in a specific design for an envisioned modern museum building.⁷

For many years, according to Otte Sköld there were two factions within the Royal Academy of Fine Arts, promoting two different locations for the museum, jokingly called the stone barn moles and the Skeppsholmen skunks. He himself belonged to the former for many years, since he feared that it would all come to nothing if too high demands were made. The solution came in 1953, when it was decided that the navy should move from Skeppsholmen, suddenly making Skeppsholmen a realistic option.⁸ The fact that this concurred with the museum plans was purely a coincidence. Now a large area was vacant near the city centre, an area that had been preserved thanks to historic circumstances, despite extensive development plans in the early 1900s.⁹ This was a unique environment, where centuries of shipping and ship-building had left a scatter of small-scale houses of varying age and purpose in a still lively archipelago community. For various reasons, the Royal University College of Fine Arts was already established on the island, and its presence gave fuel to the arguments for locating the new museum on Skeppsholmen. In June 1955, the government decreed that the Royal Navy’s former drill-house should be made available for a modern museum.

So now there was a building to convert into a museum. And what activities should be housed inside this building? Otte Sköld expressed his vision in a lecture at the Royal Academy in May 1956.¹⁰ He based his reasoning on a distinct division of roles between Nationalmuseum and the new

The museum, entrance, 1967

The building, prior to 1955



museum. The former was a prestigious institution that was charged with the task of harbouring permanent collections on which “time had conferred an established value”, inso-much as such values could be established.¹¹ In Otte Sköld’s view, the shift in values and perspectives characteristic of the art world was one of the reasons for separating modern art as a genre of its own. In that way, the modern art museum would serve as a filter, through which the value of art could be tested. Over time, the art that was of lasting value would be revealed and could be transferred to the museum for older art.¹² The new museum would be experimental and constantly changing. Therefore, the building should be designed so that it could be easily rearranged. The galleries should be “simple and practical so that one is not tied down and prevented from being changeable, for changeability is not only the way of life for art, but also the way of life for a modern museum,” Otte Sköld emphasised.¹³ In specific terms, the premises should be flexible, i.e. the same requirements that had been put forward by Curman a few decades earlier. But the arguments had shifted slightly. The issue now was the transformation and unpredictable development of modern art, where values were changing rapidly and lasting value was hard to determine.

Simultaneously with Moderna Museet in Stockholm, the private museum Louisiana was built in Denmark in 1956–58 by the art patron Knud W. Jensen to house his art collection. In addition to this, the starting-point was a beautiful site with unique qualities. The architects Jørgen Bo and Wilhelm Wohlert designed the building with great simplicity. The architecture is subtly subsumed to the purpose of focusing our attention on the art, while the surrounding landscape has been integrated with the building and enhances the rich, contemplative overall environment.

Moderna Museet is Established

The drill-house had originally been drawn by the architect Fredrik Blom in the early 1850s as a low, rectangular building with a large hall for military exercise. The entrance was centrally placed on one of the long sides. Around 1880, the building was extended in two stages, according to designs by the naval station’s master builder, Victor Ringheim, with a section extending from the other long side, so that the building plan now formed a T.¹⁴ The original drill-house was equipped with an antechamber and a neoclassic portico, its roof and windows were raised and a lantern skylight added for better lighting. The building now comprised large, unbroken floor space in two adjacent halls, with a distinguished architectonic framework but with few permanent limitations. This basic structure was ideal for the requirements drawn up by Otte Sköld.

The architect appointed to transform the drill-house into a museum was Per Olof Olsson. He removed a few minor additions to the old building, but kept the floor plan, windows, doors and other details.¹⁵ The core of the museum was the two drill-halls with their vast interior space. The entrance led straight into the middle of the first gallery, intended for temporary exhibitions. At one end, left of the entrance, P. O.

Olsson added a small lecture hall half a storey above a lower area for a cloakroom and toilets. The extensive inner gallery, extending in depth, was intended for a permanent collection, the so-called “public collection”. On one side, a room for the “study collection” was added, and on the other a long, narrow gallery and a restaurant. From the restaurant doors led out onto the small garden, intended as an outdoor café and designed by the legendary 1950s municipal landscape architect in Stockholm, Holger Blom.

“The beauty of the old drill-house awoke surprise and joy,” was the headline in the daily paper *Dagens Nyheter* following the opening on 9 May 1958.¹⁶ The day after, Jolo (Jan Olof Olsson) reviewed the opening in the same paper. In front of the canvases on the “sackcloth walls”, “Stockholm’s elegant elite” mixed with “duffle coats, Iceland jumpers and denim jeans”. The visitors suddenly discovered that they weren’t tired, he wrote:

*Because, firstly, it is stimulating to see modern art, and secondly there are no staircases to walk up or down at Moderna Museet. One step up the threshold from the courtyard and you’re inside. Then you just glide around easily on grateful, light feet, all the way to the little restaurant, which has applied for a licence to serve wine and beer.*¹⁷

Hans Eklund of the evening paper *Aftonbladet* claimed that the new museum did not differ radically from the established pattern. The oblong building, he found, contained a “more permanent public collection to show friends, acquaintances and foreigners”. He was particularly appreciative of the so-called study hall, which contained practically everything that was not displayed on the walls, he reported. “It is a form of picture library. On well-greased castors and rails large, amply-filled steel-wire screens are suspended from the ceiling and can be pulled out one by one to be viewed and reflected on.”¹⁸

Ulf Linde, who reviewed the museum in *Dagens Nyheter*, was noticeably delighted. It had turned out as hoped, he concluded. “Already the pious restoration of the façade of Fredrik Blom’s old building greets us with serene peacefulness.”¹⁹ Linde praised P. O. Olsson’s work as extraordinary. Like the light in the building, the interior was neutral and unaccented, he emphasised.

*The only architectonic element is a lecture hall, with a glass wall facing the first of the two large exhibition galleries. The hall, which can also double as a cinema, rests like a transparent platform on the cloakroom area. The design is natural, steering clear of any form of aestheticising surprises – that quality is left entirely to the works of art.*²⁰

A museum for modern art needs to be transformable, adaptable, a place where something is exemplified, where mutually

Installation of the exhibition *Guernica*, 1956

From the exhibition *Sigrid Hjertén*, 1964;
from the exhibition *Jackson Pollock*, 1963; the museum, 1983 →







contradictory solutions to pictorial problems are presented to the visitors, as Linde writes later in his review of the museum building in the journal *Byggmästaren*. Therefore, it needs to be elastic, he continues. “It must be capable of taking a challenging approach and have the resources to present something so that the viewer feels the challenge, but it must [...] also be capable of easily withdrawing from previous mistakes, since aesthetics are currently in flux.” Moderna Museet on Skeppsholmen has accepted the modern-day situation in an excellent way, and had this as its starting point for the architecture, Linde concluded. The exhibition design can articulate the space of the two galleries, “here new walls and partitions are erected, here the room is opened up in great vistas or compressed into small conglomerates of cabinets. Here the museum staff are forced to make their debut as architects [...]. Each event is also a contribution (from the staff) to the aesthetics debate.”

The museum had become a proposer, a debater. Constant regroupings and re-hangings had stimulated public interest in what was going on at the museum, Linde claimed. “And the active visitor has also gained a natural forum for discussion, the most natural place of all: a restaurant, a bar! For this invitation to an exchange of ideas we should be truly grateful!” And he continues:

*The architect [P. O.] Olsson has thus handed over the initiative to the art that is featured; he has created potential rather than asserting himself. In one respect, however, he alone has been the active designer and has asserted an artistic unity that influences all the exhibition events: the light. The light is the best conceivable, filtering like an even fluid through the halls.*²¹

A Building for Diverse Activities

Pontus Hultén, who succeeded Bo Wennberg as curator after one year and later on as museum director, mentions the building in a retrospective article as one of the new museum's primary assets at the outset: “a unique situation, no formulated programme, rather poor collections [...] no funds and hardly any staff, but an excellent building and a marvellous contact with a presumed audience.”²² This was a potential that he would utilise over the coming years.

Otte Sköld had also pleaded for a radical approach to art. There is currently no common base for our opinions on what is art and the situation is indefinite, he observed in a script for a lecture written at the time when the new museum was being planned. Different art disciplines could be embraced by the concept of modern design, in which he included posters, advertising, photography, film, and certainly architecture. He also believed that “the agenda of a modern art museum should fairly evidently include monitoring major events in the field of architecture.”²³ Architecture did actually figure in Moderna Museet's exhibitions, especially after Arkitekturmuseet (the Museum of Architecture) appeared on the scene.

The café was an instant popular success, with its adjoining sunny garden and its natural hedge. Moreover, the museum began to expand beyond its walls and assert its presence on Skeppsholmen in a striking manner. Calder's enormous

mobile was erected in front of the museum entrance in connection with the exhibition *Movement in Art (Rörelse i konsten)* in 1961.²⁴ The great Picasso sculpture *Déjeuner sur l'herbe* was installed in September 1966, and *Paradise* with its sixteen large sculptures by Niki de Saint Phalle and Jean Tinguely was in place a few years later by the bridge.²⁵

Skeppsholmen was increasingly influenced by art and museum activities in other ways too. Like Moderna Museet, the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities (Östasiatiska museet) separated itself from Nationalmuseum and was established in “tyghuset”, another old naval building on Skeppsholmen. 1966 was an eventful year. Nationalmuseum built a new annex designed by Per Olof Olsson, intended as the first stage of a future extension of the museum. The same year, Arkitekturmuseet obtained permanent premises on Skeppsholmen. This museum was started as an independent foundation by the architects' organisation SAR in 1962, but now obtained the status of a public institution and was housed in the former headquarters of the Swedish Maritime Map Administration on Skeppsholmen, together with the Royal University College of Fine Arts' department of architecture. Pontus Hultén was a member of Arkitekturmuseet's board of directors. In April 1966, the new museum organised a major exhibition for its official opening, *Hello Town (Hej stad)*, held at Moderna Museet. This exhibition presented a new eagerness to discuss and reflect on the modern city, and was effectively staged with blinking neon lights and urban soundscapes. The exhibition was designed by three young architects, Jöran Lindvall, Sture Balgård and Eva Björklund. In May the same year, Moderna Museet's legendary exhibition *She – A Cathedral (Hon – en katedral)*, was created, to be shown that summer.

1966 was also the year when the *Skeppsholmen Committee* (Skeppsholmsutredningen) delivered its final report.²⁶ The goal was to convert the islands of Skeppsholmen and Kastellholmen into “a living part of the city with a cultural emphasis”, in effect consolidating the development that had started with the establishment of the Royal University College of Fine Arts and the museums on Skeppsholmen. Great consideration should be shown to the historical development of Skeppsholmen's environment, the report stressed, while proposing that many of the older buildings on the island should be demolished. This included a large barge house, a historically valuable prefabricated wooden hall drawn by Fredrik Blom. In its place, below Moderna Museet, the committee proposed that large new premises should be built for the Royal University College of Fine Arts, on a plot more or less identical with the site that was later allotted to the competition for a new Moderna Museet building in 1990. The Fine Arts College was never built on the site.²⁷ But the barge house was torn down all the same.

