

NEW YORK CITY

Experiencing an Orchestration of Space and Time

Mark ISARANGKUN NA AYUTHAYA

Department of Architecture, Faculty of Architecture,

Chulalongkorn University

misarangkun@yahoo.com

ABSTRACT

Any trip to any city is a plunge into perplexity. The total shift between environments, the sudden change in daily routine or the difference in time put the simple practice of every day life into question. Displacement and disorientation put away the lazy negligence of daily routine. The unfamiliar situations evoke greater awareness and curiosity to the seemingly normal conditions. More importantly, they also uncover possibilities of a positive change in perspective. Journeys from one place to another or a change of place raise problems about space as much as time. As the world shrinks rapidly due to the technological and communicational progress, and cities are connected in many more ways, the preconception about space and time is exposed and challenged.

Usually, understanding of built environments - cities - starts with observation of their spatial form and structure at some point or cross-section in time. There are long-held assumptions that spatial and social structures change slowly, and that what we perceived as cities consists of fixed spatial structures that are inert and long lasting.¹

However, another way of looking at the cities is to conceive them as being clusters of “spatial events”, events that take place in time and space. There

¹ Batty, Michael. *Environment and Planning B: Planning and Design*. London: Pion, 2002. p 1.

may be interactions that lead to clusters and other aggregations, but the dominant way in which these descriptions are characterized are clearly temporal.² These temporal qualities, whether quantitative or qualitative, are important elements that allow us to think about our built environment in a new light, where emphasis is no longer placed on the static equilibrium but on the dynamics of urban change, where temporal structures are as significant as social and spatial structures, where the physicality of the city is no longer inert. As a result, architecture, infrastructure and urban elements should not be conceived as autonomous entities. They all interact with each other, and should be conceived continuum where one becomes part of another. Engaging the city means moving through these elements in time. Thinking about space is not merely thinking about a container; the composition of volumetric voids defined by finite materials, viewed from a fixed point in space. It also involves movements, multiple viewpoints, inhabitation and time. Consequently, it is also possible to conceive architecture not as a definite object of containment, but as a continuation, a transition or a phase, that liberates the engagement with diversity of space and time in what we refer to as “living” and to respond to the multiple dimensions of what we call “life”.

In an attempt to begin to address these issues, a journey to New York City serves as a case study. This paper is a descriptive observation of the experience of being in New York City, viewed as a succession of engagement with activities where space and time are not static entities but dynamic flows that fluctuate, called Mobile Sections. It also serves as a point of departure towards a better understanding of the interactions between spatial and temporal qualities within the built environment - be it architecture, landscape or urban - that we call cities.

Keywords : *New York City, Movement, Space-Time, Urban experience, Architecture, Change*

000 FLOW of LIFE + FLOW of TIME = MOBILE SECTION

Life Unfolding

“...the crossing of space represented an aesthetic means through which it was possible to inhabit the world...”³

Francesco Careri

² *Ibid. p 1.*

³ Careri, Francesco. Walkscape: Walking as an Aesthetic Practice. Barcelona: GG, 2002.

The word “live” according to Oxford dictionary means to “spend one’s life in a specified way”. Although such definition is impossible to describe its very meaning, a careful look at what constitutes an experience of life is a good start. This usually involves carrying out basic activities in private, public and other domains, interacting with people, traveling from one destination to another, as well as engaging in any other form of social practice. To “live” in a city is to constantly engaging these spatial and temporal qualities, moving from one activity to another in the built environment, intertwining different domains, confronting many attributes of the city. These kaleidoscopic elements constitute the “experience” of life that constantly unfolds with the flow of time. A continuum.



