

The image is a close-up of a sculpture of a horse's head. The horse has a large, detailed eye with a brown iris and a dark pupil. The fur is rendered in shades of grey and brown. The muzzle is covered in thick, expressive splatters of paint in various colors, including green, orange, red, and yellow. The background is dark and textured.

The History Book

On Moderna Museet 1958–2008

MODERNA MUSEET Steidl



Changing Sides Modern and Contemporary Prints and Drawings at Moderna Museet

Documenting what is taking place as part of an ongoing process is not always easy. But reconstructing a course of events on the basis of data that have been preserved in the form of historical documents is far from straightforward either. Ten years after an event, much of the then topical information has been forgotten or lies hidden behind other arguments. The following study contains a brief presentation of how and probably why some 30,000 objects were moved from one state museum to another in the late summer of 1998, with the result that an entire collection was divided. By shedding light on a matter that is relatively close to the present and putting it in a historical context, I hope to be able to show how the theories of modernism and those of its successor postmodernism have affected the art-historical position and perhaps, to some extent, the way modern and contemporary art are seen.

The practical implementation of this division was based on historically determined attitudes which were exploited, as necessary, in the course of the process in order to promote various issues. My primary aim has been to collate the disparate pieces of information and various details concerning the decision and its implementation. The source material is in large part derived from Moderna Museets myndighetsarkiv (the official archives of Moderna Museet as an administrative authority) concerning the creation and history of Moderna Museet and from the interview which was carried out with Olle Granath, who was the Director of Statens konstmuseum (the National Art Museums, an administrative authority charged with overseeing Nationalmuseum and Moderna Museet) during the years in question.¹ Additional interviews were carried out with Björn Springfeldt, head of Moderna Museet from 1989 to 1995; Ragnar von Holten, Senior Curator for prints and drawings at Nationalmuseum from 1982 to 1998 and at Moderna Museet from 1998 to 2000; and Per Bjurström, Director of Nationalmuseum from 1980 to 1989, having worked at Nationalmuseum since 1950.² Other actors have passed away, which is why, sadly, their voices are not represented in this article.³ The extensive knowledge of my informants concerning collections and the collecting process, together with museum activities in general, have contributed to the design and organisation of this study.

← Folke Gullby
Självporträtt, 1941 (detail)
Etching, 7.3 × 6.7 cm
Donation 1966

Egon Schiele
Study of a Naked Youth (Self-Portrait), 1913 (detail)
Pencil, tempera on paper, 32.3 × 47.5 cm
Donation 1952

Previous informal conversations and contacts with other actors, who were, in one way or another, either for or against the division/splitting of the Prints and Drawings Collection of Nationalmuseum, have provided me with an understanding of how an interval of only a few years can alter the experience of what was actually said and what decisions made.⁴ The conversations which were conducted at that time exist only as stories and memories today. In this study, a survey of the archives is combined with an ethno-methodological process, which can provide a more wide-ranging interpretation of the accessible material. In the course of time, the aforementioned division has tended to be interpreted on the basis of personal experience rather than from a factual position.

The official archives are not required to archive material concerning the processes that lead up to a decision, but only pertaining to the decision itself. This means that a complete recapitulation is all but impossible. In the case in point, however, no formal evidential basis for the decision relating to the division could be found in the archive material referred to above. In my survey of the archived material I found fragments relating to various discussions and attitudes, which nevertheless touch on the decision in one way or another. The few scattered documents that have been archived concerning a number of different proposals raise as many new questions as they provide answers to. This has led me out into an expanding series of circles, which have been restricted here to a summary of how Moderna Museet's collection came to be expanded after a period of reflection that lasted almost forty years.

When the museum opened in the new building on Skeppsholmen in 1998, several kinds of artworks were incorporated within its area of responsibility. All modern and contemporary prints and drawings were transferred from Nationalmuseum's Gravysal (Print Room) to Moderna Museet, while Fotografiska Museet's collection was made an integral part of the same museum's operations, having been an autonomous department within the operational sphere of the museum since 1971. Moderna Museet thus took on the overall responsibility for collecting, conserving and caring for a greater number of object categories than it had done before. The idea of creating an institution with overarching responsibility for modern art had barely a century behind it. Once this idea arose again and determined efforts were made to turn it into reality, the process would take just over a decade. The decision to transfer artworks gave rise to different reactions on the part of those affected at Nationalmuseum and at Moderna Museet. Two arguments in the main were fielded by the voices for and against: on the one hand, bringing together all modern and contemporary art in one place meant that the oeuvres of various artists could be presented in coherent fashion, while what was emphasised on the other hand was keeping drawings and prints together on one site – as in the Print Room. In a draught proposal dealing with



Helene Schjerfbeck
Study for the watercolour *Flicka vid bastu i skogen*, undated
Pencil and ink on paper, 31.8 × 22.6 cm
Donation in the testament from Torsten Svedfelt



“The need to equip the New Moderna Museet”, whose outcome was an official letter from Statens konstmuseer to the Ministry of Culture, the following was noted:

To the collections of the new museum should also be added twentieth-century art on paper, drawings and prints, which are currently part of the collections of Nationalmuseum, a division on the basis of technique that is anachronistic and constitutes an anomaly for both artists, researchers and the general public. The scale of these collections comprises approx. works.⁵

That value-laden word “anomaly” may be seen as indicating the way a limited number of the artists involved experienced the prevailing situation, as part of which painting and sculpture were housed at Moderna Museet on Skeppsholmen and the graphic arts at Nationalmuseum on Blasieholmen. The artist Nils G. Stenqvist, Professor of Graphic Art at the Royal College of Fine Arts from 1973 to 1983, was in favour of graphic art being housed at Moderna Museet and would in fact pursue the issue to the point of creating a museum devoted entirely to printmaking in the form of Grafikens Hus in Mariefred. According to both Ragnar von Holten and Per Bjurström, Stenqvist had certain “political ambitions” and saw in the discussions being conducted by Olle Granath with the State Building Administration and the Ministry of Culture about a new building to house modern and contemporary art an opportunity to get something done.⁶ The bridge between the two islands thus came to symbolise the perplexity of contemporary artists. It was seen as a gap between the museums and not as a connection. Should they visit one museum or the other to see their works? There may well even have been some discontent at having to share a camp with the artists of previous centuries instead of with the international masters of contemporary art. It was probably also hoped that a new museum would make them more visible, which was part of the general idea according to the manifesto.⁷ As they saw it, their works had been purchased only to be put in boxes, and this would be changed if they were kept at Moderna Museet. It could have been a dream scenario, but seen from today’s perspective, considering that some 13,000 prints by several hundred different artists are still biding their time in drawers and archive boxes, it seems ironic instead. In the interview, Olle Granath mentioned that Swedish graphic art went from one set of boxes to another and that, unfortunately, the change failed to live up to the manifesto, as part of which the galleries on level two in the new museum were to be dedicated to photography, prints and drawings.⁸

The notion of meeting the wishes of the artists had long been entrenched in the day-to-day museal activities of Moderna Museet. At the same time, the campaign by the artists

can also be seen as an offshoot of a modernist approach and as a way of positioning themselves as active agents in comparison with the deceased artists of the so-called historical art museums. In an archived draft document concerning “the Museum for modern art” reference is made to Isaac Grünewald who is supposed to have said that there was only one dividing line determining what constituted modern art: the one between living and dead artists.⁹ The same statement was subsequently attributed to Pontus Hultén.¹⁰ He had a capacity for amassing other people’s ideas and utterances only then to make use of them for his own ends.¹¹ Since the core cultural elite in Sweden is a restricted one, a small number of individuals can be found recurring in a whole array of different groupings. Pontus Hultén was also described as the prime mover in the campaign to create NUNSKU, a committee for contemporary Swedish art abroad, which became an administrative agency of its own in 1976.¹² While the head of Moderna Museet was always the deputy chairman of NUNSKU, artists and printmakers such as Nils G. Stenqvist, 1969–72, Göran Nilsson, 1972–76, Olle Kåks, 1978–81, John Wipp, 1981–85 and Svenrobert Lundqvist, 1987–96, have all served as chairman. The close contacts between artists and museum officials would, of course, leave their mark on the extent to which individuals adopted an active role both in terms of the wider issue and their own purposes.

Arguments referring to the educational and scientific benefits an amalgamation would entail can be found in an undated document:

Collections and temporary exhibitions of art on paper have, moreover, been added to the programme for the new museum. This is a field that still belongs to Nationalmuseum, owing to the makeshift arrangement that the adaptation of the former Navy drill hall involved and in which there was no room for this kind of operation. To make this provisional set-up permanent in a new building would be particularly unfortunate from an educational and scientific perspective.¹³

In an item about the move produced for the television programme *Nike* by Karl Haskel and entitled “Den gömda konsten” (Hidden Art), Olle Granath said that as soon as he saw the chance to get a new museum and to write its manifesto, it was quite obvious that the twentieth-century collection of drawings and prints should be moved to Moderna Museet, where there would be space for exhibitions and an archive.¹⁴ What is not entirely apparent in the floor-plan that had been proposed is any opportunity for the scientific processing of the objects in the collection. The need for a small amount of space for research is mentioned here and there. Olle Granath wrote that the objects had to be stored in such a way that they could be made available to students and researchers, since it had been remarked that the visual arts of the twentieth century had attracted considerable interest on the part of researchers and the academy and that the sub-standard storage facilities also made it more difficult for officials to see them when required.¹⁵ The subject of research crops up in the minutes of the “Reference Group for the Reorganisation of

← Lena Cronqvist
Stenen IV, 1973
Pencil on paper
Purchase 1973

← Torsten Renqvist
Två människor mot varandra stående i skytteställning, 1951
Woodcut on paper, 6.1 × 11.8 cm

[Images removed due to copyright restrictions]

Öyvind Fahlström
Notes for Dr. Schweitzer's Last Mission B 1–2, 1966
Tempera, ink on paper, 75 × 50 cm
Purchase 1995 with help from MMV

Moderna Museet”, although more in relation to the function research was intended to serve for the organisation than its practical execution within the organisation.¹⁶ Ragnar von Holten also mentioned the absence of a room for study and research in *Nike* and, as a concluding vignette, stated, “No art student has been able to study modern art on paper at Nationalmuseum or Moderna Museet for the last three years. And nor has anyone else.”¹⁷