In addition to the Fine Arts College, the Skeppsholmen Committee envisioned that Moderna Museet would continue to grow. A proposal for future buildings dated 1964,

Niki de Saint Phalle's and Jean Tinguely's
Paradis at Skeppsholmsbron, 1987

Removal of *Paradis* from Skeppsholmsbron, 1987





included in the report, outlines an extension in the form of a large exhibition hall and a new restaurant adjoining the old one, along with a new building for a crafts museum.²⁸ Thus, the committee paved the way in 1966 for Moderna Museet to further enhance its position on Skeppsholmen, to enlarge its premises and become the hub of a museum complex comprising Östasiatiska museet, Arkitekturmuseet and a potential crafts/design museum. However, discussions about the museum's future soon took a different turn. The entire Stockholm city centre was undergoing a dramatic transformation, a process that would involve the museum in completely different plans and visions.

Moderna Museet in the City Centre?

Skeppsholmen was near central Stockholm, but not close enough to encourage a quick visit during a lunch break or after work. People had to make an effort to get there, and above all, they needed knowledge about the museum and incentives to go there. Back in 1963, Kurt Bergengren had argued in *Aftonbladet* that Moderna Museet ought to be near Sergels Torg, the central plaza. Bergengren was a prominent cultural critic, focusing especially on photography, but also an active debater on issues relating to Stockholm's urban planning.²⁹ He referred to the museum's extroverted activities and pointed out that it would be practical to locate it in the city: "It should be where the people are, open for fast information and contemplative study that should not be a big ordeal to access."³⁰ Another supporter of these ideas was Pontus Hultén. "We were the ones who originally launched the idea of a cultural centre at Sergels Torg in collaboration with Kurt Bergengren at *Aftonbladet*," he later said in an interview.³¹

Stockholm's inner city was, as mentioned, undergoing a violent transition. The Hötorget area was new and the plans for the actual Sergels Torg and the super-ellipse had been finalised several years earlier, although they had not been carried out in practice. As yet, no one knew what the south side of the plaza would be like. What they could predict at the time, however, was that the yet unfinished Sergels Torg would eventually be the very centre of the city, not to say the whole country. It was an intersection for all the newly-built and planned underground train lines, it was in the middle of a cluster of leading department stores and banks. In other words, it was a place with great potential symbolic value.

Public opinion was turning against the strong commercial emphasis that would characterise the new city centre. It was said that this ought to be balanced with cultural activities in one form or another, prompting the Municipality of Stockholm in 1965 to announce an architectural competition for the two blocks immediately south of Sergels Torg. The intention was to establish some form of cultural activity there, although exactly what this would be was unclear. The competition invited ideas aimed at making room in the two blocks for the Central Bank, a large and a small theatre, a hotel and exhibition halls of an unspecified kind. Another essential

element was, of course, to architectonically articulate the site.

The winner was Peter Celsing, who proposed a complex of three different, but partially connected buildings: the Central Bank and the hotel/theatre complex were orientated towards the south and the Brunkebergstorg plaza, while the third building, Kulturhuset (the "Culture House"), lay like a long, glass screen facing Sergels Torg. This oblong building structure housed the entrance to the large theatre and other facilities for cultural activities. Unlike the extremely closed façade of the Central Bank, Kulturhuset gave an open, almost transparent, impression, like a shop window where the illuminated interior at night appeared inviting to anyone passing by. One of the problems that needed to be addressed in the plans for cultural activities in the city centre was that the area should not be desolate when the shops closed. The jury of the competition appreciated the perspectives opened by Celsing's proposal:

The large glazed exhibition floors provide inspiring potential for new forms of displays, but also present a huge challenge for unconservative, dynamic exhibition methods that are aimed both inwards to visitors and outwards towards the audiences on Sergels Torg, Sveavägen and Sergelgatan.

The proposal entailed an excellent capacity to enrich the urban landscape and city environment, the jury added, "but only if this capacity is utilised with boldness. The proposal's Sergels Torg side is in some ways a stage set that puts high demands on the exhibition directors."³²

Both the architect and the competition jury obviously had a specific tenant in mind for this very special building in the heart of Stockholm: Moderna Museet. One of the points of Celsing's proposal, which may have appealed especially to the jury, was the subtle way in which he balances the building's monumentality. It is practically anti-monumental in its design, yet dominates the site with its monumental scale. One of the sketches in the competition material shows the façade with the word GIACOMETTI in letters adapted to the size of the building. The effect is that the building appears as a great billboard in the cityscape, where the contents are advertised in colossal format. But what the contents of the building would be in reality was still unknown. The drawings indicate that the contents should be visible, changeable and vibrant and in the field of art. And in practice, there was only one cultural institution in Stockholm that qualified for the high expectations on the new building. Moderna Museet's activities in the 1950s and early 1960s had also been a source of inspiration to Peter Celsing. The building is customised, the cultural critic Clas Brunius later wrote in the evening paper *Expressen*: "Pontus Hultén would move into Kulturhuset. He was already involved at grass root level, when Peter Celsing was drawing up his plans, participating in all the decisions on practical appliances for the already determined contents."³³

Pontus Hultén had obviously played a crucial part unofficially in the creation of the building, and soon he also obtained an official role in the planning of it. A Kulturhuset

Niki de Saint Phalle and Jean Tinguely, *Paradiset*, current position

Pablo Picasso, *Déjeuner sur l'herbe*, 1962

committee was appointed to produce proposals for the contents and use of the building. It was assisted by a team of experts, including Hultén, Carlo Derkert and Pär Stolpe. The latter had figured prominently in a campaign to convert a gasometer in Sabbatsberg threatened by demolition into an activity centre. They lost the fight, but the experiences and ideas that grew from the gasometer project were incorporated in the vision that the expert team began to formulate for Kulturhuset, and which would eventually trigger a heated debate in 1969 and early 1970. At the time, the western section of the building had already been started, the part, together with the theatre, that had been reserved as a temporary lodging for the Swedish parliament while the old parliamentary building was being refurbished. The eastern section that was the primary object of the Kulturhuset debate would not be completed until 1973.

It was now 1969, and the cultural climate was radical. Local community associations and other special interest groups were formed in many fields, and the activities in museums also grew more accessible to the general public. The museums' educational programmes expanded and many Stockholm museums started up activities for kids. Moderna Museet's children's workshop, which opened simultaneously with the exhibition *The Model (Modellen)* in 1968 only to become a permanent feature with its own premises within the museum, was especially acknowledged. To engage both children and adults in activities had become just as important as displaying the art itself.

The very definition of culture was changing. The expert team for the Kulturhuset planning based its work on "a current definition of the term culture, which means that culture is not something one can have or own in a material sense, but rather something one can get involved in."³⁴ It proposes that the building be divided into three zones, each with a different content, ranging from extrovert to more contemplative. The lower floor, *Torget* (the Plaza), would be a continuation of Sergels Torg inside the building, a place for constant activities, discussions and meetings. Various creative activities would arise spontaneously and the necessary equipment should also be at hand to support this. *Kilen* (the Wedge, which was what remained of the small theatre included in the competition proposal for Kulturhuset) would serve as a forum, suitable for debates, lectures, concerts, light shows and other performances. *Huset* (the House), finally, consisting of the upper three storeys, would offer more contemplative pastimes. It would have major exhibitions on different subjects, such as urban planning, photography, painting, architecture (all in collaboration with other institutions in each respective field) and the museum's study collection on pull-out screens. The two top floors, finally, would contain the museum's collections ("public collections"). Activities would not be fixed to any particular premises, however. Everything should form a "unit with an active artistic and social goal". Ideas from the plaza could spread upwards through the building.³⁵

A somewhat more sceptical stand with regard to the team's capacity to win public approval for its ideas was expressed by Folke Edwards in an analytical article in

Sydsvenska Dagbladet in autumn 1969.³⁶ Otherwise, the expert team's proposals were enthusiastically received in the public debate, where it gained the support of prominent critics such as Kurt Bergengren, Clas Brunius and Olle Bengtzon. Even Olof Palme sanctioned the museum. He was called on to have an opinion since he was the Minister of Education and Ecclesiastical Affairs at the time, with responsibility for culture, since the museum's collections are government property. The building belonged to the municipality, however, and its politicians had a different view. They wanted, instead, to divide the activities according to administrative requirements. In addition to the museum, space was needed for the municipality's own information activities regarding current urban planning and the municipal library. This was included in the proposal submitted by the official Kulturhuset committee. In practice, this meant that the space for Moderna Museet would be significantly reduced. In February, Pontus Hultén and Moderna Museet resigned from the Kulturhuset committee, officially on account of the reduced space, which meant that it would not be possible to implement the visions that the expert team had been working on. The process may also have generated mistrust against municipal politicians and also a feeling that the government was more reliable as an underwriter. And moreover, there was the possibility of building on Skeppsholmen.

Expansion Plans for Skeppsholmen

In May 1970, Moderna Museet opened its doors again after a refurbishment of the premises and a "magnificent re-hanging" of its own works, according to *Dagens Nyheter's* art critic Margareta Romdahl.³⁷ Rauschenberg's goat had been shampooed and the floors were covered with a pale nylon fibre carpet. Several never-before shown prestigious works were now on display. At the opening, Pontus Hultén declared that the museum wanted to influence developments, "now that it is clear that we will not move to Kulturhuset in Sergels Torg. And we want new buildings here on Skeppsholmen as soon as possible." Later that summer, Stig Johansson at *Svenska Dagbladet* was thinking along the same lines. Pontus Hultén was growing short of space for the collections and activities out on Skeppsholmen. We now have a small museum with large collections, he noted. The re-hanging was a timely reminder of Moderna Museet's hidden treasures.³⁸

The collections had grown. To transfer some of them to Nationalmuseum was no longer an option. It would have been totally impossible simply on account of space. But in practice, the idea had been abandoned long ago anyway. Moderna Museet had become a museum for twentieth-century art. Somewhat paradoxically, the museum director who confessed to an approach to culture where the ownership of material objects should play a subordinate part to participation in a cultural process, had in practice collected an art treasure that would gradually and increasingly come to define the museum and its identity.

In 1970, thus, the lack of space had become severe because the collections had grown. Meanwhile, the museum's array of activities was being extended in accordance with the

prevailing approach to culture. In July 1970, a two-day garden party was held, as the newspapers reported with delight. The party was called “Frukost i det gröna” (Déjeuner sur l’herbe) and featured music, happenings and puppet theatre:

*Those who do not want to sit in the small, intimate garden and listen to music (most people do) can just “float around”, as someone put it. Moderna Museet seems to be made for floating around in: from the paintings to the café to the garden to the children’s workshop (wonderful!) to the paintings to the music, you float around and feel good.*³⁹

The following spring, Filialen was opened, an annex with a three-year pilot project (March 1971 – July 1973) led by Pär Stolpe, focusing on new forms of communication with images. It had been housed in Kasern III, a former barrack, to the east of the Naval College. Here a lively activity evolved, with an emphasis on alternative culture, protest actions and the third world.