Figure 1: Classical Mural painting depicting Thai life is an example of how the diversity of life is demonstrated in a smooth fluidity through the bird-eye-view / axonometric perspective (picture from Wat Sutat Dhepwararam)

Mobile Sections

In order to witness how life unfolds, one may observe the complex spatial and temporal relationships with reference to the “quantitative time” – time that is defined by minutes, hours, days and so on. Life in a day could consist of numerous encounters and engagements with people, built environment and paths within 24 hours. This is the section of life in a day. Similarly, dissecting the continuum of life into sections according to weeks, months, years or decades is to contemplate the thick and thin of life as it unfolds through time. Such slice of life can be described as MOBILE-SECTIONS. In an attempt to investigate the concept of Mobile Section, this paper takes an example of journeys in New York City. It is divided into 3 segments that look at the inhabitation of the world from 3 different positions – over, under and embedded, uncovering the differing relationships between movement, space and time of

the city. The first segment looks at the Mobile Section of the air travel. It reveals the complex relationships between place, time and reality as the transportation and communication technologies seemingly shrink the world. The second segment looks at the Mobile Section of the New York City; the specificity of the relationships between the famous New York Subway and the neighbourhoods of the Manhattan Island. The last segment looks at the experience of architecture as a Mobile Section, arguing that architecture can be thought of not as an object but as fields of relationships, a phase where life continues from the past and unfold into the future, a state of change.

001 BETWEEN BANGKOK and NEW YORK

Time

Departure:	BKK	18 / 03 / 06	01:00
Arrival:	NYC	18 / 03 / 06	06:00
Flight Duration:			17 hours

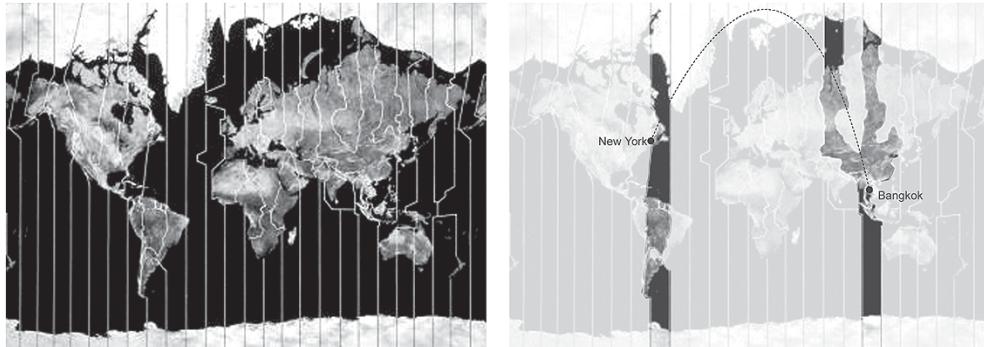


Figure 2: *World Time Zones vs. Flight across Time Zones*
(image from www.gettyimages.com)

Flying across several time-zones between Bangkok and New York, one neither inhabits the Bangkok time-zone of the past, nor the New York time-zone of the imminent future. Crossing the imaginary air-space and time-zone, one only inhabits the present. A wristwatch is now rendered insignificant as time cannot be defined by the hours and minute needles on the wristwatch anymore. Rather, time exists as an immobilized point of reference; the quantitative time of 17 hours of flight duration. It is the 17 hours that belong to neither cities, the body inhabits nothing and refers to nowhere. It is

an in-between state of being “neither here nor there”. And because of the time-zone difference, one appears to be leaving Bangkok at midnight and arriving at New York the same morning. The travel time seems to take only 6 hours. It is as if the duration between Bangkok and New York lasts from midnight to early morning, but it is the duration that is filled with having 3 meals, watching 3 movies, reading and uncomfortable sleep, all condensed into a period of sunrise. As a result, TIME one inhabits inside the plane is not the same as TIME one inhabits outside it. On the plane, time is more intense with engagements of activities. Therefore, TIME is not a uniform continuum represented by fixed numbers of minutes and hours, but an uneven flow of disrupted continuation characterized by spatial and temporal activities.