A summary of the number of square metres required for various technical and supply areas is contained in the “Preliminary floor-plan for Moderna Museet. Revised at the staff meeting, 14 September 1988”. Drawings and prints are shown to need 4 by 100 square metres of exhibition space without daylight, which subsequently corresponded in the detailed plans to one of the two galleries on level two in today’s Moderna Museet. The museum’s then curator Sören Engblom describes this in more poetic terms: “Let us now go down to the lower floor. A broad and generous staircase leads us below. Here we find the galleries for photography and graphic art, which for evident reasons have no natural source of illumination.”¹⁸ In the notes from the “Meeting of 3 September 1988 on a new Moderna Museet”, Olle Granath initiated proceedings with, “The collection is the most important, the most significant element, in the museum. And not temporary theatre groups, happenings etc.” Later on in the same notes, Lars Nittve, as chief curator, also observes, “Our collection is unlike a 17th, 18th and 19th century collection, we are in correspondence with what is actually happening *in the present*.” Olle Granath responded, “Otte Sköld thought that some things should be handed back to Nationalmuseum – To have access to older painting that has some relationship to the painting of today. Watertight seals have never existed between the collections and temporary exhibitions.”¹⁹ This is taken from notes quickly jotted down with reference to an informal conversation that was conducted among employees at Moderna Museet, but it makes clear nonetheless the way Olle Granath would return time and time again to the collection. This is also apparent when one finds listed in the Swedish collection in the proposed floor-plan (which summarised the size of the spaces it had been calculated the various operations would require) the names of August Strindberg (1849–1912), Ernst Josephson (1851–1906) and Carl Fredrik Hill (1849–1911), whom there was a desire to show in the exhibition halls even though they “belonged” to Nationalmuseum. Hill would, in fact, be loaned for the hang of the collection, when the new Moderna Museet was inaugurated in 1998. When Pontus Hultén and Carlo Derkert carried out the first selection of works for the launch of the museum in 1958, works by Pierre Bonnard (1867–1947) were also included. But his works were returned soon afterwards to Nationalmuseum, because the curator Pontus Grate had a personal interest in his art.²⁰ The museum that was pillaged of what was a relatively small part of its collection was outraged at the time over the principles underlying the division of the spoils and at the loss of a resource. Staff at the museum to which the works were transferred felt forced to consider whether in fact to accept these objects. Despite the differences of opinion,

no storms blew up and no appeals were launched in the press and media. While matters bubbled away beneath the surface, the hushed debate that was nevertheless conducted failed to have any permanent result beyond the cultural confines of the museums. The actors acted from more or less personal and historical standpoints, and both sides have been proved right. The move involved both gains and losses.

A Building for Art

Various draft documents are stored in the archives which allow the reader to trace how and when the issue of a modern museum has been debated ever since the end of the nineteenth century.²¹ In 1908, the Swedish Association of Museum Staff noted that the collection of modern art was said to be increasing at a greater rate than other collecting areas within Nationalmuseum, which would become a recurrent argument, and that space should therefore be made for this department in any future new building. Otte Sköld stated that, in round figures, 1,285 paintings and 225 sculptures were entered in the inventory between 1909 and 1946/47, while, in 1989, Olle Granath mentioned a figure of 4,000 works of art.²² In another draft on the same issue of 1988, the observation was made that the collection had increased by several hundred per cent, although the same rate of accretion would actually involve slightly more than a doubling, which would mean that the rate of increase could not be several hundred per cent.²³ The experts of Nationalmuseum put forward the idea in 1913 of an annex to Nationalmuseum to house the increased number of objects.²⁴ They were also of the view that the objects considered worthy of inclusion in the collections of the elite museum (read Nationalmuseum) should be transferred there from the modern museum ten years after the death of the artist, in accordance with the principle of division which was applied between the two Paris museums of the Luxembourg and the Louvre. The concept of an elite collection was used by Moderna Museet as late as 1998 with reference to a selection of photographs which were deemed to have a higher priority than the other photographic material in the collection.

Some form of report or appeal for the liberation of modern art from Nationalmuseum would subsequently recur at five- to ten-yearly intervals until the creation of the current new building on Skeppsholmen. It was Otte Sköld who first mentioned in 1956 that the new building he envisaged there should provide an integrated overview of the entire range of contemporary art, including painting, sculpture, drawing and prints as well as arts and crafts.²⁵ The inquiry into the issue of a home for arts and crafts (either as part of Nationalmuseum or in a museum of its own) is still ongoing in 2008. There is a range of opinions on what principles should prevail in creating a dividing line, spread over a period of a hundred years. As early as 1935, Axel L. Romdahl considered that the time was ripe for an academic discussion concerning a modern museum and its contents, and that it was not self-evident that it should be seen as beginning with the art that made its breakthrough in the 1880s.²⁶ He argued against the so-called Berlin Principle whose outcome was that – after

the First World War – art was divided with works from the eighteenth century onwards until 1880 being shown at the National Gallery, while art after 1880 was displayed at the Kronprinzen-Palais in Berlin. Romdahl considered instead that 1810, the time of the Swedish monarch Karl Johan, was an appropriate starting point. Others championed 1818, the year of the deaths of Fredrik von Breda and Elias Martin, while Axel Gauffin proposed 1885, the breakthrough year of the opponents (a group of artists in opposition to the Art Academy), as a matter of course. Gauffin also proposed a system of buying and selling that would make it possible to purchase works on a large scale, without being required to collect everything and with the additional option of selling off certain works. For his part, Gregor Paulson proposed that a modern artwork should return to a “museum of quality” twenty years after it had been acquired. Country towns would be allocated representative collections, while he also thought that any superfluity should be sold off. Commissioners of the Swedish Academy of Fine Arts thought that thirty years was an appropriate length of time. Otte Sköld himself spoke in favour of the Luxembourg-Louvre system, perhaps also on the model of the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in New York, which in 1931 had declared itself in favour of replacing inferior works with superior ones. In the commission of inquiry into Nationalmuseum of 1948, a museum was envisaged with a carefully sifted elite collection of older art while another museum was to provide a refuge for modern, growing and working art, which would also enjoy a greater freedom of manoeuvre.

Otte Sköld was, however, conscious of the difficulties involved in drawing a dividing-line between both collections. He referred to the possibility of having an introductory collection, in which the roots of the new art movements could be displayed in the modern museum, while making use of loans as well.²⁷ Sköld wrote, “One day modern art will necessarily be old. [...] One has to be fully aware of what a museum that serves a central archival function is and what a museum for modern art should be.”²⁸ To maintain the topicality of contemporary art, works that were no longer of interest should be transferred to a museum with a central archival function, whose primary task would be to care for and conserve artworks – both in theory and practice. Seen from this perspective – of a continuous process of transferring works of art – the collection of Moderna Museet would consist of a more manageable number of works than what is, in numerical terms, the large collection of art from more than a century of collecting that the museum currently has at its disposal. It may be considered an irony of fate that rather more than one hundred thousand works were in fact transferred in the opposite direction, to what, according to Otte Sköld, was a museum for modern art.

The guiding light for this occurrence was to be a new building. It was described in the brochures for Eddie Figge’s Foundation as “a new and dignified museum of modern art in Stockholm”.²⁹ During the 1980s, the number of newly-built museums of contemporary art and museums of modern art increased in the rest of Europe. The time

was presumably deemed to have come for Sweden as well, to judge by a postscript to “Moderna Museet Program 88”. Here Ebbe Lindmark of the investigatory bureau of the State Building Administration was to write:

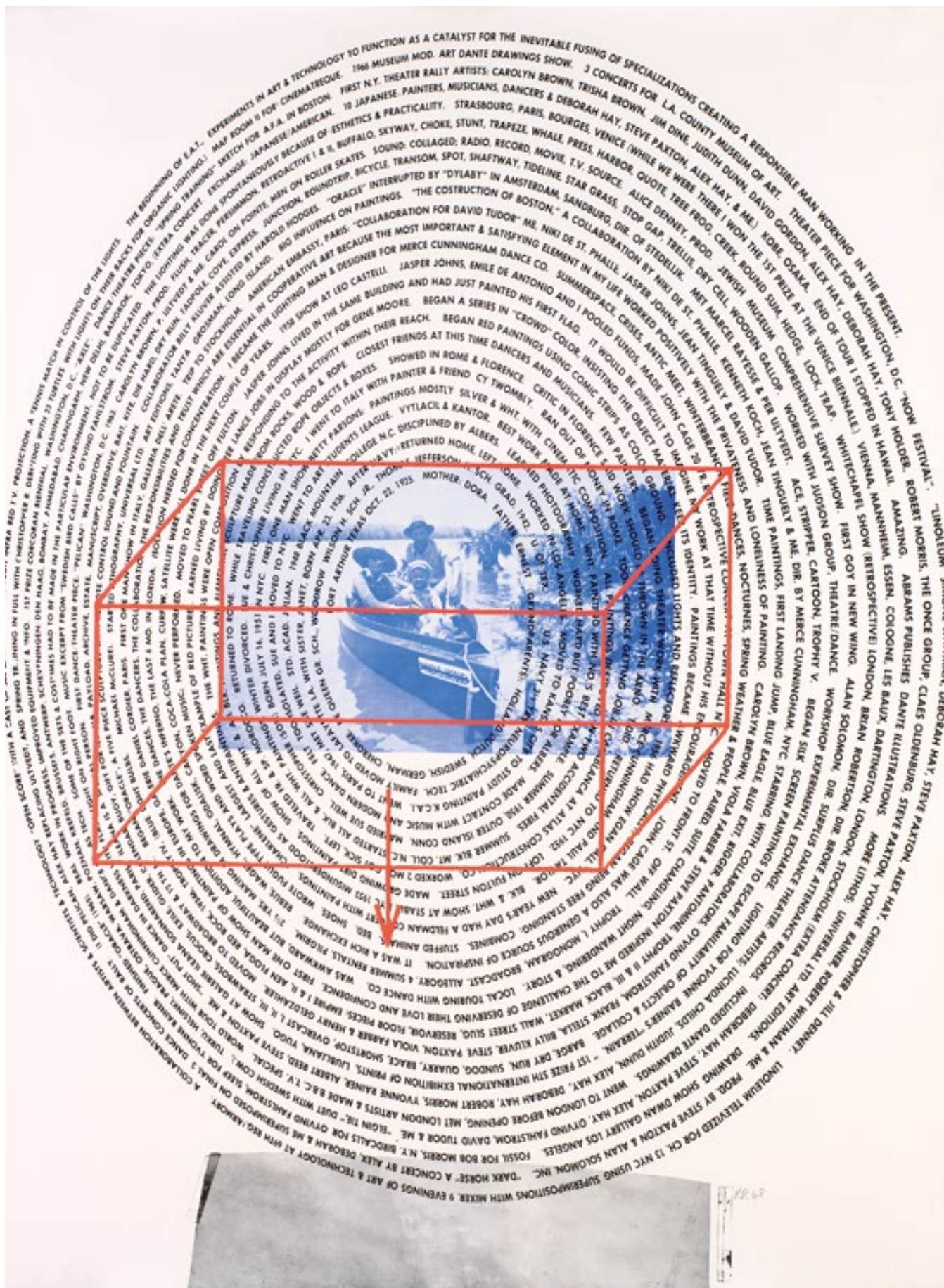
*P.S. The government “ought” to be kept so informed and prepared on this account – and to have reached such a stage with matters pertaining to the competition – that “when spring comes” the government can reach a positive decision, a constructive decision, to the effect that before the summer we can announce an architecture competition for a museum complex encompassing the entirety of cultural life. (It would not be saying too much surely if things work out “as expected”).*³⁰