Once the plans for moving to Kulturhuset had been abandoned, Pontus Hultén immediately embarked on a programme for extending the museum, together with Carlo Derkert and Pär Stolpe from the defunct expert team, based on the ideas they had formulated there.⁴⁰ This required much larger premises with several new activities. There should be a *paper museum* for drawings, lithographs, prints, posters etcetera, a *workshop* where the public, museum staff and artists could work together, and a “*memory*” where current material of different kinds could be collected and processed. Finally, there was to be a *library* in the form of an image archive with excellent audiovisual equipment. TV and teleprinters would enable communication with other institutions all over the world and the organising of global symposia.⁴¹

In a proposition to the Ministry of Education in April 1972, the forerunner of the National Property Board presented a programme for refurbishment and extension of Moderna Museet, comprising an extension by some 7,700 square metres. It was based on the museum’s own demands and would have entailed an addition of more than three times the floor surface of the original museum building.⁴² One year later, however, in April 1973, this benign prospect had shrunk considerably, when a press release announced that the government had commissioned the Board to extend Moderna Museet by 3,500 square metres, that is, less than half of the original pledge.⁴³

The exact reasons for this downscaling are hard to determine. But in practice it marked the end of an era, where other factors also played a part. In the spring of 1973, the time ran out for the Filialen experiment. Pär Stolpe took various measures to prevent the closure, and had many supporters, including several famous artists.⁴⁴ In a letter to *Dagens Nyheter*’s critic Margareta Romdahl, he even alludes to a schism between him and Pontus Hultén.⁴⁵ The latter afterwards described the period following 1968 as a time characterised by two different standpoints: “one that was artistically oriented and in a romantic and optimistic way wanted to utilise a dynamic cultural climate to extend the potential for

culture in Stockholm and Sweden. Another that was politically oriented and, for better or worse, aimed the focus of the discussion, according to an established pattern, at a safe distance, i.e. South East Asia and North America.”⁴⁶ It is hardly a coincidence that the description of the first group appears to match Hultén himself, while the other could well represent Pär Stolpe and the activities that had taken place at Filialen.

At the time, Pontus Hultén felt severely pressured by the criticism against the museum, which had led, among other things, to a government financial audit of the museum’s operations.⁴⁷ His commitment to Moderna Museet seems to have waned just as new opportunities presented themselves to him in Paris, where the Centre Pompidou was being built as a central institution with a radical agenda. In other words, a situation that was not entirely unlike that which had appeared possible for a while at Sergels Torg in Stockholm. At around the time when the extension was being built at Moderna Museet, Pontus Hultén was appointed head of the art department at the new cultural centre in Paris. Philip von Schantz replaced him as director of Moderna Museet in Stockholm, and was thus introduced in the building phase without having been involved in the planning process. This meant that the building work took place in a veritable vacuum, when the museum stood without strong leadership.

In October 1974, Moderna Museet closed for refurbishment and extension, again with P. O. Olsson as the architect. On 7 November the following year, the new museum opened its doors to the public. The main alteration was the extension to the north, with a large, sky-lighted exhibition hall, flanked on either side by narrow galleries. “The materials and dimensions were chosen with the intention of giving the interiors an unassuming, simple look that gives precedence to the exhibited works,” P. O. Olsson explained.⁴⁸ At the far end of the large hall was a workshop for children and adults. Workshops, offices and storage space were located on the lower floor of the extension. A cinema and lecture hall had been created in an inner part of the former exhibition hall. Between the old and new halls there was a public storage area for art, where a “study collection” on pull-out screens had been recreated (after having served as a closed warehouse with no public access). Here visitors could also browse through magazines and watch video recordings on TV. “It will all be very educational,” commented *Dagens Nyheter*.⁴⁹ The restaurant was larger now, with an adjoining section for cloakroom and toilets. The garden had been re-landscaped by Walter Bauer.

Although the museum now had more than twice the floor space, an air of disappointment still lingered among those who had harboured great expectations on the extension plans before they were downsized. Moreover, the change of director had put a damper on the previous decade’s optimistic ideas on a vibrant and progressive operation. I was an editor of the journal *Arkitektur* at the time, and produced a theme issue on art museums in 1977.⁵⁰ Malmö konsthall, designed by Klas Anshelm, had just been completed and was received positively as a beautiful and functional museum building. Since Moderna Museet’s extension had not been

presented in the journal before, it was natural to acknowledge it properly in this issue, and also to give space to critical voices. Bo Lagercrantz wrote the main feature. He was head of Stockholm City Museum (Stockholms Stadsmuseum), an institution that had provided a forum for debates, seminars and exhibitions relating to current social issues. Firstly, he claimed he felt bitter about the extension of Moderna Museet that had been implemented: "A dreadful betrayal of the wonderful promise that the old museum gave us and the world." There had been an opportunity to "establish the world's first museum with a consistent relationship to the total picture, dynamically reflecting the relationship between the mass image and its various permutations in art", as Pontus Hultén was now doing in Paris, according to Lagercrantz. Instead, this was a retreat back to the old art museum rut, he said. This had been made possible because of flexibility. First, the promised area had been reduced to one third, then everything had been shoved together, in the holy name of flexibility. The fault lay with Hultén's successor, who had failed to be precise in his programme, he continued. The architect was not to blame; his task had merely been to find a form for the lack of ideas, according to Lagercrantz.

The so-called flexibility, which had been a guiding principle for the design of museum buildings ever since Curman's days, was now being called into question. Or rather, its limitations as a model were beginning to grow clearer. I was among those who expressed scepticism, for instance in an article in the same issue of *Arkitektur*. My main question was: "Room for experiments, room for artists and audiences to act. How can these objectives be translated into physical form, into architecture?" There was no real answer to that question, other than that flexibility was not enough in itself. It was also a matter of distinctness, ease of orientation and how the various spaces were positioned in relation to one another. But the sprawling, indistinct spaces that often resulted from demands on flexibility had also generated a new need for a more articulated architectonic design. Here, Liljevalchs konsthall could serve as a model for a building with definite, distinct rooms, which, thanks to its carefully considered room dimensions, could still be used in many different ways. This allowed flexibility in use, but also provided something beyond making more floor space available.

In 1977, Centre Pompidou in Paris was completed. The principle of flexibility had been consistently applied in the design, proving to be problematic in some respects.⁵¹ But the building was also the first example of a new phenomenon: a cultural building that became famous mainly on account of its remarkable architectonic design. "A muscular, almost brutal, crystal palace for modern laboratory culture that expresses efficiency, dynamism, openness. Anything but closed, dignified, class-conscious 'culture'," wrote Folke Edwards in a review of the building. Regarding the contents, he described Centre Pompidou as a merger between administratively separate units: a museum for modern art (with Hultén as the director), a public library equipped with the latest audio-visual technology, an experimental concert hall and music laboratory, and a centre for industrial design, architecture

and urbanism. Its novelty lay mainly in the great investment in audio-visual information, according to Edwards. In his opinion, the building incorporated a contradiction: while it is "the French establishment's cultural battleship, it wants to be a forum for experimental and innovative culture... for guerrilla warfare." How this was to be consolidated, he writes, was another question. "But probably a tough one."⁵²

The Idea of a New Building is Born

Not much more than ten years later, in the late 1980s, the issue of new premises for Moderna Museet resurfaced. Two crucial changes had taken place during the inflated and speculative economic boom. One was that the value of art had rocketed. The other was that cultural capital had become an increasingly essential ingredient in the cities' competition for tourists, events and investments on the international market. Thus, museums gained a new and economically poignant role in "putting the city on the map". Frankfurt am Main was a city that, thanks to massive investments in new museums, designed by internationally renowned architects, succeeded in reversing its rather poor reputation as a cultural metropolis. Throughout the Western world, new more or less spectacular museum buildings popped up and stirred up publicity. Many of these museums expressed a completely new approach to museum architecture, contrary to the modest attitude to art that prevailed in the 1950s. Now the museum architecture was seen as a work of art in its own right. Famous examples are Hans Hollein's museum buildings in Frankfurt and Mönchengladbach, with their fragmented spatial forms that constantly offer new perspectives that can easily make visitors lose their bearings. In positive terms, the intention could be described as follows: "The object here is not the art work's autonomy at any price, but the consciously staged relationship between the space and the work of art."⁵³ In practice, many visitors felt that the buildings obscured the art itself.

Sweden's cultural climate had changed significantly since the end of the 1960s. The role of Moderna Museet had also shifted. It was no longer something new, radical and unpresigious, but an established institution that owned a national treasure. Many of the works in the museum collection had attained an iconic status over the years, which meant that their value had increased dramatically. The collection of twentieth-century art was described as one of the best in Europe. In spring 1989, the lack of space became even more urgent, when 23 internationally prestigious works were donated to the museum by Gerard Bonnier. The inability to display the collections once again became a strong argument in favour of an entirely new building. The decisive reason, however, was the technical shortcomings of the old building, especially with regard to the indoor climate. An investigation carried out by the National Property Board in the winter of 1988, finally, revealed that it would not be possible, within reasonable costs, to achieve a climate in the premises that would protect the works of art from damage.⁵⁴

The Swedish Arts Council consequently submitted a proposal to the Property Board for a completely new modern art

museum, three times the size of the old one. A possible site was the parking lot below the museum (that is, the plot that was once proposed for the University College of Fine Arts). *Dagens Nyheter's* art critic Ingela Lind had been shown the plans and wrote about them in an article on 1 June 1988, after a discussion with three people who played a prominent part in the new proposal: Moderna Museet's director, Olle Granath, the head of the Swedish Arts Council, Göran Löfdahl, and the director-general of the National Property Board, Lars Ag. Löfdahl and Ag had already commissioned sketches as a basis for an architectural competition. By chance, there were unused funds in the national budget, thanks to the abandoned project to build a new opera in Gothenburg.

Ingela Lind summed up the arguments in favour of a new modern art museum: lack of space, the considerable financial value of the art and the art thefts that called for better security in museums. Added to this, the works were threatened by damage since it was not possible to achieve the right climate in the old building, while the modern art works, thanks to their experiments with new materials, were especially prone. Moreover, it was hard to borrow valuable works from other institutions. Finally, Lind mentioned the international boom in museum building. New museums had been built all over the world despite fairly meagre collections, but in Sweden the situation was the reverse, she claimed: "In Stockholm there is (thus) great art in search of a building and an audience, while many other museums are buildings in search of a collection."⁵⁵

The idea of a new museum was now officially established. Critical voices were heard, but on the whole there was massive support.⁵⁶ The decisive factor was the foundation that was created thanks to the commitment of the artist Eddie Figge, which collected funds and donated works of art to contribute towards the funding of an architectural competition, mainly in order to attract international participation. Meanwhile, the planning proceeded. One problem was what to do with the old, listed drill-house. Since it was not suitable for the Moderna Museet collection, Olle Granath suggested Arkitekturmuseet as a suitable tenant. In September 1989, the National Property Board, the Swedish Arts Council and the two museum directors Olle Granath and Jöran Lindvall presented their plans for an architectural competition. On 16 May 1990 it was launched.

The Architectural Competition in 1990 and the Ensuing Debate

The competition task was to design Moderna Museet and Arkitekturmuseet, which would form two separate units within one building complex, but with a common entrance. Around the entrance would be clusters of public areas, such as a cloakroom and toilets, an auditorium, specialist bookshops, a café and restaurant. The joint use of certain premises was justified as a way of saving space, but in practice it also opened up for a potential contact between the two museums and their fields of expertise.