Dis-place-ment

Considering the act of living in Bangkok and New York as inhabiting two Mobile-Sections, departing from one city to arrive at another is to physically disappear from one place to reappear at another, a body being taken off and inserted between the two Mobile-Sections. The familiar spatial practices consisting of home, work and friends are suddenly absent. No longer does a daily life involve the usual activities that were carried out the day before. Instead, it is replaced by the elements of home, work and friends that are totally unfamiliar in their appearance, material, texture and colours. Still, there are buildings, bridges and people, but they are almost incomprehensible in their sights, sounds, smell, taste and touch. Disoriented, the body is not where it was yesterday, nor has it come to terms with where it will be tomorrow. The body is dis-placed. As the body is taken out of one Mobile Section and inserted into another, it passes through the transition state of dis-place-ment.

Reality

Communication technology allows instant virtual connection between two (or more) points from anywhere and at anytime. A body can physically be in New York while at the same time virtually be in Bangkok through cell phones and internet, allowing one to meet at a distance, to be what Paul Virilio calls telepresent – here and elsewhere, at the same time⁴ – thus, inhabiting multiple cities simultaneously. Moreover, working in New York for 2 months means being part of the city, maneuvering the New York Mobile-Section. But at the

⁴ Virilio, Paul. *Open Sky*. New York: Verso, 1997. p 10.

same time there is the realization that going back to Bangkok means having to maneuver another Mobile-Section. If a “reality” is represented by inhabitation of a particular place for a purpose, a Mobile-Section, then communication and transportation progress expands the meaning of reality beyond a single entity. Reality becomes multiple inhabitations. One can simultaneously be present between multiple Mobile-Sections, or successively shifts from one Mobile-Section to another. Reality is plural.



Figure 3: *Multiple Time / Multiple Realities* (Image from www.gettyimages.com)

002 CONTEMPLATING the CONSTANT CHANGE

Being in New York: Maneuvering the Life, Time and Mobile-Sections

*“[New York’s] present reinvents itself, from hour to hour, in the act of throwing away its previous accomplishments and challenging the future... The spectator can read in it a universe that is constantly exploding.”*⁵

Michel De Certeau

Seen from above at first sight, the Manhattan Island is an overwhelming congestion of skyscrapers. Surrounded on the east and west sides by the Hudson River and the East River respectively, the island seems to be expanding upward with the explosive rise of the countless steel, stone and glass superstructures. The skyward verticality is in stark contrast with the endless horizontality of the serene water spreading out in all direction. The distinctive feature of the island is the paradoxical nature of the chaotic skyscrapers regularly organized through a certain order. With the rules of the rectangular grid designed by Simeon deWitt, Gouverneur Morris and John Rutherford in

⁵ De Certeau, Michel. *The Practice of Everyday Life*. Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1984. p 91.

1807, the island is a matrix of 12 avenues and 155 streets, a city of $13 \times 156 = 2088$ blocks.⁶ Accompanying the physical rigidity after two hundred years is the constant burst of unquenchable city life energy. As Rem Koolhass observed; The Grid makes the history of architecture and all previous lessons of urbanism irrelevant. It forces Manhattan's builders to develop a new system of formal values, to invent strategies for the distinction of one block from another. The Grid's two-dimensional discipline also creates undreamt-of freedom for three-dimensional anarchy. The Grid defines a new balance between control and de-control in which the city can be at the same time ordered and fluid, a metropolis of rigid chaos.⁷ Viewing the city from the plane's window is the only time the city appears as a coherent whole, the one time that the eye can encompass such ever-changing chaos in totality.

Once on the ground, the concentrated clusters of the skyscrapers operate as distant points of reference. Their physical presence enables the New Yorkers to locate themselves according the defined orientation of North, East, West and South. Moving towards Manhattan in the famous New York Subway, these vertical bulk becomes bigger and bigger. Their larger-than-life presence can only be slowly absorbed as the body is mechanically catapulted towards them with the repeating thump of the friction between the subway wheels and the steel tracks. And suddenly it all disappears. The Subway suddenly descends towards the darkness of the under water tunnel as it enters the Manhattan Island. Submerged under the surface, the presence of the city has disintegrated, replaced by the blackness of the under-lit tunnel. Arriving at New York City is the act of losing sight, acquaintance made with the disappeared, greeting with the memory of the instant past. A blindfolded body witnessing a spectacle.