In May 1997, Eddie Figge wrote in a letter that, “If there is a hitch after the elections, we will have to find entirely new means and strategies!”³¹ A favourable climate of opinion was successfully created, and through Eddie Figge’s Foundation sponsors were sought to put together a donation to provide the sketch fee so as to be able to invite international architects to participate. Bengt Göransson, the then minister for education and culture, wrote in a contribution to the discussion:

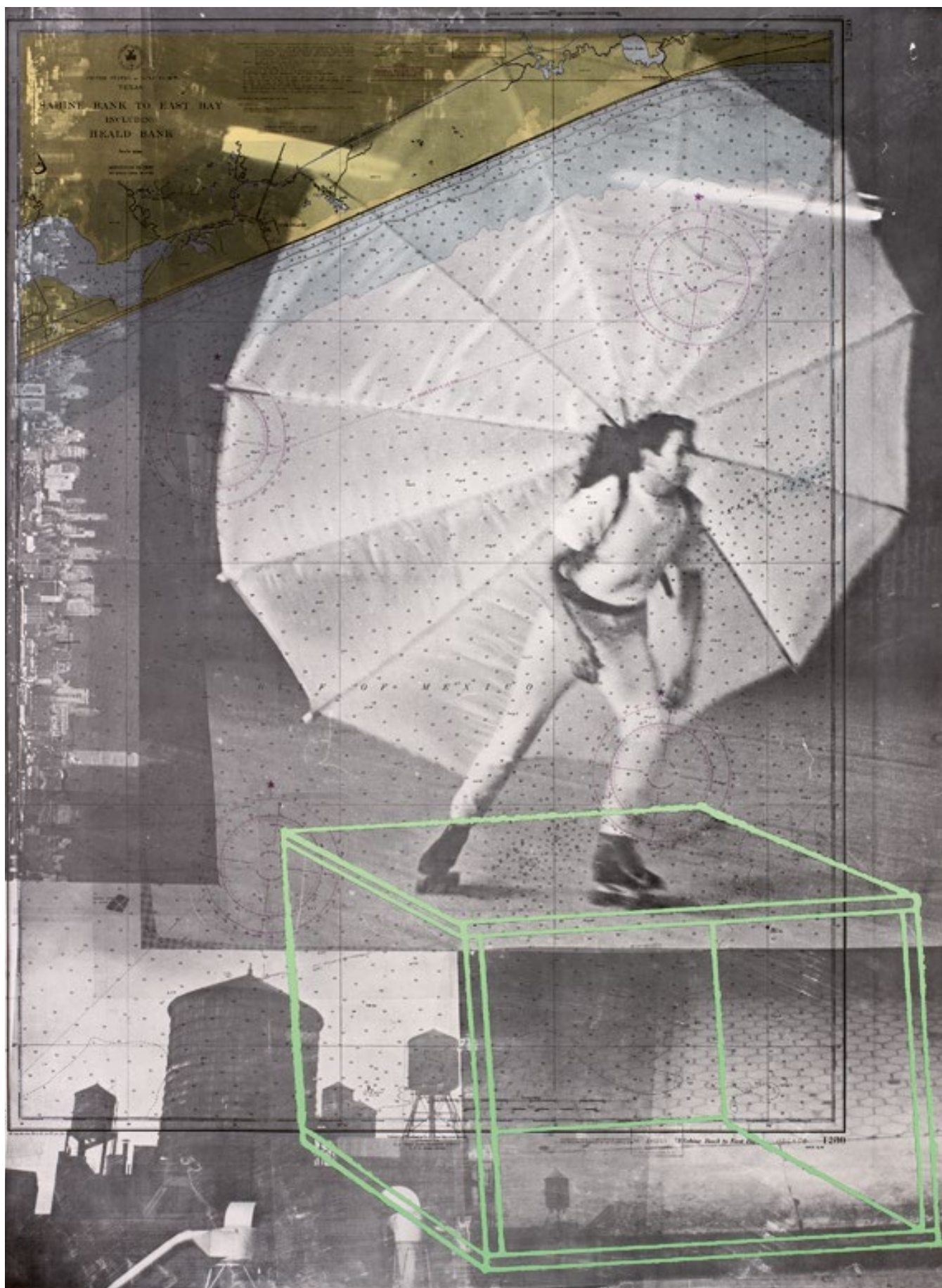
*In the case of Moderna Museet, the issue is sponsorship as a component of opinion formation. With the help of a couple of million, an architectural competition could be arranged, and once the outcome is clear, government and parliament would be expected to come up with the quarter of a billion it is going to cost, if anything more than architectural drawings are to come out of this.*³²

There were several critical voices. In an article in the periodical *Nu*, it was suggested that the opponents of the museum building were unwilling to speak out in public in order to protect their own interests. Aleksander Wolodarski, architect at the Stockholm city planners’ office, felt that the New Building Programme needed to be slimmed down. He expressed scepticism at the prospect of a palace of culture (Moderna Museet in combination with the Museum of Architecture). A cost of 350 million SEK for the new building alone was mentioned in the article. It was not primarily the financial considerations, however, to which objections were raised, but the effect the building would have on the seventeenth-century milieu of Skeppsholmen. The proposal to transfer Moderna Museet to Kulturhuset was raised once again, just as it had been when it was first built, and Pontus Hultén was among the instigators. Housing commissioner Carl-Erik Skårman, for example, declared that Skeppsholmen had to be saved from government prestige projects and argued for the construction of a tenth floor on Kulturhuset at a cost which would be 200 million less.³³ But since Parliament moved into Kulturhuset when the building work was done, Moderna Museet was given a new building on Skeppsholmen in 1975 as a form of consolation prize – and perhaps a new museum, as well, in 1998.³⁴

A new building is consistently put forward in the notes



Robert Rauschenberg
Autobiography (Broadside), 1968
 Offset lithography
 Purchase 1969



Robert Rauschenberg
Autobiography (Broadside), 1968
 Offset lithography
 Purchase 1969

and draft proposals stored in the archives as a reason for expanding Moderna Museet. From the conservator's perspective, it was the sub-standard quality of the premises available for both storage and exhibitions that constituted the primary reason, but there was also the need to incorporate the twentieth-century collection of "art on paper" (a recurrent collective term for drawings and prints). The idea that it would have been impossible to incorporate drawings and prints – both in 1958 or in the expanded building of 1978 – for lack of space is repeated in later documents. In chapter 3 of a typed draft by Otte Sköld, it is stated that, in order to reduce the space required in the museum of modern art, the drawings and prints not needed for exhibition or the study collection should be stored at Nationalmuseum. The inquiry carried out at that time therefore found that 200 square metres would be adequate for drawings and prints in the modern museum.³⁵ When works were subsequently moved from Nationalmuseum to Moderna Museet, the opposite argument was used, i.e. that the measure would help to remedy the lack of available space in the Print Room.

In the proposal put forward by Pontus Hultén for an expanded museum, the museum would house additional exhibition and storage premises for the growing collections and for other activities. The following statement is contained in the draught document written by the then museum architect P.O. Olsson (in response to an inquiry made by Knud W. Jensen based on an imminent publication on museum activities), "Premises should be arranged for a 'paper museum', in which drawings, lithographs, prints, posters, etc. can be collected."³⁶ The 1969 Skeppsholm Inquiry instigated by the Ministry of Defence, reported, "MUS 65 has paid particular attention to the issues of collecting and the providing of information with respect both to modern prints and other reproductive arts [...]" and that premises have been included in the building plan for "[...] a department of prints, to which the more recent parts of the collections of Nationalmuseum would be transferred."³⁷ The 1972 inquiry by the State Building Administration considered the need for increased floor-space for the latest acquisitions of drawings and prints, which would be met by a two-storey building intended for the museum's "prints department" at an estimated cost of 2 million SEK.³⁸ The building was supposed to meet normal office standards with polished façades and a flat roof covered in gravel, and with a required construction time of nine months.³⁹ Sixteen years after painting and sculpture moved into a building of their own, it should have been possible to complete the so-called original plan which continued implicitly to embody Otte Sköld's reservations. In 1958, the premises were far from offering enough space for all the objects intended and, during the 1970s, there was no single individual willing to tackle the issue. Considering that Philip von Schantz would later be one of the driving forces behind Grafikens Hus, it would be interesting to know why he did not put his weight behind this matter as the newly appointed head of the museum.

Under the heading of the collections in the "Preliminary floor-plan for Moderna Museet. Revised at the staff meeting, 14 Sept. 1988", it is indicated that "Five of the twelve rooms