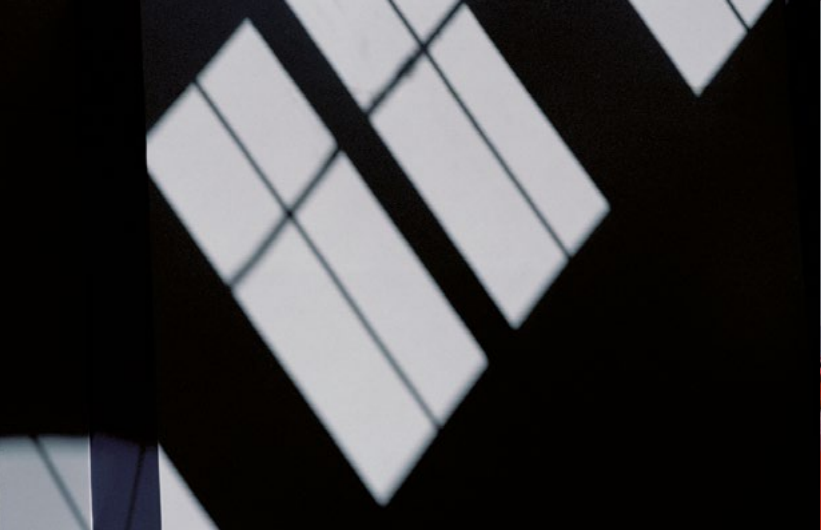
In the competition programme the two museum directors had formulated a "programme philosophy", stating the

features they looked forward to in the new building. They wanted a visually straightforward building, without compromising on quality and with a classical floor plan with clearly defined rooms. "In the past decades of museum architecture, there are several examples where the presentation of the art has become obscure, since the rooms were not sufficiently clearly defined," they claimed. Reading between the lines, some of the new museum buildings had appeared as warning examples. Instead, the museum directors eulogised the artist studio, where simplicity is combined with a beautiful, utilitarian light. The ideal is a quiet intensity. They also underline that they want to see "the surrounding nature intrude on the architecture". The feature they mention most specifically is the pale floors that reflect the light upwards.⁵⁷

This was a general Swedish architectural competition, but in order to attract prestigious international participants three non-Nordic and two Nordic architects had been specially invited: Tadao Ando, Japan; Frank Gehry, USA; Kristian Gullichsen, Finland; Rafael Moneo, Spain; and Jørn Utzon, Denmark. The architects were selected by Arkitekturmuseet. The aim was to find five internationally renowned architects who were so disparate that the selection would not give any clue as to the desired architectural style. All except Gehry submitted a proposal to the competition.⁵⁸ Altogether, more than 200 proposals had been received on the final competition date, 15 November 1990. The jury included the directors of the museums involved (Olle Granath who was now the head of Nationalmuseum and the National Art Collections, the umbrella under which Moderna Museet belonged; Björn Springfeldt who had been appointed head of Moderna Museet; and Jöran Lindvall, head of Arkitekturmuseet) and representatives of the National Property Board and the Municipality of Stockholm. Two architects had been duly appointed by the Swedish organisation for architects, SAR: Jan Gezelius and Danish architect Boje Lundgaard. The rector of the Royal University College of Fine Arts, Olle Kåks represented the Eddie Figge Foundation. Moreover, the jury included a few co-opted experts.⁵⁹ The chairman was the architect and director of engineering at the National Property Board, Lennart Kolte.

The competition site was roughly the area surrounding the existing Moderna Museet and the large space below the museum down to the water. A magnificent location, in other words, that was basically ready to use after the great barge house had been demolished a few decades earlier. But the difficulty lay in placing a substantial volume in a sensitive spot, characterised by small-scale buildings that were invaluable both historically and with regard to the townscape. This was a delicate architectural task, and there was certainly cause to anticipate conflict, not least in view of the spectacular tendencies that had been demonstrated in international museum architecture.

Added to this, there were other issues. Building a museum is not merely a question of design but primarily one of content and identity, which in turn influences design and disposition. What kind of museum was wanted? The question was a veritable cultural policy issue and top of the agenda.





Museum development had led to a number of dilemmas, which appeared most starkly in relation to this particular museum. Ingela Lind pinpointed these issues with great precision in an article headed “Why this silence around a new modern art museum?” The art market forces new museums to be designed to resemble fortresses or lockable treasure chests, giving the works an aura of sanctification, regardless of their original purpose, she writes. Lind continues:

*More important than the colour of the floor is the question of whether it is even possible for a museum that holds the ever-more closely guarded art treasures of the 20th century and is economically dependent on the political and financial establishment to also serve as an anti-museum. [...] How can Moderna Museet be guaranteed intellectual and artistic liberty in a dwindling economy? How can it balance the increasing demand to finance its monstrously growing costs for conservation, insurance and security, against the need to be not only popular but also a place for experimentation in cross-cultural challenges against the same establishment on which it is growing increasingly dependent?*⁶⁰

How can the intellectual vitality be guaranteed in a petrifying institution, she asks, and refers to Moderna Museet’s history as an anti-museum with a heritage that includes the Museum of Modern Art in New York, “whose philosophy for the art museum as modern man’s living room was brought by Pontus Hultén first to Stockholm and later to Centre Pompidou in Paris.” Another issue, according to Ingela Lind, was whether it was possible or desirable to draw boundary lines between artistic disciplines such as arts and crafts, design, furniture, architecture, stage design, painting, graphic art and sculpture.⁶¹

Two days later, Moderna Museet’s director, Björn Springfeldt, was challenged by *Dagens Nyheter* on the issue of whether content, aim and location should not have been discussed before launching an architectural competition. Springfeldt responded that the new museum’s architecture would have to be adaptable so that the building could accommodate a flexible operation. He was happy with the standard of the competition proposals. Moreover, he claimed to be enthusiastic about the idea of a design museum in the vicinity and emphasised that a new museum of architecture was part of the competition task, and that small stages would be created “automatically” in the museum, thanks to the department for photography, the larger workshop and the auditorium.⁶² It was only natural, he said, that the space for the collection would be twice as large as the exhibition space, since the museum had such a large and high-class international collection.⁶³

The actual possession of a prestigious collection had consequently influenced the museum’s activities and identity in various ways. It represented astronomical economic values, but also a significant cultural capital. This was the

most pressing reason for a new building, and it influenced the new building’s design. The disposition of the surface intended for the collection and temporary exhibitions already signalled an institution that asserted its identity through its possessions.

The architectural competition offered a broad spectrum of solutions, with new premises laid out either along the quayside or uphill, or both. Some of the competitors had tried to divide the museum into smaller units, resembling old warehouses or shipyards, others proposed massive, solid bodies. In March 1991, the winner was selected, and the sealed envelopes of the anonymously submitted entries were opened. It was revealed that the first prize had been awarded to one of the foreign invitees, the Spanish architect Rafael Moneo. His proposal was for a solid volume that would stretch north parallel with Östasiatiska Museet. The drill-house would be turned over to Arkitekturmuseet, while the extension from 1975 would be demolished to make room for the new building, which would continue down the slope, with an additional entrance facing the large open space below the museum. For temporary exhibitions there would be a large gallery near the entrance, while the museum’s collections would be hung in nineteen variously-sized exhibition halls, grouped into three larger blocks.

This was a solution, in other words, that differentiated between a flexible space for temporary exhibitions and smaller, clearly defined rooms for the collection. These smaller rooms would have a pyramid shape with chimney-like skylights, giving each unit a distinct silhouette from the outside, while the aggregate effect was a small-scale and varied rooftop landscape. A large part of the building volume would be sunk into the bedrock. Moneo’s ambition had been to achieve the (large) area that was required in the programme with the smallest possible impact on “the sensitive and delicate architecture on the island.”⁶⁴ In its statement, the jury emphasised that this was a striking and beautiful proposal, where the new building would appear independent and yet blend with the existing buildings into a totality. It favourably commented the design and layout of the exhibition spaces and the restaurant, but also pointed out a few shortcomings that needed to be adjusted.⁶⁵ This referred mainly to the requirements of Arkitekturmuseet, which were treated negligently in the proposal.

The result of the competition was favourably received on the whole. “With roots in classicist architecture, Moneo has a broader perspective that enables him to differentiate between essentials and inessentials,” wrote John Sjöström in *Svenska Dagbladet*. He continued: “It is not the building they asked for, but it is the volume that is to be desired on Skeppsholmen. There is not room for more in one collected unit.”⁶⁶ Some critical voices were also heard, however: “If this somewhat stiff, rather too static and rational development is implemented, Stockholm will at long last have its Museum with Antiqua typeface on marble and a serene light flowing from celestial heights that the museum board wanted all along,” wrote Ingamaj Beck in *Aftonbladet*.⁶⁷ In the journal *Arkitektur* Aleksander Wolodarski analysed the competition

← Moderna Museet in Spårvagnshallarna, 1994–96; construction site, the new Moderna Museet, 1995; interior from the new museum, 1997

result in terms of how the volumes are distributed in relation to the island's building traditions and topography. He gave special attention to a proposal with a design that divides the programme into several smaller units, which, he claimed, expresses another approach to the identities and roles of museums in the urban landscape.⁶⁸

Soon, however, other clouds began to loom with regard to the whole issue of a new building. It all started with a discussion in the Stockholm Property Board regarding the rental of premises in Kulturhuset. The minutes from a meeting on 31 March 1992, state that the possibility of transferring Moderna Museet's activities to Kulturhuset should be utilised.⁶⁹ The chairman of the Board, commissioner Carl Erik Skårman (Conservative) was to pursue this aim fervently throughout the rest of the year. His arguments in favour of a move to Kulturhuset were firstly the proximity to the large audience of "ordinary Stockholmers" and that this would entail a "revitalising of an area in the city that needs a lot of culture".⁷⁰ Apparently, however, the main issue was that the Municipality of Stockholm wanted to hoist the rental costs for Kulturhuset onto the government, so they could cut some spending of municipal funds. For Moderna Museet the discussion came at a sensitive time. The competition had been held and there was a winner. However, the sitting Conservative coalition government had not yet announced whether they would allocate funds for a new building. Soon, there was substantial unease, triggering a heated debate in the press. There are worrying signals, wrote Sune Nordgren in *Sydsvenska Dagbladet* on 17 May, "that a new Moderna Museet has been moved down on the list of priorities and that the funding that existed is no longer there. Instead, the most astonishing ideas are presented as 'solutions', for instance the proposal that Moderna Museet move to Kulturhuset!"⁷¹ He found the idea preposterous.