Underneath the city where its sight is absent, entering Manhattan becomes an act of navigating the chaos, confronting and crossing paths of commuters, signs and destinations at the speed and durations defined by the Subway. A striated space of fixed paths in well-defined directions, restricted speed and regulated circulation.⁸ A Subway Mobile-Section. The Subway car - flocking swarm of New Yorkers into claustrophobic confinement, collapsing distance into nothingness as it moves between stops, and liberating them as each destination arrives – becomes a moving lobby of the city. Endlessly collecting and dispersing commuters, it is a constantly-moving public space of

⁶ Koolhass, Rem. *Delirious New York, New York*: Monacelli Press, 1994. p 18.

⁷ *Ibid.* p 20.

⁸ Deleuze, Gilles and Guttari, Felix. *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987. p 386.

convergence and divergence. A mobile space of public. Engaging this public domain, the New Yorkers are equipped with apparatus of privacy: ipods and pocket books. The ipods enable them to overcome the uncomfortable confinement within the subway cars as they choose to hear the more desirable sounds downloaded from their MacBook's digital space. Identifiable by the ones whose ears are plugged with the slick white wire, the ipods disconnect bodies from the physical and collective moments of "here and now", and connect them to "other" moments of individual choice by means of digital technology. Moreover, the collapse of distance by the subway movement generated the new-found "free time"; time that one waits for one's destination to arrive. Such free-time is purposefully utilized as the New Yorkers immerse themselves into the ocean of words, reading all sorts of book from Dada to Da Vinci Code, transporting them to their own world of individual imagination. The time-killer pocket books allow them to be with themselves, absorbed in their own thoughts and to inhabit their own domain. Thanks to these apparatus, a virtual private domain is actualized within the physicality of the Subway public space. Its presence is non-physical. It operates through the disengagement with the collective present (of here and now) and engagement with the individual preference (of there and elsewhere). Its existence is temporary. Emerged by a soft touch of a button or a delicate turn of a page, the virtual private domain rapidly emerges, and quickly dissolves away by the same action. The Subway car is where the public and private domains simultaneously exist, a place where the physical and the virtual collide.

Navigating the Subway system is a test for survival. Apart from being lost and disoriented, schedule change, closed stations, confusing signs and complex interchange are integral parts of riding New York Subway. Getting between the Subway stops is all about anticipating and maneuvering possible change; the sensory organs have to perform with great awareness, the body has to react quickly to the constant flow of shifting information. Between the stops, one anticipates how long the journey takes, not how far the journey is. These fixed points in space are measured not by distance, but by the time it takes to arrive. Moving between these stops, the body now inhabits time - the duration of moving from one point to another – and not space – a geographical extension between the two points. The physicality of a Subway stops now exist as temporal entity that goes by nothing more than the more or less rapid flow of their individual duration, estimated only in terms of being ahead of or behind schedule.⁹ With the intertwining systems connecting within the Manhattan Island and between its boroughs (Queens, Bronx, Brooklyn, New Jersey), these

⁹ Auge', Marc. *In the Metro*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. 2002. p 18.

countless Subway stops are everywhere in the city, forming connecting portals that effortlessly link distant areas together in matters of minutes. They are blackholes within the city, collapsing the distance into an element of time. Between them, question of when more matters more than the question of where. New York City, therefore, becomes duration, a fluctuation of time flow.

Ascending onto the surface of the city, the body moves through levels of the station, threading the multiple sections; the section of departure and arrival at concourse level, the section of crossing paths at platform level and the section of the entering/leaving where change of practice occurs, for example, a transition from a professional life to a private one.¹⁰ These sections of multiple space (and time) stack on top of one another, weaved together by the stairs and elevators. Passing through them is to literally moving through the multiple sections of multiple times.