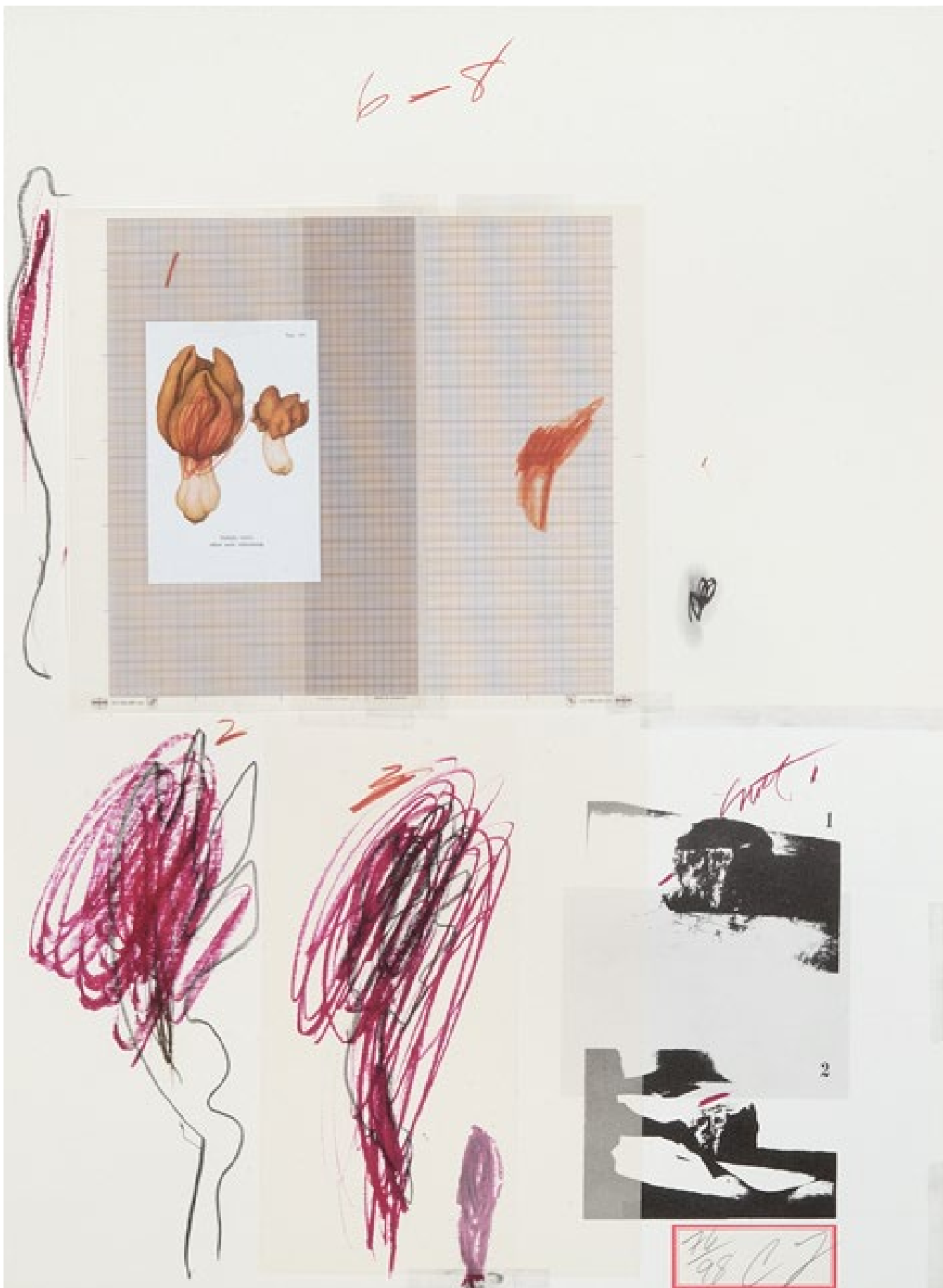
of 100 square metres will simply lack daylight for the display of photography and drawings" and that "two of these can be blacked-out".⁴⁰ Information about storage and the number of square metres for drawing, sometimes referred to as "prints and drawing", makes clear that the floor space had been reduced from 150 square metres to 100 square metres – currently the storage area measures 93 square metres. In both the 1950s and the 1990s, reference was made to number of objects and running metres (currently about 30,000 objects in 599 portfolios, as compared with handwritten notes presumably from end of the 1950s which mention 22,000 prints and 700 portfolios or 100 shelf-metres).⁴¹ There is no written evidence that consideration was paid to the rate of increase or even that calculations were made on the basis of previous accessions. On the basis of the initial project calculations of floorspace for exhibitions and storage and the number of shelf-metres, what was implemented was a smaller area that only just houses the drawings and prints that were transferred. This meant that there was no space available for any significant form of expansion. Leif Wigh, who was the curator at that time for photography pointed out that "paper has to be stored flat and takes up a great deal of space as a result".⁴² In the storage area for drawings and prints, the archive boxes have ended up being stored horizontally to the benefit of the works contained. In contrast, the handling of the material has become more onerous as the space and equipment available were not designed for this storage system. In round figures, some 5,000 posters, 2,000 prints from Konstfrämjandet, and a smaller collection of plates cannot currently be stored in this area. At present they are located at other storage sites, thus creating a scenario resembling the very one the aim was to build a way out of. The collection of plates was under discussion in the years before the move, and it emerges from the minutes that the then curator Nina Öhman intended to have a meeting with the staff at the Print Room concerning the copperplate collection. It was then asserted that the museum was not prepared to receive the plate collection.⁴³ This collection, which was relatively easy to handle in numerical terms, was not transferred until 2001 because the aim was to avoid incorporating it in Moderna Museet's collection of art. The issue of an archive for works associated with other artworks in the collection has only been solved very recently with the decision of the administrative authority to create a series of archives for objects with a link to the art and artists represented in the collection. Despite the fact that the plate collection has existing inventory numbers, it is perhaps to a greater extent material for the archives rather than a collection of art.

The State Building Administration writes in "Moderna Museet. Planning for a New Museum. Some Views":

*What decided the matter is very difficult to put a finger on, the storage and exhibition areas ought to be agreed, and the balance between them. To some extent some "narrow" functional aspects have to give way here to cultural policy-financial considerations. (A hundred square metres here or there corresponds to 1–1.5 million SEK, 10,000–15,000 SEK per sq.m).*⁴⁴



Sture Johannesson
Take a Trip – Welcome Back, 1967
 Poster, 76 × 54 cm
 Purchase 1968



Cy Twombly
Natural History. Part I Mushrooms, no. IX, 1974
 Mixed media, 75.8 × 55.2 cm
 Purchase 1982

What seemed like a dream museum in the initial plans – with room to breathe and space enough to grow into – was scaled down by the financial restrictions that were imposed. Nowadays the museum is faced with an even greater archival task. The limitations on what can be displayed in the rooms used for the presentation of the collection in the new building are no less restrictive than in the old. A recurrent argument in the various official documents that provided support in one way or other for a new building is that both the public and the originators of art should have a right of access to the wealth of art the museum has at its disposal. In a draft document concerning why a new modern museum is needed, Olle Granath mentions that one of the most important collections in Europe is not accessible to researchers and the general public. In an unsigned document, typed in response to a letter to the press by Marie-Louise Ekman (then de Geer Bergensträhle), reference is made to sealed up museums whose contents have spoilt.⁴⁵ What was actually sealed were the portfolios at Nationalmuseum's Gravvrsal, once the modern and contemporary works had been winnowed out and inventoried. The aim was to keep intact the capsules the drawings and prints were kept in when they were transferred. That this would then become symbolic of the way in which the works would remain in their packaging is particularly interesting because the physical placement of the works, despite their being unpacked, failed to make them more accessible – to the public or to researchers.

Considering the way both museums had previously operated, it would nevertheless seem unrealistic to have expected that a collection meant to serve both for study and display would suddenly be given greater space. On the other hand, it might well have been imagined that previously existing hierarchies had been broken up by the wake of postmodernism. What emerges from a general survey of the exhibitions of drawings and prints mounted at both Nationalmuseum and Moderna Museet is that it is the breadth of its range that the former institution has put on display in the form of thematic exhibitions of work from one place or by one group. During the greater part of the twentieth century, Nationalmuseum's exhibitions also included graphic art from various countries in Europe, America, the former Soviet Union, Cuba and Japan. In addition, between 1938 and 1975, Nationalmuseum staged drawing competitions at regular intervals called *Young Draughtsmen (Unga tecknare)*, which were revived in the 1990s. The work of individual Swedish artists who had distinguished themselves either in drawing or printmaking, or posters, advertising and book-making provided another recurring exhibition theme. There is a degree of conformity between the projects that NUNSKU and Nationalmuseum worked on. Moderna Museet, for its part, exhibited a more restricted array of work by internationally established artists, whose production also encompassed prints and drawings. These included works by Paul Klee, Barnett Newman, Max Ernst and Jasper Johns.

So why, then, were drawings and prints not transferred as early as 1958? Space was a decisive criterion, as was the level of interest in promoting the issue. As a professor of painting,

Otte Sköld had a fixed view of modern art. Gunnar Jungmark, who was employed at Nationalmuseum from 1928, also ran the Print Room with a firm hand. The personal chemistry between them was crucial to the outcome, as were other circumstances, such as the fact that the premises on Skeppsholmen became available at a critical period when action was required rather than art-historical arguments which simply served an ideological function in terms of establishing a position in the field of cultural policy, when Otte Sköld said that painting, sculpture, drawings, prints, architecture, arts and crafts, photography, posters, advertisements in various forms, films of various kinds, artefacts and design would all be encompassed within the framework of what would be shown at a modern museum, he was referring to the visual image in a broad sense. This would subsequently become narrower when he turned to the display collection and the study area, and to the fact that large parts of the collection would be housed outside the museum. Forty years later, however, that prospectus has not been expanded on and is now referred to as the "permanent display collection". The same vision had, in contrast, been followed up in the Print Room where the collection of posters had been expanded and where sketches for arts and crafts objects and architectural drawings continued to be collected, as are certain kinds of advertisement. Per Bjurström refers to Alpheus Hyatt Mayor, curator of prints at the Metropolitan Museum of Art (1946–66), as his mentor for the attempts he made while working at Nationalmuseum to broaden the field of collecting and exhibition activities undertaken by the Print Room.⁴⁶ The concern was to document the pictorial world that forms our visual environment together with such adjacent fields as stage design, children's picture-books, comics, record sleeves, the illustrations in women's magazines and educational posters. Moderna Museet's few purchases of prints and drawings were shaped largely by the way prints and drawings were seen at the Museum of Modern Art. There these works were kept in frames and considered to be like paintings and solitaires, and this would be the case at Moderna Museet as well. As a result, there was no competition between the museums in relation to who should acquire what. Both Per Bjurström and Björn Springfieldt maintain that they worked well together and they would check with one another about things that happened in their field.⁴⁷

The Legitimation Process of Modernism

When Otte Sköld wrote about the modern museum as an organisation at the service of the art world, at once both mobile and experimental, a vital hotbed and a collection point for art in a broad sense, this corresponded exactly with the way modernism was seen in the 1940s, when the so-called avant-garde had already become established as the canon.⁴⁸ If the aim were to describe in general terms what a modern museum ought to be, the words would be just as applicable today. According to Sköld, it was all but impossible to make any definitive assessment or valuation of contemporary art. This was why a modern art institution was required to serve as a filter if it were not to become the cabinet of curiosities he believed many extremely modernist museums had

turned into.⁴⁹ In broad terms, Otte Sköld thought and wrote as the classically trained artist and museum-keeper of his time that he was, expressing fixed ideas about painting and sculpture. He could, for example, see no contemporaneous process of development in the works by such artists as Marcel Duchamp, Alexander Calder, Joseph Beuys and Jean Tinguely, who are nowadays seen as foreground figures in the development of twentieth-century art. He also neglected arts and crafts, perhaps in order to avoid having to have an opinion. According to an undated draft document from Statens konstmuseer, which probably dates from the 1980s, arts and crafts would also have to give ground in order to keep drawings and prints at Nationalmuseum. The idea was put forward in this proposal of moving arts and crafts, industrial art and design, to a building of their own, and it was considered “appropriate to have the building of Nationalmuseum house both the collection of older painting and sculpture as well as drawings and prints.”⁵⁰ This would resolve the issue of caring for and conserving the remaining works, as the storing of drawings and prints was encroaching on the exhibition halls.⁵¹ Children’s pictures, the drawings of the insane and “the images of primitive fetish-worshipping peoples” failed to meet with any sympathy on the part of Otte Sköld either.⁵² In this regard, it should be pointed out here that Nationalmuseum has a hundred or so children’s drawings in its collection, which were mainly collected and exhibited during the 1940s and 1950s, as were the sought-after drawings created in their illnesses by Carl Samuel Graffman, and subsequently, by Carl Fredrik Hill and Ernst Josephson. For brief periods, new ideas did seem to burn brightly in Sköld’s mind, and these reflect his attempts to acquaint himself with the broader context of cultural policy with regard to the way in which the collection and collecting were viewed from the conceptual apparatus of the period. But just as often he would evince an older, more traditional approach to collecting, and even research, as being confined to a historical process of revision and an archive-based procedure, without the slightest reflection as to there being any conceivable limitations to this perspective.