Why was the idea that Pontus Hultén had proposed and worked for more than twenty years earlier suddenly "preposterous"? The answer was delivered in the public debate not only by Sune Nordgren but also emphatically by a number of other commentators. The need for a museum for contemporary art was a national concern, Nordgren insisted. And moreover, Moderna Museet's potential lay in its collection, but the building was deficient. It was a "delayed-action destruction machine" (as Olle Granath had dubbed it earlier). The competition had been a success, Moneo's proposal was a truly exciting solution, in tune with the unique environment on Skeppsholmen. Build it now, Sune Nordgren exhorted. "Now that there is a building to erect on a specific site that could make it one of the most beautiful museums in the world. Now that the collection and the building together can become an attraction of international renown."⁷² Similar opinions were put forth by Niklas Rådström in *Expressen* and John Peter Nilsson in *Aftonbladet*.⁷³ In *Dagens Nyheter* Philip von Schantz referred to an "embarrassing discrepancy between the scope and dignity of the collection and the potential of the museum building to display and handle this collection," and went on to emphasise the advantages of the new link to Arkitekturmuseet.⁷⁴

In early June 1992, subsequently, a full-page ad was published in the major daily papers with the headline "Build the New Moderna Museet Now!" signed by 149 cultural workers. The text called attention to the prominent quality of the collection and the museum's task to care for, extend and exhibit it, but states that the existing building threatened to damage them. Moneo's winning proposal to the competition was described as a moderate, practical and very beautiful example of a modern museum building. "A place where the concept of a 'museum' can cover both museum collecting and muse-like, playful, thought-provoking and serious exhibitions."⁷⁵ *Dagens Nyheter* was quick on the uptake and followed suit with a leader article under the heading "Build the new Moderna Museet". In Rafael Moneo's custom-built building, Moderna Museet's collection will come into its own in an entirely different way than it ever could in Kulturhuset, it says.⁷⁶ Moneo was interviewed in the news pages of both major dailies, alongside features on his recent international feats.⁷⁷

In August, the Ministry of Culture received a petition, signed by Carl Tham (then chairman of the Swedish National Art Museums, Statens konstmuseer), Olle Granath and Björn Springfeldt. Peter Celsing's Kulturhuset building, they opined, had been a shining example of a multi-activity house, corresponding to the new era and cultural approach prevailing at the time it was built, when the emphasis was more on a dialogue between the practitioners of art and their audience through active participation and in groups, than on the individual's encounter with the work of art. But Kulturhuset had never received sufficient funding to live up to this. In contrast the petition stressed Moderna Museet's dual role as an art museum with a significant collection and a diversified programme of exhibitions and events. Thus, it filled a unique purpose as a memory and a reference to contemporaneity. This role could not be fulfilled in Kulturhuset due to several practical problems: ten storeys with mostly side-lit galleries and very long and complex adjoining corridors, low rafters that were also in the way when moving things within the building. Moreover, security would be almost impossible to handle, the audience would find it hard to get an overview, warehousing and conservation would have unfavourable conditions.⁷⁸

At least the new discussion on Moderna Museet's relocation to Kulturhuset in 1992 clarified one point. The importance of the collection was now generally regarded as the core of the museum's identity. In twenty years it had changed from a museum that is what it *does* to a museum that is what it *has*. And it was this latter museum that needed a building to suit its purpose and of a standard appropriate to its cultural capital.

The first reassuring messages came in mid-November 1992. The government had given the National Property Board the go-ahead to start planning the development on Skeppsholmen. At the press conference, Minister of Culture Birgit Friggebo announced that Stockholm was a candidate for European Cultural Capital, and that the decision to build a new Moderna Museet would increase their chances of success.⁷⁹ So far, however, the Municipality of Stockholm had

not approved the urban plan and a new discussion flared up, mainly about the unique environment on Skeppsholmen. In a column on *Dagens Nyheter*'s leader page Thomas Hall criticised the large volume of the planned museum. Instead, he proposed that the museum be split between older and contemporary art. The latter, he suggested, could be housed in the PUB department store building on Drottninggatan in central Stockholm, which was under debate for other reasons.⁸⁰ Olof Hultin also expressed his opinion, in a leader in *Arkitektur* that a relocation to the city would have been "the vitalising injection needed to cure the dilapidating and culturally deprived city centre". Moreover, he was cautionary with regard to the museum's size, and referred to the half-empty buildings in Germany after the museum boom, wondering if there would be money left for a meaningful operation.⁸¹

As for the environment on Skeppsholmen, however, the cultural heritage bodies had been comparatively generous in their statements and had only minor objections to the winning proposal. These mainly concerned the height of the skylight lanterns and the angle of the roof, and the contour of the skyline on the side facing Skeppsbron.⁸² Similar issues were also discussed at the local building committee's discussions on the urban planning under the Stockholm commissioner Monica Andersson (social democrat), with the result that Moneo had to adjust his plan on certain points. One substantial improvement was that windows were added to give a view of the water from a few places inside the large exhibition area in the building. Monica Andersson did not win agreement for all her objections, however. At a meeting in the City Hall at which Moneo was present, she had stated that Stockholm disliked "superpower architecture" and that Moneo's "Gothic lanterns" should be removed. Jöran Lindvall, who also attended the meeting, recalls: "Moneo staunchly refused to comply with this. He staggered out of the meeting. I happened to be standing in his way and he practically fell in my arms with the words: 'It is not easy to be an architect.'"⁸³

The museum director, Björn Springfeldt, was happy with the proposal, however. Moneo's museum is characterised by humility and respect for art, he said. On Skeppsholmen there is the "peace, calm and refuge that people need in order to experience art," he told *Dagens Nyheter* in the summer of 1993.⁸⁴ A controversy that had apparently existed in the jury came to light, however, in a debate organised by the magazine *Arkitektur* at the time. The moderator and editor Olof Hultin asked why the jury had given priority to a proposal that "totally disregards the greatest asset here, namely the access to the water". The architects in the jury wanted the possibility of a view from the exhibition enclaves, Björn Springfeldt responded, "and I won't deny that this was a concern for us museum people, since it is harder to exhibit paintings and art, if there is a beguiling view that averts attention."⁸⁵

In autumn 1993 the project progressed. In October, Arkitekturmuseet opened an exhibition on Rafael Moneo and his architecture, generating a host of articles in the press where Moneo's sensitivity to the location was consistently praised.⁸⁶ In the introduction to the catalogue, Johan

Mårtelius analysed the approach that characterised the works of the Spanish architect. There is a self-effacing trait in Rafael Moneo as an architect, he wrote. But this does not mean that he is discreet or quiet, but rather that he gives the building a quality so it can stand independently, with its own relation to the place and history, Mårtelius explained. Moneo seeks a "durable character that pursues a continuous dialogue stretching far beyond the architect's, the programme's or the building situation's temporary interference."⁸⁷

That autumn, a startling art coup took place at Moderna Museet; eight paintings were stolen, including six by Picasso. Together, the paintings represented a sum corresponding to the entire budget for the new building.⁸⁸ The theft impacted immediately on the planning phase, and security was given even higher priority. This meant higher costs without any additional allocations to the total budget, so cuts had to be made in other areas. This affected Arkitekturmuseet noticeably.⁸⁹

Evacuation: Moderna Museet in the Tram Depot

In October 1993, the Moderna Museet director, Björn Springfeldt, announced that the tram depot (Spårvagnshallarna) on Birger Jarlsgatan in Stockholm would serve as temporary premises for the museum while the new museum was being constructed. The depot was originally built as a garage for Stockholm trams when the tramways were electrified at the end of the nineteenth century. It is situated near the Stockholm tramways head office, built in the 1880s, at Tegnérsgatan 2, and both buildings were designed by the architect Adolf Emil Melander. Behind the massive brick façades are high-ceilinged, bright halls with a delicate ironwork frame. The whole block had been through a massive refurbishment that incorporated the tram depot in an entirely new office complex with an indoor plaza. Parts of the new building were available for offices, an auditorium and a café, while the old depot could accommodate exhibition galleries and other public areas, including a bookshop, cloakroom and toilets near the entrance, and children's activities at the back. According to *Dagens Nyheter* and *Svenska Dagbladet*, Björn Springfeldt was euphoric about the large, open premises that he found to be ideal.⁹⁰

In spring 1994, Moderna Museet moved to the tram depot. The environment was entirely in line with a current trend in the art world to utilise old industrial or other functional buildings with large, well-lit rooms for exhibition-related activities. A combination of spatial qualities were found here, flexible usage and an unprestigious setting that was attractive to artists, exhibition curators and audiences. In hindsight, looking through pictures from Moderna Museet's exhibitions over its entire existence to illustrate the relationship between art and spaces, we find that it is the sculpture exhibitions that consistently reveal the qualities of the space, possibly because the photographer is simply more focused on three-dimensional features. One of the most exquisite photographs shows an interior from the Alexander Calder exhibition in the tram depot in 1996, from floor to

[Images removed due to copyright restrictions]

ceiling and with the light falling through the lanterns in the ironwork roof frame and the bow windows.

The period in the tram depot developed into something that went beyond a necessary stop-gap – it became an appreciated epoch. Moderna Museet's visitors quickly found their way to the new address. The location in a common urban environment along one of the busiest city streets felt inviting and accessible in a new way. In light of this new and unpretentious situation the ongoing museum project was apt to appear in a new light, where its exclusivity seemed more striking.

A New Museum in a New Era

While the museum's activities were relocated to the tram depot, the building process and planning of the new museum moved on. As mentioned, the local building committee in Stockholm had discussed concrete objections to the museum exterior, resulting in some adjustments. When the new building committee members met in autumn 1996 and chose a colour for the exterior in opposition to the architect's recommendations, their participation decidedly tipped the scales from dialogue to embarrassing mistake. It had already been decided at the time that the roof material would be zinc for environmental reasons. Following that decision, the architect had explored different grey tones and proposed a dark, warm grey nuance for the façade rendering.⁹¹ The committee felt it looked too much like concrete and preferred red. At a meeting on 11 September 1996, the building committee decided to refuse planning permission for the grey colour and recommended red. And that was how it turned out. The project manager at the National Property Board, Peter Ohrstedt, publicly challenged whether politicians were entitled to make decisions on pure design issues such as this. Shouldn't their task be to ensure that competent building entrepreneurs and architects design buildings in a competent manner – rather than assume the role of designers and ultimate arbiters of taste, he asked.⁹² The question was justified, especially since the issue is essential to the purely architectonic effect of the building, as the colour of the façade interacts with the colour of the roof.⁹³

On 8 September 1997, the new museum was presented to the press, with the architect Rafael Moneo in attendance. The museum now had a new director, the British David Elliott. Less than half a year remained before the official inauguration, and the positive accounts in the press added to the high expectations. "A terrific museum," was the heading of Bo Madestrands presentation in *Expressen*. "The architecture is discreet and unobtrusive, and consequently does not risk killing the art," he opined, while adding that the overhead lanterns did not provide enough light.⁹⁴ This was a problem that would crop up repeatedly in the ensuing debate. In general, many of the critics praised the adaptation to the site, along with the interior as a whole.⁹⁵ Moneo had shown the aesthetic courage to let the architecture be subordinate to the voice of Skeppsholmen and Stockholm, Christina Karlstam wrote in *Upsala Nya Tidning*: "Similarly, his building reveals an architectonic maturity that entails that art is allowed to take centre stage in the new museum,"

she states.⁹⁶ Peder Alton in *Dagens Nyheter* was more critical. He compared the "gravely closed rooms" with prehistoric catacombs and disapproves of the "pressing twilight" that pervaded there: "The art audience must adjust to wandering around in a grey light and revere art as invaluable treasures. A high-brow museum for the 21st century."⁹⁷

As Cultural Capital of Europe, Stockholm could open its doors in February 1998 to one of the era's great museum developments on the international arena. Two days after the official opening on 12 February, the general public finally had access to the new building. Naturally, the interest was enormous and expectations sky-high. The museum building was presented in big, full-page, richly illustrated articles in the press. The tone was now generally positive, but the objections also grew in number and precision. The entrance and restaurant were perceived to be surprisingly light, spacious and open, but the issue of the bad lighting in the exhibition galleries was resumed.⁹⁸ The permitted brightness had been determined by the conservators at a level that was experienced as too dark. Moreover, it was February and the days were short.⁹⁹ Many visitors also perceived the building as closed, mostly due to the dusky, windowless rooms. The closed feeling was associated with isolation but also with a bunker, an impregnable stronghold or fortress.¹⁰⁰ This impression was probably enhanced by the strong emphasis given to the museum's security and the thick walls that contain technical installations. In the programme philosophy the then museum directors had called for an everyday environment, but without renouncing demands on quality. In the finished museum the materials were of a high quality, with walls clad in birch panelling and limestone from Gotland, and oak board and limestone floors, which were perceived as luxurious.