Figure 4: New York City Subway Map

The Subway stations' fundamental task is to function as points of departure and arrival, managing uninterrupted flow of man and machine. However, these stations, being part of the city, operate differently in relation to the areas that surround them. Some becomes an entrance to the neighbourhood. At *Spring Street Station*, a body is transported to SoHo; New York's glamorous downtown shopping destination. Once an industrial zone known as Hell's Hundred Acres, the neighbourhood was earmarked for destruction in 1960s. However, its signature cast-iron warehouses were saved by the many artists who inhabited them. SoHo morphed into a playground for the young, beautiful and rich as loft living later become fashionable, thus the buildings were renovated for residential use. Balancing the heft and grace, these buildings of cast-iron facade were solidly built for industrial use, but their generous

¹⁰ Auge', Marc. *In the Metro*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. 2002. p 56.

interior floor space has made them ideal for residential-loft conversion in the modern era.¹¹ At **Canal Street Station**, a body enters another country altogether: the Manhattan's Chinatown. Hailed as the largest Chinese-immigrant community outside Asia, the crowded street lined with stands stocked full of fish, fruit and vegetables. There are street vendors, countless restaurants, and gift shops that sell everything from knockoff designer items to kitschy pop-culture paraphernalia. An international street of local familiarity. The **8th Street Astor Place Station** is where there are diverse species of ravers, punks, yuppies, hippies, homeboys and vagrants, as well as diverse activities such as indie record shops, bargain restaurants, punk clubs and cheap clothing stores. The Astor place is always swarming with modern-day street urchins, and also a site of Cooper Union, the city's first free private college.

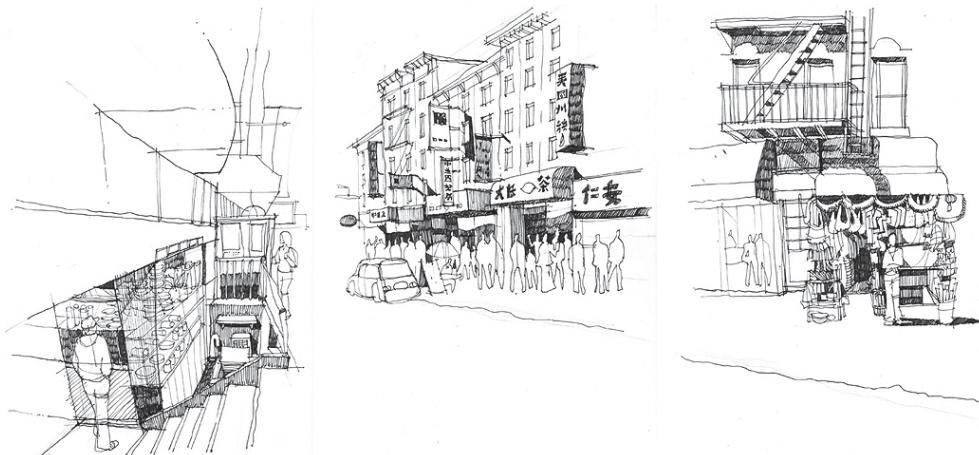


Figure 5: Impression of the New York's Chinatown at Canal / Mott Street

Operating as transportation node, some stations become the space of going¹², a point in space where New Yorkers converge and diverge, intensely cross paths, but never actually meet. At **34th Street Penn Station** is where 600,000 commuters move through daily. The railroad terminal, called Penn Station, offers linkage to the regional rail systems and the airports. Formerly an architectural masterpiece designed by McKim, Mead & White in 1913 – the world's largest rail terminal - the majestic Pennsylvania Station was razed in 1960s to make way for a sport and entertainment arena Madison Square Garden. It was an outrageous act that led to the creation of the Landmarks

¹¹ Bell, Annie. *Time Out: New York*. 12th Edition. New York: Penguin Books, 2004. p 83.

¹² Careri, Francesco. *Walkscape: Walking as an Aesthetic Practice*. Barcelona: GG, 2002.