On the occasion of the twenty-fifth anniversary of Moderna Museet, Olle Granath wrote that the collection is both the kernel of the museum and its heart, but also that a declaration of this kind can sound like a looking back to a traditional museum role.⁵³ At the same time, he mentioned that efforts were made to smash the mirror that Otte Sköld had polished in order to reflect the present, which is, according to Pierre Bourdieu, the struggle that takes place at the establishing of a new/different habitus and cultural capital, although similar food for thought – as in the idea that the museum should be a playground for independent groups – had already been suggested by Otte Sköld in the foreword to the Liljevalchs catalogue and had also been summarised in Nationalmuseum’s 1957 year-book.⁵⁴ In Olle Granath’s view, it was the skills and interests of Pontus Hultén that made the museum what it was, although it should be observed that all Pontus Hultén needed to do was follow the extensive manifesto put together by Otte Sköld, excepting the fact that

Nationalmuseum ran the lending and deposition operation until 1999 and 2002, respectively.⁵⁵ Modernism experienced a renaissance in the 1960s, and instead of encountering opposition, a number of Pontus Hultén’s efforts would therefore be praised to the skies.⁵⁶ A positive selection mechanism has meant that only particular aspects have been considered, and these have subsequently been treated exclusively as a success story. After the more political art of the 1970s and the museum’s focus on individual Swedish artists, the critics began writing about the museum in less glowing terms during the 1980s. By showing so-called classics, which became important for financing the other operations of the museum as a result of their success with the public, museal activities were re-established. Pontus Hultén’s time at the museum brought with it a form of experimentation involving a great deal of trial and error, but this came to a total halt during the 1970s. The lack of any major ventures of high quality described by Olle Granath was to lead to exhibitions of work by Marc Chagall (1982), Henri Matisse (1984–85) and Pablo Picasso (1988), the standard-bearers of modernism, and proof of the unique quality to be found in art and nowhere else, which provided the museum with its *raison d’être*.⁵⁷ It was in this spirit that ideas of building an even larger museum in order to display the celebrated extent of the existing collection would appear to have developed. Considered retrospectively, this would also lend further legitimacy to the previous established arguments about the need to keep twentieth-century art collected in one place, since the Picasso exhibition, for example, encompassed painting, sculpture, drawings and prints, as well as an exhibition of photography. The following statement is contained in an archived copy of a motion of 1985 concerning an extension to Moderna Museet, “We therefore need a state museum for Swedish modern art, which would serve to supplement the activities of Moderna Museet and would be primarily concerned with ‘external’ activities.”⁵⁸ Seen from this perspective as well, it seems even more self-evident that Olle Granath, who was appointed director of Statens konstmuseer in 1989, was keen to include all the accepted modern and contemporary forms of art in one institution: the new Moderna Museet, instead of it simply becoming a new “national museum” solely for modern art.⁵⁹ But when he refers to Otte Sköld’s original idea about including all categories of material and forms of expression within one museum, the narrative seems anachronistic. Otte Sköld had already mentioned the possibility of putting together a display collection in a handwritten draft, but that “with regard to the issue of drawings and prints, there can be no question at present of transferring the 22,000 sheets in 700 portfolios. Drawings and prints should nevertheless be exhibited using exchanges between the museums”.⁶⁰ Per Bjurström relates how he made an attempt to exhibit a smaller number of works by younger Swedish artists in a corner of the Swedish room at Moderna Museet, but that they were sent back after three to four weeks, without being replaced by others.⁶¹

The postmodernist 1980s tried to come to terms with the modernist conceptual apparatus as it pertained to highbrow



Sherrie Levine
After Edgar Degas, 1978
Lithography on paper, 30.4 × 22.6 cm
Purchase 1988

and traditional ways of seeing art. By starting from artistic careers that had been established for some 20 to 30 years, such as those of Robert Rauschenberg and Donald Judd, who had also written about their times, they also made the technical aesthetics of the 1960s which was based on repetition and originality their launchpad. Photography and feminism were in the vanguard, and this makes it interesting that developments were missed in the work of artists such as Eva Hesse and Agnes Martin, who have now emerged as foreground figures. Prints also occupy/occupied a major place in the work of postmodernist artists. Sherrie Levine's graphic reproductions of Edgar Degas' paintings illustrate a historical approach to depiction (in terms of the countless number of print reproductions which have *pinxit* on the print for the artist who created the original, *sculpsit* for the person who engraved the plate, and *fecit* for the individual who printed the sheet) while equating the original with the copies. This is why there may be a more audacious aspect to Otte Sköld's proposal for a modern museum than in the actual outcome some forty years later. But Granath proved bolder in using his unilateral powers to decide in favour of the move and going against the concerted authority of the officials then working at the Print Room. Today Olle Granath, Per Bjurström and Ragnar von Holten all seem to be agreed that the result fails to match up to the initial ideas of the 1980s.⁶² The original intention of collecting all forms of expression under a single umbrella applied presumably to Otte Sköld's notion of a transitional museum. After 1998, the museum would resemble more closely what Sköld called an epochal museum, i.e. a static museum that exhibits and maintains a display collection, while also housing what is a large study collection in numerical terms.

Vision and Reality

In an undated manuscript under the heading "Moving with Moderna Museet towards the Turn of the Century", Olle Granath writes that "The public has a legitimate demand to be able to encounter the classics of the collection at any time irrespective of which temporary exhibitions are currently on show at the museum."⁶³ The role of the museum, he continues, used to be to care and conserve, while at the same time providing a platform for the new. In the sentence that follows, the word "anachronistic" is used: "One effect of what has been said is also that museums as a consequence of their being anachronistic can become fortresses of a provincial culture in the best sense."⁶⁴ The same word had previously been used in an entirely different context. It was used to describe how "unmodern" it was to divide up modern art between two art institutions on the basis of technique. It becomes even more interesting in relation to another undated draft document, the last paragraph of which is introduced as follows:

*There are many demands for a national museum for twentieth-century art, the only one of its kind in the country, and of necessity they involve the museum in a controversial position. There will always be groups who believe themselves poorly provided for by the museum's activities.*⁶⁵

A conflict was increasingly making itself felt, and it entailed both a practical tug-of-war between the permanent collection, temporary activities, the public and artists and a theoretical approach to the original vision Otte Sköld outlined.

The established status of modernism became a problem for the museum in the 1990s when attempts were made to define its "new" role and how to plan the internal organisation to be developed in the new museum. The museum was described in relation to the circumstances of the *konsthallar* and the *kulturhus* (public art galleries and major cultural centres or complexes, respectively), which may be seen as an offshoot of the earlier proposal to move Moderna Museet to Kulturhuset. What seems to have been important was to be positioned in relation to the rest of the Swedish art and cultural worlds. To then take on the role of becoming more of a historical museum might be seen as contradictory, but this can be practically explained with relation to an existing vision of bringing all the threads together. The issue may perhaps have been made more complex to the extent that plans were simultaneously being made for a new administrative authority. Granath put forward three requirements prior to the recruitment of a new museum director: the museum should become an autonomous administrative authority; the board should be free to appoint a foreign director and be able to pay a salary comparable to the salaries of other foreign museum directors.⁶⁶ The new authority appears to have slowly evolved during the 1990s in the course of the reorganisation meetings at Moderna Museet. The term of Björn Springfeldt's appointment was by then reaching its end, and a new director would have to be appointed. The choice fell on David Elliott who came from the Oxford Museum and had come into contact with Sweden as a result of a collaborative project with NUNSKU.⁶⁷ The division into two administrative authorities in 1999 was, however, not without its problems as a superior official was appointed, the director of Statens konstmuseer – and a subordinate, in the shape of the director of Moderna Museet. Staff and financial resources were shared, which meant that Nationalmuseum retained its status as the organisation responsible for a number of joint functions. The sense of having lost something, or of not having been awarded enough, also formed part of the mix. In the interview in *Nike*, Olle Granath says that cultural policy has always been abstract and involved a great deal of verbiage.⁶⁸ He had nevertheless found the right touch for finding his way around the field of cultural policy. The arguments in favour of something new in the years 1958, 1988 and 1999: a museum, a building and an organisation, respectively, were/are to a large extent the result of the existence over the years of various networks of individuals at comparable positions in the apparatus of government and of their commitment to the issue (the museum director, the director-general of the State Building Administration, the Swedish Arts Council, the Ministers for Education and Ecclesiastical Affairs). The individuals who were in decision-making positions probably felt that their own personal endeavours were crucial to the way the matter was resolved, even though history and time were also on their side. What was being argued for in

theory, for the second time, would become more difficult to implement in practice since “the national museums”, one for much older art and the other for older modern art and contemporary art, brought their own points of view to the planning process without looking beyond the boundaries they had chosen to define for themselves. In addition, each end of the bridge also considered that those on the other side did not really understand, that they saw things differently, although this was seen as something positive when it came to their own operations. There was an underlying discrepancy between being a platform for new forms of artistic expression and collecting, caring for and conserving them, which can be gleaned from the lists of various requirements individual staff members at Moderna Museet emphasised in order to assert the importance of their own spheres of operation.⁶⁹