A contrast was provided by the new part of Arkitekturmuseet, which Moneo had designed light-handedly as a more open and unassuming building in the international style. Its bright library with corner windows was hailed by several critics as the most beautiful room in the whole complex. "This liberating lightness makes one want to linger," exclaimed Ingela Lind, who hoped the two museums would be able to interact, so that they would not miss the dynamic point of being linked. Moderna Museet's new building, on the other hand accrued a mound of objections in her article. The oak parquet and its pattern absorbed the weak light and competed with the art. Contemporary art objects often required the whole floor. The windowless halls for art were yet another problem. Altogether, however, she stated that Sweden had gained an impressive millennial monument of a high international standard in Moderna Museet. "A new national museum for the cultural heritage of the 20th century." What was needed now was to "puncture the insipidness that threatens to afflict all ageing institutions".¹⁰¹

In 1998, Moneo's new building for Arkitekturmuseet was awarded the Kasper Sahlin Prize, Sweden's most prestigious architectural award. The fact that he did not get it for Moderna Museet was too obvious a gesture to misunderstand. It can be imagined that Moneo must have received the prize with mixed feelings.

Mould and Evacuation: Klarabergsviadukten

In 2001, mould was found in both museums. Mould dogs were used in a preliminary survey. The inspection records, where the places where the dogs detected mould are marked with an X, look like cross-stitch patterns. Close lines of crosses run along the walls and corners throughout most of the building. This provoked strong reactions, but was not a reliable description of the situation. In-depth inspections gave another picture. The mould resided primarily in the restaurant ventilators. Leakiness, damp patches, condensation and holes were also found in several places. Moreover, damp basement air from cavities in the bedrock spread to the museum premises via the ventilation system. The staff in both museums were affected by serious health problems.

Scandal is a mild word for what this meant. But this is not the right place to get to the bottom of how this could have happened. The likeliest explanation is probably a combination of circumstances, of which a few can be mentioned: Many different parties were involved and were supposed to interact, the number of consultants rose dramatically in the process. The principal was the National Property Board, which was restructured and renamed in 1993, with ensuing turbulence and changes in personnel. In practice, it meant that the entire project had a new principal, with a new organisation and operations policy.¹⁰² Another significant loss in the process was that the experienced project manager Lennart Kolte died in 1994. The originator himself, Rafael Moneo, was engrossed in other projects in other countries and was represented on site by his daughter Belén and her partner Jeff Cobb – an arrangement that appears to have worked well, however. A Swedish consulting group led by the architect Ragnar Uppman at White Arkitektkontor had the task of adapting the Spanish architect's drawings and instructions to Swedish regulations, technology and building procedures. The third major party was the construction company NCC. Added to this complex network of parties who had to collaborate were the cutbacks, which, in turn, led to great (and expensive) reworkings of the plans. There was an obvious lack of control, since the leaks had not been discovered and attended to. The automatic dampness and temperature control didn't work properly either. A factor that probably had a decisive effect was the tight schedule. Somewhere along the line, everything apparently went completely wrong, resulting in serious conflicts between all the parties involved. The cost for the rebuilding necessitated by the mould, SEK 354 million, was slightly more than the original budget for the entire project.¹⁰³

The mould was obviously a shocking setback for both museums, involving a new round of relocating and refurbishing for another two years. Moderna Museet had just appointed a new director, Lars Nittve, who had previous experience of working for the museum. He successfully turned the catastrophe into an inspiring new start for the museum. The collections toured to different c/o addresses and an operational base camp was set up c/o Klarabergsviadukten 61, premises next door to the Central Station.

Yet another change of scene in keeping with the times.

A stark environment in raw concrete without any apparent architectonic qualities at the outset, was transformed into an unpretentious and inviting meeting point by the interior decorator Åsa Conradsson at Fråne, Hederus, Malmström architectural bureau. The museum greeted visitors with a bright blue entrance façade, leading straight into the bustle of a café and book shop immediately inside the front doors. A bold colour scheme in turquoise and orange interacted with a clever use of graphic design to meet the requirements for information. A long wall papered with posters drew visitors deeper into the premises, past a multi-media information centre, a photography library and a children's workshop. At the end was a major exhibition space with windows overlooking the rough cityscape around Tegelbacken. Another inside space was used for small, short exhibitions under the name *Odd Weeks (Udda veckor)*.

Reactions were immediate and appreciative. "A positive surprise in a coolly brutal urban setting," wrote Clemens Poellinger in *Svenska Dagbladet*. Similar tributes were heard in other newspapers.¹⁰⁴ Moderna Museet was described as present, popular, contemporary and vibrant, and was contrasted by some critics with the building on Skeppsholmen, which was described as authoritarian or bunker-like.¹⁰⁵ The favourable reaction to the premises at Klarabergsviadukten thus cast a shadow on the new building, even if the comparison concerned activities operating under entirely different conditions. The museum's legendary past was another such counter-image in the bleak atmosphere after the mould was discovered. "A museum with a magnificent reputation from the 1960s as an open and radical art institution has been transformed into a conservation machine for rows of light-sensitive masterpieces. How much fun is that?" exclaimed *Göteborgs Posten's* cultural editor Mikael van Reis in a comment on the mould scandal.¹⁰⁶

The positive experiences from Klarabergsviadukten were applied, however, in the refurbishments of Moderna Museet prior to the return. The assignment was given to the architectural bureau Marge, run by four women architects: Pye Aurell Ehrström, Katarina Grundsell, Louise Masreliez and Susanna Ramel. The main new feature was the brighter entrance, achieved by moving the admission desk and opening up the book shop. An espresso bar was added, signs were replaced and the large restaurant was redecorated. The floors in the exhibition spaces were made paler and the lighting was adjusted. The entrance facing the water, which had previously been closed to the public, was opened. The effects were obvious and the museum was experienced as brighter and more welcoming.

Moderna Museet in an International Context

The international museum boom of the 1980s did not end in the 1990s but continued to accelerate well into the 2000s. In the summer of 1997, when the work on Moderna Museet was in its final stage, the new art museum designed by Frank

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Gehry opened in Bilbao. This was the culmination of the boom, and people started referring to the “Bilbao Effect”. Gehry, who had designed an array of remarkable buildings with sculptural shapes since the 1980s, had become one of the international megastars of architecture. With the museum in Bilbao he brought his own personal design style to its utmost point. Using advanced CAD technology, exceedingly complex sculptural shapes could be translated into feasible constructions. Using particular material effects, the curved shapes were made to shimmer like the underbelly of a live fish. The museum in Bilbao was an immediate media hit and consequently a poignant illustration of the concept of “city branding”. Inspired by the Bilbao example, some local politicians began to regard spectacular architecture as a tool for promoting their city. It was easy to overlook the specific conditions in Bilbao. Gehry’s feat was to create a place out of a non-place by means of impressive changes. A run-down industrial site was exalted into a characterful focal point in the urban landscape.

In Helsinki the art museum Kiasma, designed by the architect Steven Holl, was finalised almost synchronously with Moderna Museet in Stockholm. With its unconventional shape it meanders across a previously sprawling zone between the central district around the railway station and the government district comprising the Parliament, the Finlandia building and Töölönlahti. A welcoming entrance, with a café and book shop right inside the doors, faces the city. A winding interior with beautiful, varied natural lighting, leads visitors through the museum to the other end, where it opens up again, this time towards a magnificent view of the city around the bay. Kiasma has made “a living, urban and public space out of a place where previously only drunkards loitered,” wrote Kaarin Taipale in the presentation of the museum in the Swedish magazine *Arkitektur*.¹⁰⁷ Like Gehry’s museum in Bilbao, Kiasma responds to a specific location where, in both cases, it was possible to be flamboyant without the risk of losing something significant.

Rafael Moneo’s task in Stockholm was an entirely different matter. He had to adapt his design to a site with significant value. He is not an architect who aspires to ephemeral values that happen to be in vogue, but tries to establish long-term, sustainable and durable solutions. The new international museum boom has not been characterised unequivocally by spectacular projects. A common trait of many of the new museums, however, is that they relate to the location in some way. But there are just as many versions of the new style as there are new museums, writes Mimi Zeiger in her book *New Museums. Contemporary Architecture around the World*, where she presents 31 new museums built between 1998 and 2005, of which Kiasma is one example and Moderna Museet another.¹⁰⁸

Back to Square One?

With all the troubles and complications along the way, Moderna Museet has finally obtained a building of lasting value. It is not an unprestigious old drill-house, but then, the museum is no longer a newly-launched operation for experimental

contemporary art. It is the museum it has become over fifty years, a national museum for twentieth-century art. For this purpose, it has obtained a building to preserve and exhibit the art in its possession. A collection that is not only a great economic asset, but also sufficiently extensive to highlight new issues and contexts in an era when both the past and the present are constantly subjected to reinterpretation.

The museum’s identity has gone through major changes over the years it has existed. The reasons can be found both in financial and political developments and in the changing zeitgeist. These changes are evident in the museum’s buildings, both in their architectonic style and in the actual allocation of space. A very tangible change is that the commercial part of the museum’s activities has swelled increasingly, in accordance with the international trend. The original museum’s little cubby hole that sold posters and catalogues is vastly different from today’s museum shop. Admittedly, it also sells Arkitekturmuseet’s books, but like other museum shops, it carries a wide range of general design products, some of which are suitable for promoting Moderna Museet’s own logo. Meanwhile, the children’s workshop has comparatively less space and is tucked away where it is virtually impossible to find.

Among the things that have been lost along the way is a cross-disciplinary approach to culture that includes architecture and design. However, since Moderna Museet and Arkitekturmuseet are now located in the same building complex, there is potential to reawaken the old ambitions. If material from both museums were to be combined in new ways, interesting exhibitions could be created on particular eras, themes or issues.

It may seem like Moderna Museet’s history is back to square one after fifty years. A new national art museum has been created, with a large art collection of established value. Does this mean that we need a new contemporary museum for experimental art? One answer to this could be that the premises are large enough to cater for both these needs for a long time to come, as long as there is vitality. In connection with its many relocations, Moderna Museet has demonstrated an ability to improvise on an art scene that is more multifaceted today and has many more playing fields outside the prestigious institutions than fifty years ago. If the Municipality shows a generous attitude, a great deal could well happen. The government has given Stockholm a golden egg in the form of the new building for Moderna Museet. Maybe the time has come for the Municipality to reciprocate, for instance by allocating resources to Kulturhuset so that it can become a more active and vibrant arena for contemporary art, perhaps in dialogue with Moderna Museet.

Architecture has to have a long-term perspective. Whether a building is truly good can only be judged after a couple of decades, when more transient, time-bound values have evaporated. The modest approach to architecture that characterised the refurbishment of Moderna Museet’s first premises and, say, Louisiana, resulted in museum buildings



that were appreciated and loved for many years. In Rafael Moneo, Moderna Museet found an architect with similar intentions, that is, to create a museum building for art, not to compete with it by means of spectacular design.

Ten years after the original opening, the house has had time to settle. It is not entirely unobjectionable, although some flaws have been remedied. The fact that the view has not been used to more advantage is an objection that remains. Personally, I have often wondered why Moneo did not position the long connecting corridor on the side facing the water rather than facing Östasiatiska museet. This would have given a view of the city as a constant reference point as visitors walked from one exhibition space to the next. But perhaps it was natural for an architect from Spain to choose an enclosed, shady location for a connecting passage of that kind. As it is, it forms a straight incision between the museums that could be interpreted as an architectonic subtlety by specialists, but is probably experienced as boring by most visitors. The space between the buildings was intended to be even narrower and was to be a sculpture gallery.

Another shortcoming is that the lower entrance does not feel as natural and accessible as it should. What is now perceived as the back could, however, be turned into a magnificent front for the museum facing the water. There is a great deal of scope here to be utilised. Moneo has inserted the museum beautifully into the cliff-side so that the entire space before it remains free. This is an asset with great potential that should be used to greater advantage. What is also needed is more effective signposting of the lower entrance and the paths leading to it. An outdoor café, bushes, sculptures, lawns are missing to make visitors to both museums feel more at home in that particular area. And there is still no mooring for regular passenger boat traffic that should naturally operate on the Nybroviken-Skeppsholmen-Djurgården route. In the meantime, Moderna Museet's swarm of shining lanterns in the dusk has given Stockholm a new dimension, with a new building that is a part of its city.

- 1 As an architectural critic, I have periodically monitored the museum's changes over the years and on a few occasions participated actively in the public debate around the museum. Since this could impact on how my essay is perceived, I will account in footnotes for my own contributions wherever they are relevant to the context in the main text.
- 2 *SOU 1949:39 Nationalmuseiutredningen. Betänkande angående Statens konstsamlingars organisation och lokalbehov.*
- 3 *SOU 1949:39 Nationalmuseiutredningen*, p. 80.
- 4 Sigurd Curman, "Museibyggnader. Några principiella synpunkter rörande deras planläggning", *Byggmästaren*, A8, 1933, p. 33. See also Anders Bergström and Victor Edman, *Folkhemmets museum. Byggnader och rum för kulturhistoriska samlingar*, Stockholm 2005.
- 5 *Byggmästaren*, A8, 1933, p. 34. Curman's italics.
- 6 *Ibid.*, p. 37. Curman stresses in a footnote that the similarity is limited to the building method.
- 7 *SOU 1949:39 Nationalmuseiutredningen*, p. 228ff. The proposal shows an envisioned new building on a sloping site, 1–3 storeys, with partially inserted mezzanine levels. The public areas would include galleries for painting, sculpture, prints and drawings, crafts and temporary exhibitions. For each category there was to be a centrally located room for the public collections and side rooms for the study collections. Moreover, there would be a kitchen, a restaurant and a lecture hall, along with a warehouse and offices. On the whole, the proposal has large open areas, lighted both through roof lanterns and from the side through close-set windows along the outer façades and an inner courtyard.
- 8 The decision was based on the Navy Committee appointed in 1948, which delivered its report in 1951 (*SOU 1951:46*), followed by proposition 1953:200.
- 9 A proposal for an urban building style based on the model of the inner city with the same development as in the Östermalm district in Stockholm was discussed at the turn of the century. A number of monumental buildings had also been proposed over the years, for instance a domed university and a parliamentary building in Swedish renaissance style. As late as in 1925, a government-appointed committee had discussed a proposal for collecting several civil service ministries around a secretariat building on Skeppsholmen. See also the summary of the Skeppsholmen Committee's report, *SOU 1966:27 Skeppsholmsutredningen. Skeppsholmens framtida användning*, p. 23.
- 10 Moderna Museets handlingar rörande museets byggnad och inv. Museet för modern konst. Ett museum för modern konst. Föredrag vid Kungl. Akademiens för de fria konsterna högtidssammankomst den 31 maj 1956. Av överintendenten, professor Otte Sköld. F4:1, Moderna Museets myndighetsarkiv (MMA, Moderna Museet's official archives). The lecture was published in a slightly abridged and revised version in Otte Sköld, "Ett museum för modern konst", *Moderna museet. En konstabok från Nationalmuseum*, ed. Bo Wennberg, Stockholm 1957.
- 11 Sköld, *Moderna museet* 1957, p. 18.
- 12 *Ibid.*, p. 24.
- 13 *Ibid.*, p. 30.
- 14 Nils G. Wollin, *Skeppsholmen under 300 år*, Stockholm 1971, p. 115ff.
- 15 *Byggmästaren*, A12, 1958, p. 252.
- 16 "Gamla exercishuset skönhet väckte förvåning och glädje", *Dagens Nyheter* 9 May 1958.
- 17 Jolo, "Premiär för nya konstmuseet", *Dagens Nyheter* 10 May 1958.
- 18 Hans Eklund, "Vårt moderna museum", *Aftonbladet* 7 May 1958.
- 19 Ulf Linde, "Moderna Museet", *Dagens Nyheter* 10 May 1958.
- 20 *Ibid.*
- 21 Ulf Linde, "Det Moderna Museet", *Byggmästaren*, A12, 1958.
- 22 Pontus Hultén, "Fem fragment ur Moderna Museets historia", *Moderna Museet* 1958–1983, eds. Olle Granath and Monica Nieckels, Stockholm 1983, p. 34.
- 23 F4:1, MMA. Undated draft lecture.
- 24 It was originally intended for the World Fair in New York in 1939. Hultén acquired the rights for the model and a workshop in Västberga, Stockholm made a full-sized version, see Kurt Bergengren, *När skönheten kom till city*, Stockholm 1976, p. 170.
- 25 The two artists had created them in connection with the World Fair in Montreal in 1967, where they were exhibited on the roof of the French Pavilion. According to Pontus Hultén, the artists regarded them as the progeny of *She* at Moderna Museet and were willing to donate them, "so the children could return to their intellectual origin". Hultén, *Moderna Museet* 1958–1983 1983, p. 44.
- 26 *SOU 1966:27 Skeppsholmsutredningen. Skeppsholmens framtida användning*.
- 27 The Royal University College of Fine Arts eventually got other new premises on a different location on Skeppsholmen.
- 28 *SOU 1966:27 Skeppsholmsutredningen*, p. 80, the extension plan signed by the architects Håkan Brunnberg, Sune Malmqvist and Lennart Skoog 1964.
- 29 In his book *När skönheten kom till city* Kurt Bergengren describes the transformation of Stockholm city in a style that mixes witticism with scathing criticism.
- 30 In an article in *Aftonbladet* on 7 March 1963, he proposes a relocation to Sergels Torg. The article I refer to in my essay was published in the same paper on 23 October 1963, under the heading "Aktiva museet" (The active museum).
- 31 "Moderna museets chef: Tal om bred kultursyn för svårt för Stadshuset", *Dagens Nyheter* 3 March 1970. The article is by *Dagens Nyheter's* art critic Margareta Romdahl.
- 32 The jury's comment. *SAR:s tävlingsblad*, no. 4, 1966, p. 99.
- 33 Clas Bruniüs, "Tala med Pontus!", *Expressen* 18 May 1970.
- 34 According to a declaration of intent, quoted by Olle Bengtzon in *Expressen* on 2 Sept. 1969.
- 35 "Ett Kulturhusprogram: Experiment i social samlevnad", signed by the members of the so-called expert team. *Dagens Nyheter* 18 May 1969.
- 36 Folke Edwards, "Kulturverkstad eller supermarket?", *Sydsvenska Dagbladet* 19 Oct. 1969.
- 37 Margareta Romdahl, "Ny avrättning av traditioner på Skeppsholmen", *Dagens Nyheter* 6 May 1970.
- 38 Stig Johansson, "Museum med lokalproblem", *Svenska Dagbladet* 3 July 1970.
- 39 "Två dagars frukost i det gröna", *Dagens Nyheter* 20 July 1970. Compare *Svenska Dagbladet* the same date.
- 40 My own interview with Stolpe in 1976, published in *Arkitektur*, no. 3, 1977, p. 10.
- 41 P. O. Olsson, "Moderna Museets tillbyggnad", *Arkitektur*, no. 3, 1977, p. 2.
- 42 The original building was 2,400 square metres, and the museum had the use of a further 900 square metres in temporary premises. See a letter from the National Property Board to the Ministry of Education dated 24 April 1972; reg. no UA 444–2895/70. The building programme was presented together with the 1969 Skeppsholmen report (i.e. a later report than the one I refer to above) and was in line with its report from 1972.
- 43 Press release from the National Property Board with the first publishing date 4 May 1973. F5:2, MMA.
- 44 Appeal for the Filialen dated 30 May 1973 made to the director of Nationalmuseum Bengt Dahlbäck and signed by Felix Hatz, P. O. Ultvedt, K. G. Bjemmark, Ann Margret Dahlqvist-Ljungberg, Åke Pallarp, Sven Ljungberg, Arne Jones and others. F5:2, MMA.
- 45 F5:2, MMA. Letter dated 5 June 1973.
- 46 Hultén, *Moderna Museet* 1958–1983 1983, p. 47.
- 47 The parliamentary auditors performed an audit of the national art museums (Statens konstmuseer) in 1971, which was primarily aimed at Moderna Museet in general and Filialen in particular. Their criticism mainly concerned the way government funding had been used for activities that were described as biased political propaganda. The audit resulted in a memo that was replied to by the museum and did not lead to any further measures. "Handlingar rörande riksdagens revisorers granskningspromemoria 8/1971", signed by Nancy Eriksson, chairman, and Per Dahlberg, head of secretariat. F4:1, MMA. See also Per Bjurström, *Nationalmuseum 1792–1992*, Stockholm 1992, p. 329f.
- 48 Olsson 1977, p. 4.
- 49 Anita Sjöblom, "Moderna museet får helt ny profil", *Dagens Nyheter* 11 March 1975.
- 50 *Arkitektur*, no. 3, 1977.
- 51 Referring to the discussion about Kulturhuset in Stockholm, Hultén writes in 1983: "We often used the word flexibility in those days, and it later became a catchword for architects. Much of what we planned has later been applied in Centre Pompidou in Paris." Hultén, *Moderna Museet* 1958–1983 1983, p. 48. However, the large, flexible exhibition spaces at Centre Pompidou proved to cause major problems when exhibiting art, as Olle Granath pointed out in a conversation on 20 Aug. 2007.
- 52 Folke Edwards, "En teknologisk katedral", *Arkitektur*, no. 3, 1977, p. 20ff.
- 53 Heinrich Klotz, *Neue Museumsbauten in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland* (exh. cat.), eds. Heinrich Klotz and Waltraud Krase, Deutsches Architekturmuseum, Frankfurt am Main 1985, p. 19.
- 54 *Ny byggnad för Moderna museet och Arkitekturmuseum*. Progress report September 1991. National Property Board, Swedish Arts Council, Moderna Museet and Arkitekturmuseum. The problem had long been obvious to the museum management, according to a conversation with