Early on in the process it was pointed out that one had to be on one's guard against seeking to expand the museum in terms of staff numbers, as “in that case the authorities would lash out.”⁷⁰ Olle Granath confirmed this, but also related that he subsequently chose to deliver a paper directly to the Ministry of Culture which outlined the desired increase in staffing, a decision which was implemented for the opening in 1998 by the Minister of Culture Marita Ulvskog.⁷¹ The reorganisation group at Moderna Museet discussed various posts, including the number of curators and senior curators, their various tasks and responsibilities, exhibition producers, researchers and “keepers”, whether the specialist areas should be defined along medium boundaries or not, and whether it was necessary to employ new curators. The organisational structure that was drawn up contained proposals to have a greater number of departments with more clearly defined areas of responsibility laid out according to periods such as “1900–45, 1945–2000, 2000–2050?”, although this was never authorised. Instead media were given preference as providing the dividing-lines, and painting, sculpture, drawings, prints and art education were listed as separate entities. Video, film, installations and mixed forms were listed together. It is interesting to note that photography was not sorted under curators, but under techniques, in which category storekeepers were also listed for paper, photography, painting, sculpture, mixed techniques, film and video.⁷² Drawings and prints had no champion of their own at Moderna Museet in the course of these meetings, instead an official from Nationalmuseum was appointed to the museum in 1998. An application had been made as early as 1989 for the means to provide a curator with responsibility for this area.⁷³ The solution arrived at ten years later involved a redistribution of resources between the two museums. This, too, would be a source of confusion, although it may also have been a precondition set so that the responsible party could find their way through all the material. A collection of 30,000 works cannot simply be a collection of highlights. It is structured like a grammar and follows certain rules, while also containing many exceptions. The various references that exist can be found by working through the whole collection slowly but surely, working side by side with the people acquainted with the contents of the entire operation, so that experience can be turned into knowledge and vice versa.

What is reiterated in the “vision” currently promulgated by Moderna Museet are many of the previous standpoints that have had a claim to stake in the course of the entire debate on the role of a modern museum of art. Sören Engblom wrote that Moderna Museet has problems with its name and that the pace of the various tasks of care and conservation it discharges, while also keeping an eye on the present, occurs “andante and in tempo allegro”.⁷⁴ The same perspective recurs in Moderna Museet's current policy as formulated by Lars Nittve, director of Moderna Museet since 2001. He describes the task of being both a museum and an arena for contemporary art as a conflict between various tempi, which necessarily gives rise to a paradox. In Nittve's view, the collection is the key to the paradox of a modern museum and he says that “painting, sculpture and works on paper still constitute the vital nucleus of art”.⁷⁵ At issue here may be the consolidation of a modernist line of thought that has managed to survive the theories of more recent times relatively intact. Even though Per Bjurström wrote that a paradigm shift had occurred when Olle Granath was appointed director at Nationalmuseum, the same system of presuppositions and intellectual patterns that have been considered, for the most part, as received ideas during the best part of the twentieth century would be repeated.⁷⁶ In the “vision” for the museum, Lars Nittve declares that the museum is not identical with the building, although the institution is more important than ever.

Once in the museum building on Skeppsholmen, it is possible to reflect on the nature of the circumstances governing the various parts the collection is made up of today and how the institution can best make use of its potential and its knowledge base. Forty years after the birth of the museum and a good ninety years after the first ideas were mooted, the previously separate collecting fields of painting and sculpture, drawings and prints, photography, film and video, together with a handful of other forms of contemporary artistic expression, are treated as a single large collection. The works are, however, still classified primarily according to medium and material. The museum's five curators, each in charge of a collection of their own, have retained them as their so-called specialist areas. The “permanent classics” are still on show in the display rooms, irrespective of whether they are of older or more recent date. For drawings and prints this means that they are seldom identified as works of art, which makes possible new and alternative narratives in the practical context of a new hang. Take, for example, Pablo Picasso's early drawings or Robert Rauschenberg's later prints. These works provide different connotations than the ones normally associated with Cubist painting or with Combines. They tell different stories, parallel to the ones that are usually visualised. Taken together, the works of these artists demonstrate the complexity of art. Similarity of form does not always mean similarity of content.

Ideology and Praxis

In summary terms, the occasionally unfair treatment meted out to prints and drawings may originate in a measure of conceptual confusion. Terms such as “art on paper”, “works

on paper”, “paper art”, “paper museum”, “prints and etchings” are used indiscriminately to refer to prints and drawings. In 1981, Per Bjurström wrote the following in a preliminary manifesto concerning the need for storage space:

*The collection area for the department of drawings and prints can be defined unambiguously with reference to technique. No restriction on the basis of a separation into periods and stylistic eras applies. The acquisition of art objects from the twentieth century, however, takes place in consultation with the Moderna Museet.*⁷⁷

Olle Granath, for his part, was to maintain in a staffing plan of 1989 that the division between the two museums had led over the years to a great many ambiguities in the way the boundary had been drawn between them.⁷⁸ The department of prints and drawings at Nationalmuseum has been located on the ground floor since 1952. In an official letter of 1980, Per Bjurström stated, “When the department was installed in these premises, drawings, prints and architectural drawings were still primarily considered to be study material.”⁷⁹ With the passage of time they have been assigned a greater financial value owing to appreciation, while the way they have been stored has encroached on the capacity to display them. Since the mid-1990s, Nationalmuseum’s restaurant has occupied the site where Per Bjurström thought the new storage area would be located. In tandem with the division into older and modern material, the storage and exhibition areas in the Gravyrsal also swapped places. The area available for displaying art became smaller while storage and conservation were allotted a greater amount of space. Simultaneously, the hours available for studying the material in the study hall were restricted.

The older concept of a study collection does not, in itself, constitute a problem for the collection of prints and drawings. But a lack of familiarity with the breadth of the collection can give rise to problems. There is no catalogue of the collection to make the material easily accessible. Despite digitised versions of the contents of the collection on the internet, a title such as “abstract composition” or “human study” provides no more information than a handwritten inventory would unless there is a visual correspondence with the object: a hindrance which the descriptions of that era tried to alleviate. As long as more written surveys which include combinations of different objects and how they relate to one another and to art history as a whole are not produced, the potential of the display collection is at risk, instead, of becoming obsolete as source material.⁸⁰ The manner in which objects are registered, manually or digitally, is not crucial to their accessibility. On the other hand, the opportunity for study available, and the realisation that study serves a functional purpose of its own, has a decisive effect on the way the works are received. This also applies to the artworks selected to be displayed. It is only then that they can be defined from a broader ideological perspective, including the history of ideas. Per Bjurström coined the term “service research”, by which was meant that other people derive benefit from work

that is done anonymously. It is only when new material can be surveyed and processed that new ideas are born.⁸¹ Olle Granath wrote that the collection (using “collection” as an overarching term without indicating greater specificity) could be seen as constituting a national encyclopaedia within its field, and that publications should also cover the collections and not simply the exhibitions.⁸² This is a very liberal interpretation of the potential of the collection. In another draft, it is stated that while selections have to be made at the time of acquisition, the principle that best serves art and the museum is to make acquisitions on a generous and optimistic basis.⁸³ Ragnar von Holten mentioned that, as the curator responsible for the contemporary collection, his guiding principle was to trace the development of art and document it, and that as curator one can neither govern nor alter that development.⁸⁴ Per Bjurström also stated the importance of following art and documenting the images we see around us in society, in order that their historical dimension should not subsequently be lost. Obviously, financial considerations exist which determine the scope for the incorporation of artworks in the collections of the state. A narrow postmodernist perspective, in which all art is considered on the basis of the same criteria, involves neglecting to a considerable extent what is specific as well as what is unique in the various forms of artistic expression. Under the cover of tearing down the old hierarchical barriers between the differing classifications of art objects and so creating a common class, a structure has been produced into which many kinds of art no longer fit. Previously, drawing and prints were acquired on the principle that they were characteristic of their time both in terms of subject and technique and on the basis of their relation to other forms of art. Concepts such as high art and good art are subjective criteria, which establish restrictive boundaries for art as a field. In the words of Otte Sköld:

*To be competent to judge art in the best sense, a refined and elevated sense of art’s value and content is required together with a feeling for art, capable of instinctively perceiving and rejoicing in the intentions of the artist, his sense of colour, his technical judgment and expertise and many other qualities, most of which must be innate. These are not qualities that can be acquired by art-historical study, no matter how extensive.*⁸⁵

His phraseology has its origins in the myth of “the Modernist man” – the genius born into knowledge, who must travel the world to see and gain experience, and who should, perhaps, have departed the scene when postcolonial studies and feminism first broke ground more than thirty years ago. The conditions of knowledge have changed, as have its contents. A narrow postmodernist interpretation of the concept of art risks losing sight of the multiplicity that also permits art to be subversive. In Olle Granath’s view, one cannot/should not adjust a collection after the event since one would then lose sight of the way a society sees itself.⁸⁶ Paradoxically, this is a statement that manages to put its finger on how we see ourselves today and how this perspective will be interpreted in the future.

In numerical terms, the greater part of the collection of drawings and prints that was transferred to Moderna Museet is made up of Swedish art. But it also contained international works (without there being any explicit collecting principle), including drawings by Egon Schiele and prints by Cy Twombly, for example; artists, that is, who were not previously represented in Moderna Museet's collection. The division largely followed the aforementioned Berlin Principle, which holds that artists born after 1880 belong to the history of modern art. This also applied to works by artists born before 1880 who were already represented in the collection of Moderna Museet. The use of this procedure means that painting and sculpture continue to determine the way the history of the development of modern art is written. An artist such as Käthe Kollwitz (1867–1945), who was both a sculptor and printmaker, is nowadays considered to be one of the artists who influenced modernism. Her work can be found in the Print Room of Nationalmuseum since her painting and sculpture were not represented at Moderna Museet. Henri Matisse (1869–1954) was represented at Moderna Museet, and that was where his drawings and prints were naturally transferred. *Katalogen Moderna Museet*, its supplement and the inventory cards at Nationalmuseum served as the starting points for sorting the works and for registering them digitally. This was all in aid of keeping count of the number of objects to be transferred, so that there would be no subsequent discussion as to who was to be responsible for which work.⁸⁷