- Olle Granath on 20 Aug. 2007.
- 55 Ingela Lind, "Nytt museum på Skeppsholmen", *Dagens Nyheter* 1 June 1988.
- 56 Per Bjurström, in *Svenska Dagbladet* on 25 March, 1990, was one of the critics, along with Bo Lagercrantz in *Aftonbladet* on 10 June, 1990. Both were in favour of a division into smaller museums rather than one big museum.
- 57 *Arkitekttävling för Moderna Museet och Arkitekturmuseet, Skeppsholmen, Stockholm* 1990. Competition programme issued by the National Property Board, Stockholm 1990, p. 5.
- 58 Gehry had initially declined but was persuaded by Olle Granath and Jöran Lindvall to participate, since without him the scheme would lose its breadth. Gehry had already started working on the Bilbao museum and later dropped out of the Stockholm competition. Information provided by Jöran Lindvall in a letter dated 28 Sept. 2007.
- 59 The National Property Board was represented by the director-general, Lars Ag, and the director of engineering, Lennart Kolte, while the Municipality of Stockholm was represented by municipal architect Bengt Lindblad. Co-opted experts were the landscape architect Pär Gustafsson, appointed by LAR, Christian Laine, National Heritage Board, and Göran Löfdahl, Swedish Swedish Arts Council. The secretary was Anders Jörlén, department director, National Property Board. Gezelius was also a professor at Chalmers University of Technology, and Lundgaard was a professor at the Kunstakademiet in Copenhagen. See the competition programme, p. 24.
- 60 Ingela Lind, "Varför en sådan tystnad kring ett nytt modernt museum?", *Dagens Nyheter* 10 Feb. 1991.
- 61 Ibid.
- 62 According to one contemporary proposal, the House of Admiralty on Skeppsholmen was to be used as a museum for crafts and industrial design.
- 63 Birgitta Rubin, "Ett vardagsrum för publiken", *Dagens Nyheter* 12 Feb. 1991.
- 64 Project outline for Moderna Museet and Arkitekturmuseet in Stockholm. Project no. 7351-000. Madrid, December 1991. F5:22, MMA.
- 65 Arkitekturmuseet's programme had not been accommodated, the restaurant was too small and had no outdoor section, the work spaces were too dark, and so on. Another crucial shortcoming was that the lower foyer and stairs did not reach to the façade. *Arkitekttävlingar* no. 11, 1991, p. 8.
- 66 John Sjöström, "Mot en ny identitet" *Svenska Dagbladet* 24 May 1991. I personally expressed my relief over the outcome of the competition in a column in *Dagens Nyheter* in April. Rafael Moneo is economical, he reduces in order to enhance the elementary, I wrote. My objections mainly concerned the connecting passages. "A stairway leads from the foyer to the lower floor, but it is not clear whether this is supposed to be one of the main exit routes. The idea was that this would improve the potential to utilise the area below, which should obviously not be used for parking. It should be a place for gatherings, parties, sitting in the grass. With a restaurant by the waterside and mooring for the boats that should naturally operate a regular service connecting Skeppsholmen with Nybroviken and the Vasa Museum/Nordiska Museet." Eva Eriksson, "Toppiga tak passar bra", *Dagens Nyheter* 17 April 1991.
- 67 Ingamaj Beck, "MODERNA MaUSolEET", *Aftonbladet* 13 April 1991.
- 68 Aleksander Wolodarski, "Håll hårt i holmen", *Arkitektur*, no. 6, 1991.
- 69 Excerpt from the minutes from a meeting of the Stockholm property board on 31 March 1992. F5:13, MMA.
- 70 Writ to the Ministry of Culture, dated 11 June 1992. Reg no. Kv 92/3076/K, copy in F5:13, MMA.
- 71 Sune Nordgren, "Bygg nu!", *Sydsvenska Dagbladet* 17 May 1992.
- 72 Ibid.
- 73 Niklas Rådström, "Bomben mot Moderna museet", *Expressen* 20 May 1992; John Peter Nilsson, "Högt spel om museet", *Aftonbladet* 21 May 1992.
- 74 Philip von Schantz, "Vart tog museet vägen?", *Dagens Nyheter* 2 June 1992.
- 75 See *Dagens Nyheter* 5 June 1992. The petition included an impressive number of leading personalities in Sweden's cultural establishment at the time.
- 76 "Bygg nya Moderna museet", *Dagens Nyheter* 19 June 1992.
- 77 Rebecka Tarschys, "Fullträffar för Moneo", *Dagens Nyheter* 25 June 1992; Hedvig Hedqvist, "Moneo värnar konsten", *Svenska Dagbladet* 1 July 1992.
- 78 Writ to the Ministry of Culture, dated 10 Aug. 1992, signed by Lennart Kolte and Hans Humble. F5:13, MMA. The practical problems were discussed in even greater detail in the National Property Board's reply to the municipal property board's proposal. Letter from the National Property Board to the Ministry of Culture, dated 13 Aug. 1992. Reg. no. Ö-357/674-92. Copy in MMA.
- 79 *Dagens Nyheter* and *Svenska Dagbladet* 13 Nov. 1992.
- 80 Thomas Hall, "Hur modernt blir Moneos museum?", *Dagens Nyheter* 6 Dec. 1992. See also the ensuing debate in *Dagens Nyheter* 16 Dec. 1992.
- 81 Olof Hultin, "Museum i tiden", *Arkitektur*, no. 6, 1993, p. 2.
- 82 Ann Charlotte Samec, "Modernas nya kostym färdig", *Dagens Nyheter* 19 May 1993.
- 83 Letter from Jöran Lindvall, 28 Sept. 2007.
- 84 Ann Charlotte Samec, "Så ska Moderna bli modernt", *Dagens Nyheter* 9 June 1993.
- 85 "Staden, huset, konsten. Ett samtal om Moderna Museet", *Arkitektur*, no. 6, 1993, p. 14ff.
- 86 Rebecka Tarschys, "Spanien möter Stockholm", *Dagens Nyheter* 22 Oct. 1993; Ulf Sörenson, "Arkitekten som lyssnar till platsen", *Göteborgs Posten* 11 Nov. 1993; Olof Hultin "Arkitekten tillhör platsen. Ovanligt vacker utställning om Moneo", *Svenska Dagbladet* 11 Nov. 1993.
- 87 Johan Mårtelius, "Ett fortlöpande samtal", *Moneo* (exh. cat.), Arkitekturmuseet, Stockholm 1993, p. 8ff.
- 88 Ragnar Uppman, *Arkitektens öga*, Stockholm 2006, p. 205.
- 89 Letter from Jöran Lindvall, 28 Sept. 2007.
- 90 Rebecka Tarschys, "Modernas flytt går som på räls", *Dagens Nyheter* 14 Oct. 1993, and Hedvig Hedqvist, "Moderna museet övervintrar i ljus och rymd", *Svenska Dagbladet* 14 Oct. 1993.
- 91 Peter Ohrstedt, "Missvisande debatt i viktig fråga", *Svenska Dagbladet* 28 Sept. 1996.
- 92 Peter Ohrstedt, "Genant att politiker röstar om fasadfärg", *Svenska Dagbladet* 21 Sept. 1996.
- 93 In a column in *Dagens Nyheter* I wrote: "If the colour of the roof contrasts too strongly with the colour of the walls this will affect the architecture. It will resemble a big lump with a cap. If the colours are in harmony, we perceive an entirely different shape. The house is dissolved into smaller upward-striving units [...] Let the new building be grey! Not like concrete, but with a beautifully shimmering grey rendering. That must have been Moneo's intention, even if he now, in his modesty, appears to be willing to compromise with the underwriters. And the municipal planning committee obviously considers itself more qualified to decide the colour than the world-famous architect himself." Eva Eriksson, "Låt arkitekten bestämma museets färg", *Dagens Nyheter* 16 Oct. 1996.
- 94 Bo Madestrand, "Ett riktigt pangmuseum", *Expressen* 9 Sept. 1997.
- 95 Hedvig Hedqvist, "Lysande anpassning till miljön – stor kvalitet i interiören", *Svenska Dagbladet* 8 Sept. 1997; Magdalena Nordenson, "Konsten står i centrum", *Norra Västerbotten* 17 Sept. 1997 (also published in several local Swedish newspapers); Gunnar Lindqvist, "Moderna Museet mäterligt", *Östgöta Correspondenten* 16 Oct. 1997. Lindqvist was the former director of the Linköping museum.
- 96 Christina Karlstam, "Diskreta rum för konst och arkitektur", *Uppsala Nya Tidning* 9 Sept. 1997.
- 97 Peder Alton, "Oskulden är borta", *Dagens Nyheter* 12 Sept. 1997.
- 98 See, for instance, Inger Landström, "Ett svenskt Louisiana", *Borås Tidning* 13 Feb. 1998; Erica Treijs, "Modernaste Moderna slår upp portarna", *Dagbladet* (Sundsvall) 12 Feb. 1998.
- 99 Hedvig Hedqvist, "Ljuset räcker inte till", *Svenska Dagbladet* 12 Feb. 1998. According to Jöran Lindvall the brightness was adjusted to suit watercolours, the most sensitive category of art. The same level was generally applied throughout the museum, however. Conversation with Jöran Lindvall in June 2007.
- 100 Curt Bladh, "Nya Moderna museet. Se men inte synas", *Sundsvalls Tidning* 13 Feb. 1998.
- 101 Ingela Lind, "Konstens kassakista", *Dagens Nyheter* 8 Feb. 1998.
- 102 Uppman 2006, p. 198–220. Uppman describes and reflects on the entire complicated process from his position as leader of the consulting team. The process has also been described by Jöran Lindvall in "Vad rätt du tänkt...", *Arkitektur*, no. 7, 2002. I have cited both these sources as the main basis for this section. In addition to this, I have used two articles from *Dagens Nyheter* written by Anders Frelin, 13 Sept. 2001 and 18 Nov. 2001, along with material from the mould dog inspection report in F5:35, MMA.
- 103 Uppman 2006, p. 210.
- 104 Clemens Poellinger, "Moderna museet inviger på oslagbar adress", *Svenska Dagbladet* 13 June 2002; see also Mårten Arndtzen, *Expressen* 14 June 2002; Erik Helmersson, *Skånska Dagbladet* 15 June 2002.
- 105 Natalia Kazmierska, "Den nya tidens museum – modernt och mobilt", *Norrköpings Tidningar* 7 Aug. 2002.
- 106 Mikael van Reis, "Mögligt museum som bunker", *Göteborgs Posten* 24 Nov. 2001.
- 107 Kaarin Taipale, "Kiasma – en främmande fågel mitt i staden", *Arkitektur*, no. 6, 1998.
- 108 Mimi Zeiger, *New Museums. Contemporary Museum Architecture Around the World*, New York 2005.

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