For Moderna Museet's part, this procedure entailed a minor bonus at the time of conversion to a digital object database in 1999. Since the starting point for registration at Nationalmuseum was aimed solely at identifying the works, information regarding accession, provenance, material, technique and measurements, as well as images of most of the objects, is for the most part lacking. The principle on which the division was made was based on a manual procedure which obviously had its shortcomings. When searching in the digital object databases of the respective museums, it emerges that an artist such as Harriet Sundström (1872–1961), one of the early Swedish modernists, is represented at both institutions. Artists of the same generation, such as Maj Bring (1880–1971), Mollie Faustman (1883–1966), Sigrid Hjerten (1885–1948) and Vera Nilsson (1880–1971) were all born after 1880 and, in the light of their date of birth, no further questions arise as to the extent to which they come under modernism and thus belong to Moderna Museet. There are, moreover, a number of other exceptions that have not been recorded. This still leads to artists and visitors ending up caught between two stools since officials at both institutions cannot remember or are unfamiliar with the exceptions. An artist such as Gösta Adrian Nilsson (1884–1965) is represented at both museums. Although he was born after 1880, since he also did the costume sketches for Gösta Nystroem's *Ishavsbaletten* he is represented at both museums. Nationalmuseum has a collection of theatre, costume and set sketches from 1600 onwards, which was kept together in one place, as were the collections of childrens' pictures, childrens' picture

books, sketches and patterns for arts and craft objects and architectural sketches. No one is prepared to state whether this is anachronistic or not, but it may have been intended as a minor concession – meant apparently to cushion the bigger loss. On the other hand all the posters were transferred, despite some of them being older than 1880, which may be compared with parts of the collection of photography which can be dated back to the 1840s. Some posters were to be found in the archive of Moderna Museet, which demonstrates the diversity of the collecting process and the fact that there are not always watertight barriers between what is kept in the archive and what is inventoried as art. The poster as graphic design, an instance of artistic expression, and an ephemeral object is interesting. Thanks to a donation by Albert Engström, who travelled around Russia in 1924, a good collection of Russian posters exists – all of which he brought home with him. Perhaps he sensed that Russian posters would subsequently have an enormous impact – when, some seventy years later in the 1990s they would be exhibited throughout the world. Posters by the Lithuanian artist Gustav Klucis, for example, were acquired in connection with the exhibition *Aleksandr Rodjenko*, despite the fact that there were already posters by him in the collection.

In the footsteps of Albert Engström came the comic strips; these have not always enjoyed the status of art either. Much of post-war American art refers both to a form of visual language and content that is based on the capacity of the comic to transmit a message using different visual means. David Elliott acquired *Big Ass Comics*, *Snoid Comics* and *The People's Comics* by Robert Crumb, for example, for the collection in 2001. The collection also contains material pertaining to the IB affair as a result of a personal initiative on the part of a previously employed official. Had it been immediately registered under the artist's name, this material would probably have been confiscated by the police. Sture Johannesson's notorious posters made their way into both the collections of posters and graphic art, which demonstrates how technique and form can be one and the same, while nevertheless leading to different classifications. In an unadorned leaflet entitled *Grafik, vad är det?*, it is stated that it was the political poster in particular which was considered to be one of the reasons for dividing the graphic collection between the museums.⁸⁸ The political poster was distributed in a large edition, and efforts were made to ensure it was disseminated to a broad audience rather than simply becoming a collectible object. Other posters, for their part, were printed in smaller editions and sold to finance political activity.

The collection of drawings belonging to King Gustav VI Adolf, which included many acquisitions from *Young Draughtsmen*, was left in his will to Nationalmuseum and was inventoried in 1974. It was compiled according to an older approach to drawing as both a medium and a form of artistic expression. Together with the rest of the collection, it demonstrates the breadth of modern and contemporary drawing. The king's collection of prints was, however, to remain at the castle in the Bernadotte Library, although the Print Room was given the opportunity to expand its

collection of prints with the work of Axel Fridell. Moderna Museet thus acquired an extensive and very fine collection of works by the graphic artist who, together with Anders Zorn, may well be the most celebrated Swedish graphic artist in international terms.

When Per Bjurström stayed in New York in 1968, he bought graphic art directly from the Leo Castelli Gallery, which represented such artists as Robert Rauschenberg.⁸⁹ Today there are nearly thirty works by Rauschenberg in addition to the well-known pieces *Monogram* and *Mud Muse* in the collection of Moderna Museet. These are mainly prints which were acquired for Nationalmuseum from the beginning of the 1960s up until 1981; the collection was subsequently expanded by donations of graphic works from the estate of Leo Castelli (2004) and Pontus Hultén's donation in 2005.⁹⁰

Today it is by no means unusual for Nationalmuseum to borrow works from those parts of Moderna Museet's collection it is obviously most familiar with. With the benefit of hindsight, a greater degree of cooperation and a more profound measure of theoretical and art-historical reflection might have led to the making of even better decisions. As has been said, there are no watertight barriers between the museums. What is at issue in certain situations is knowledge about the various parts of the collection which needs to be converted into a broader collective experience if it is to be made visible. Hopefully, it will not take too long before the edges have been rubbed off – as Olle Granath put it in *Nike*: “It takes time to grow into a building that is three times the size of the other and is organised in a totally new way, you have to sort of grind your way into it, smoothing away the edges, to find the right surfaces and the right places”.⁹¹ Since 1998, its duties have involved being a central archiving museum of art, a museum for modern art and a place in which the present can collect, care for, conserve and study on a scientific basis both what was and what is. Political changes and economic considerations, like the building itself, have proved to have greater weight than the art-historical arguments which were used to promote the issue of collective responsibility for the art of the twentieth century. Time will tell which art-historical arguments and individual standpoints will serve to guide the continued expansion of the collection.

- 1 Interview with Olle Granath, 13 June 2007.
- 2 Interviews with Björn Springfeldt, 8 Oct. 2007; Ragnar von Holten, 12 Feb. 2008; Per Bjurström, 15 Feb. 2008.
- 3 Pontus Hultén, Nils G. Stenqvist and Philip von Schantz were actors who might have made the picture more nuanced.
- 4 My personal knowledge, which derives from being part of the process from when the works of art were settled in the Gravysal at Nationalmuseum until they were transferred to Moderna Museet, has also served as a basis for this presentation. In 1994, I started working as an assistant at Nationalmuseum's Print Room and moved in 1998 to Moderna Museet. I have been curator of prints and drawings there since 2001.
- 5 The gap in the text reflects the fact that the number of works has been left out of the document. Moderna Museets handlingar rörande museets byggnad och inv. (Moderna Museets documents concerning the museum building and inventory). Det Nya Museet 1991–1993, Draft 27 Sept. 1993. F6:8, Moderna Museets myndighetsarkiv (MMA). Official letter from Statens Konstmuseer Dnr 283/93 to the Ministry of Culture F5:10, MMA. As many of the documents are unsigned drafts and the like, they are often difficult to find in the archive. For this reason, further information in addition to the folder is provided in this text.
- 6 Interviews with Ragnar von Holten, 12 Feb. 2008; Per Bjurström, 15 Feb. 2008.
- 7 No formal manifesto as such exists. Instead, for the most part, this is Olle Granath commenting in various documents on the new modern museum. See, e.g. Moderna Museets handlingar rörande museets byggnad och inv. Med Moderna Museet mot sekelskiftet. Olle Granath. F6:9, MMA. No year attributed.
- 8 Interview with Olle Granath, 13 June 2007.
- 9 Moderna Museets handlingar rörande museets byggnad och inv. F 4:1, MMA. Noted on the protective cover from the period when Otte Sköld was director: "Museet för Modern konst utredningsförslag i stencil ej def." (Stencil of Museum for Modern Art inquiry proposals not def.)
- 10 Moderna Museets handlingar rörande museets byggnad och inv. 1994–1995. Moderna Museet i rörelse mot det nya huset. En vision. F5:11, MMA. Sören Engblom's name has been noted on the second sheet.
- 11 According to Bjurström, the previous director Bengt Dahlbäck called Hultén "da capo". Interview with Per Bjurström, 15 Feb. 2008.
- 12 Sophie Allgårdh, *Svensk konst i världen. Trender, lanseringar och reaktioner* 1965–1996, Stockholm 2000, p. 13ff.
- 13 Moderna Museets handlingar rörande museets byggnad och inv. F 6:9, MMA. 890227/06 has been noted on the upper right-hand corner on one of the four copies.
- 14 "Den gömda konsten", Sveriges Television, *Nike*, 21 Sept. 1998, producer Karl Haskel.
- 15 Moderna Museets handlingar rörande museets byggnad och inv. Med Moderna Museet mot sekelskiftet. Olle Granath. F6:9, MMA. No year attributed.
- 16 Moderna Museets handlingar rörande museets byggnad och inv. Reference Group for the Reorganisation of Moderna Museet 26 Feb. 1997. F5:11, MMA.
- 17 "Den gömda konsten", Sveriges Television, *Nike*, 21 Sept. 1998.
- 18 Moderna Museets handlingar rörande museets byggnad och inv. 1990–1995. From the documents of Sören Engblom 1990–1992. F5:11, MMA.
- 19 Moderna Museets handlingar rörande museets byggnad och inv. Meeting 3 Sept. 1988 concerning a new Moderna Museet. F6:9, MMA.
- 20 Interview with Olle Granath, 13 June 2007.
- 21 Moderna Museets handlingar rörande museets byggnad och inv. Museet för modern konst. Ett museum för modern konst. Lecture at the ceremonial meeting of the Swedish Academy for Fine Arts, 31 May 1956. By the museum director Professor Otte Sköld. F4:1, MMA. Typewritten draft. The following details have also been taken from this folder.
- 22 Moderna Museets handlingar rörande museets byggnad och inv. Museet för modern konst. F4:1, MMA. Typewritten draft. Moderna Museets handlingar rörande museets byggnad och inv. F6:9, MMA. Typewritten draft with the note "890227/OG [Olle Granath]" in the upper right-hand corner.
- 23 Moderna Museets handlingar rörande museets byggnad och inv. F6:9, MMA. Typewritten draft without a heading and signed by Olle Granath 10 May 1988.
- 24 The idea of an annex to remedy the continually acute lack of space at Nationalmuseum is a proposal that is still being investigated.
- 25 Moderna Museets handlingar rörande museets byggnad och inv. Museet för modern konst. Ett museum för modern konst. Lecture at the ceremonial meeting of the Swedish Academy for Fine Arts, 31 May 1956. By the museum director Professor Otte Sköld. F4:1, MMA. Typewritten draft.
- 26 Axel Romdahl, "Ett svenskt nationalgalleri", *Svenska Dagbladet* 12 July 1935.
- 27 Moderna Museets handlingar rörande museets byggnad och inv. Museet för modern konst. Ett museum för modern konst. Lecture at the ceremonial meeting of the Swedish Academy for Fine Arts, 31 May 1956. By the museum director Professor Otte Sköld. F4:1, MMA. Typewritten draft.
- 28 Otte Sköld, "Ett museum för modern konst", *Moderna museet. En konstbok från Nationalmuseum*, ed. Bo Wennberg, Stockholm 1957, p. 16.
- 29 Moderna Museets handlingar rörande museets byggnad och inv. Folder for Eddie Figges Foundation of 1988. F6:8, MMA.
- 30 Moderna Museets handlingar rörande museets byggnad och inv. Moderna Museet Program 88, inkl. Arkitekturmuseets program 1988 – Lägesrapport 29 Nov. 1988. State Building Administration, Bureau of Investigation. F6:9, MMA. Signed Ebbe Lindmark.
- 31 Moderna Museets handlingar rörande museets byggnad och inv. Letter from Eddie Figge to Björn Springfeldt, Stockholm 8 May 1991. F5:8, MMA. "Om" [If] is written in bold in the letter.
- 32 Bengt Göransson, "Sponsring – tecken på statlig fattigdom", *Svenska Dagbladet* 5 Sept. 1989.
- 33 Moderna Museets handlingar rörande museets byggnad och inv. F5:11, MMA. Skårman was interviewed by Hedvig Hedqvist, "M och c vill flytta Moderna Museet till Kulturhuset", *Svenska Dagbladet* 14 Nov. 1992.
- 34 Moderna Museets handlingar rörande museets byggnad och inv. F5:11, MMA. Wilhelm Behrman, "Hotade öar i Stockholm: Holmgång i kulturmiljön", *Nu*, no. 48, 1992. Moderna Museets handlingar rörande museets byggnad och inv. 1990–1995. F5:11, MMA.
- 35 Moderna Museets handlingar rörande museets byggnad och inv. Museet för modern konst. Ett museum för modern konst. Lecture at the ceremonial meeting of the Swedish Academy for Fine Arts, 31 May 1956. By the museum director Professor Otte Sköld. F4:1, MMA. Typewritten draft.
- 36 Moderna Museets handlingar rörande museets byggnad och inv. P. O. Olsson 13 Jan. 1982. F5:6, MMA.
- 37 Moderna Museets handlingar rörande museets byggnad och inv. F5:2, MMA. The Skeppsholmen Inquiry of 1969. Ministry of Defence. DsFö 1972:1, Stockholm 1972, p. 19.
- 38 Moderna Museets handlingar rörande museets byggnad och inv. Official letter from the State Building Administration 24 April 1972 signed by Director-General Reidar Tiltet, to the King (Ministry of Education). F5:2, MMA. Arrival at Moderna Museet dated (stamped) 17 May 1972.
- 39 Moderna Museets handlingar rörande museets byggnad och inv. Moderna Museet, Skeppsholmen, Stockholm. Signed PO 72. Copy of a draft that belonged to P. O. Olsson. F5:6, MMA.
- 40 Moderna Museets handlingar rörande museets byggnad och inv. Preliminärt lokalprogram för Moderna Museet (Preliminary floor-plan for Moderna Museet). Moderna Museets handlingar rörande museets byggnad och inv. Revised at a staff meeting 14 Sept. 1988. F5:9, MMA. "Original" is marked in pencil in the right-hand corner.
- 41 Moderna Museets handlingar rörande museets byggnad och inv. Fakta om museibyggnaden. Moderna Museets handlingar rörande museets byggnad och inv. F4:1, MMA. Museet för modern konst. Ett museum för modern konst. Lecture at the ceremonial meeting of the Swedish Academy for Fine Arts, 31 May 1956. By the museum director Professor Otte Sköld. F4:1, MMA. Typewritten draft.
- 42 Moderna Museets handlingar rörande museets byggnad och inv. Meeting 3 Sept. 1988 about a new Moderna Museet. F5:9, MMA.
- 43 Moderna Museets handlingar rörande museets byggnad och inv. 1994–1995. Minutes from the Planning meeting of 10 May 1995, held between 8.30 and 12.00. F5:11, MMA.
- 44 Moderna Museets handlingar rörande museets byggnad och inv. From Ebbe Lidemark, State Building Administration, to Olle Granath, 19 Oct. 1988. F6:9, MMA.
- 45 Moderna Museets handlingar rörande museets byggnad och inv. 1986, 1988–1993. F5:8, MMA. Typewritten draft.
- 46 Interview with Per Bjurström, 15 Feb. 2008.
- 47 Interviews with Björn Springfeldt, 8 Oct. 2007; Per Bjurström, 15 Feb. 2008.
- 48 Moderna Museets handlingar rörande museets byggnad och inv. Ett museum för modern konst. Lecture at the ceremonial meeting of the Swedish Academy for Fine Arts, 31 May 1956. By the museum director Professor Otte Sköld. F4:1, MMA. Typewritten draft.
- 49 *Moderna museet. En konstbok från Nationalmuseum* 1957, p. 20.
- 50 Moderna Museets handlingar rörande museets byggnad och inv. F6:9, MMA. Two typewritten, undated and unsigned drafts.

- 51 Moderna Museets handlingar rörande museets byggnad och inv. Floor-plan for the storage areas of Statens Konstmuseer, etc. To the Swedish Arts Council, LUP Delegation, Marianne Jansson, 31 March 1982. F 5:9, MMA.
- 52 *Moderna museet. En konstbok från Nationalmuseum* 1957, p. 24.
- 53 Olle Granath, "Ett museum är ett museum är ett museum...", *Moderna Museet* 1958–1983, ed. Olle Granath and Monica Nieckels, Stockholm 1983, p. 8.
- 54 Otte Sköld, "Förord", *Det moderna museet. Vägledning över utställningen med modern konst ur Nationalmusei samlingar* (exh. cat.), Liljevalchs konsthall, Stockholm 1950.
- 55 *Moderna museet. En konstbok från Nationalmuseum* 1957, p. 20.
- 56 Interview with Olle Granath, 13 June 2007.
- 57 *Moderna Museet* 1958–1983 1983, p. 9.
- 58 Moderna Museets handlingar rörande museets byggand och inv. Motion 1984/85:864, 21 Jan. 1985, Karin Ahrlund (fp). F5:7, MMA.
- 59 Interview with Olle Granath, 13 June 2007.
- 60 Moderna Museets handlingar rörande museets byggnad och inv. F4:1, MMA. These handwritten notes are headed: Fakta om museibyggnaden (Facts about the museum building).
- 61 Letter from Per Bjurström, 7 Oct. 2007.
- 62 Interviews with Olle Granath, 13 June 2007; Ragnar von Holten, 12 Feb. 2008; Per Bjurström, 15 Feb. 2008.
- 63 Moderna Museets handlingar rörande museets byggnad och inv. Med Moderna Museet mot sekelskiftet. Olle Granath. No year attributed, p. 3. F6:9, MMA.
- 64 Ibid., p. 3.
- 65 Moderna Museets handlingar rörande museets byggnad och inv. Moderna Museet i Stockholm. No year attributed. F6:9, MMA.
- 66 Interview with Olle Granath, 13 June 2007.
- 67 Allgårdh 2000, p. 103.
- 68 "Den gömda konsten", Sveriges Television, *Nike*, 21 Sept. 1998.
- 69 Moderna Museets handlingar rörande museets byggnad och inv. From various minuted notes 1994–1995. F5:11, MMA.
- 70 Moderna Museets handlingar rörande museets byggnad och inv. Meeting of 3 Sept. 1988 about a new Moderna Museet. F5:9, MMA.
- 71 Interview with Olle Granath, 13 June 2007.
- 72 Moderna Museets handlingar rörande museets byggnad och inv. 1994–1995. F5:11, MMA.
- 73 Moderna Museets handlingar rörande museets byggnad och inv. Bemanningsplanering för ett nytt Moderna Museet. Letter from Olle Granath, Statens Konstmuseer, to the Ministry of Education, 13 Dec. 1989. F5:10, MMA.
- 74 Moderna Museets handlingar rörande museets byggnad och inv. Moderna museet i rörelse mot det nya huset. En vision. Sören Engblom. 1994–1995. F5:11, MMA.
- 75 Lars Nittve, "Det moderna museet – och Moderna Museet", *Moderna Museet. Boken*, ed. Cecilia Widenheim et al., Stockholm 2004, unpaginated.
- 76 Per Bjurström, *Nationalmuseum 1792–1992*, Stockholm 1992, p. 374.
- 77 Moderna Museets handlingar rörande museets byggnad och inv. Programutredning 1981 omfattande konstmuseernas totala magasinsbehov för konst. Appendix 1. F5:7, MMA.
- 78 Moderna Museets handlingar rörande museets byggnad och inv. Bemanningsplanering för ett nytt Moderna Museet. Letter from Olle Granath, Statens konstmuseer to the Ministry of Education, 13 Dec. 1989. F5:10, MMA.
- 79 Moderna Museets handlingar rörande museets byggnad och inv. Program rörande magasin för teckning och grafik under Nationalmuseums ännu ej igenbyggda gård. From Per Bjurström, Director, to the LUP-delegation, 31 Jan. 1980. F5:7, MMA.
- 80 See Per Bjurström, *Tre decenniers svensk grafik*, Stockholm 1976, and Ragnar von Holten, *Svenska Teckningar. 1900-talet: en konstbok från Nationalmuseum*, Stockholm 1985.
- 81 Interview with Per Bjurström, 15 Feb. 2008.
- 82 Moderna Museets handlingar rörande museets byggnad och inv. Med Moderna Museet mot sekelskiftet. Olle Granath. No year attributed. F6:9, MMA.
- 83 Moderna Museets handlingar rörande museets byggnad och inv. Moderna Museet Stockholm. F6:9, MMA. Unsigned and undated.
- 84 Interview with Ragnar von Holten, 12 Feb. 2008.
- 85 Moderna Museets handlingar rörande museets byggand och inv. Ett museum för modern konst. Lecture at the ceremonial meeting of the Swedish Academy for Fine Arts, 31 May 1956. By the museum director Professor Otte Sköld. F4:1, MMA. Typewritten draft.
- 86 Interview with Olle Granath, 13 June 2007.
- 87 *Katalogen över Moderna Museets samlingar av svensk och internationell 1900-talskonst*, eds. Nina Öhman, Björn Springfeldt et al., Stockholm 1976, and the *Supplement to Katalogen* 1976, eds. Nina Öhman and Margareta Helleberg, Stockholm, 1983.
- 88 *Grafik, vad är det?* (exh. cat.), Nationalmuseum, Stockholm 1970.
- 89 Interview with Per Bjurström, 15 Feb. 2008.
- 90 For a detailed presentation of Moderna Museet's collection of graphic works by Rauschenberg, see Annika Gunnarsson, "Sidetrack – Robert Rauschenberg", *Konsthistorisk tidskrift/Journal of Art History*, vol. 76, no. 1–2, 2007, pp. 60–71.
- 91 "Den gömda konsten", Sveriges Television, *Nike*, 21 Sept. 1998

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