Preservation Commission to save important historical buildings.¹³ Equally majestic is the **42nd Street Grand Central Terminal**, a 1914 Beaux Art station designed by Warren and Wetmore. Famous for its barrel-vaulted concourse, it was once called the “Terminal City”, a complex of commanding buildings, interconnected in more ways than one¹⁴, a spectacular point of arrival.



Figure 6: New York's multiple levels considered as Sections of Time

Some stations possess the multiple functions of orchestrating the converging and diverging flow of the New Yorkers; operating as platforms for commuters' interchange underground - a centripetal force- but as channels to gathering places on the surface - a centrifugal force. The **14th Street Union Square Station**, for example, is an underground interchange of 8 different subway lines that run to the East and West Side of the Island. On the ground, a body is liberated into a public park, a special one. From 1920s until the early 1960s, Union Square gained reputation as the favourite location for political oratory, from AFL-CIO rallies to anti-Vietnam War protests. Following 9/11, the park area has become a visual focal point for the city's outpouring grief. It is also best known for an excellent farmer's market –Union Square Green Market – and the variety of commercial use in the buildings that surround the square.¹⁵

The **42nd Street Time Square Station**, an underground intersection of 10 subway lines, is the foreplay to the glitter and grit of the city- the Times Square.

¹³ Bell, Annie. *Time Out: New York. (Downtown)*. 12th Edition. New York: Penguin Books, 2004. p 98.

¹⁴ Wood, Nick. *360 New York*. New York: Abrams, 2003. p 109.

¹⁵ Simpson, Les. *Time Out: New York. (Downtown)*. 12th Edition. New York: Penguin Books, 2004. p 94.

Filled with eateries catering to theatergoers on the street, occupied by buildings that housed entertainment companies, five-star hotels, theaters, museums, stock exchange and so on, illuminated by acres of blinking lights and glaring neon, Time Square at the moment is a chaos of exponential intensity. Celebrities, tourists, city dwellers cross paths, united by the awe at the larger-than-life spectacle that reached its pinnacle when the city celebrates the New Year's Eve. Once a famous area for sex trade, the elongated intersection has been transformed, through forceful and clever interventions, into what is often called "the crossroads of the world".

Some stations are located very close to buildings that they become integral parts of New York architecture. At **51st Street Station**, the Rockefeller Center's masterly designed public space meticulously steer the New Yorkers into its compound of sunken court and Art Deco Skyscraper. At **59th Columbus Circle Station**, the glass-boxes of the new Time Warner Headquarter represent a contextual transition between the midtown office towers and low-rise and broader residences of the Upper West Side. Architecture is seamlessly weaved into the fabric of the city, forming a fluid continuum where architecture, city and movement all exist as one; a fluctuating urban field.

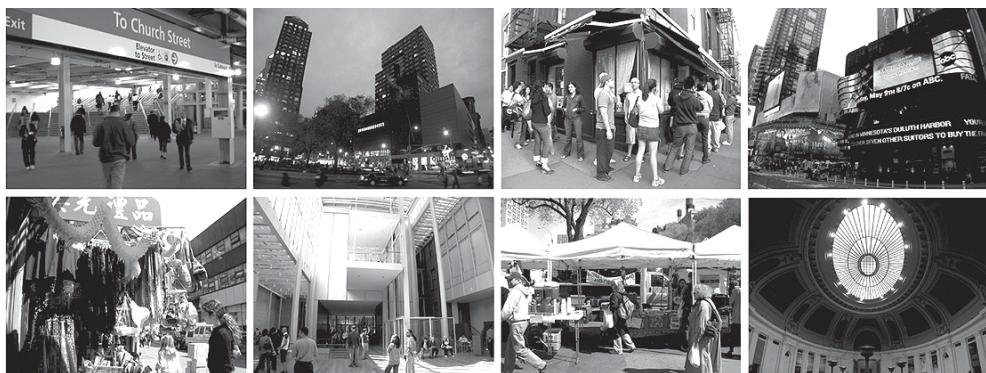


Figure 7: Engagement with activities in the city

Absorbing the overwhelming sight of Manhattan sunset high above the ground - from the Empire State Tower's 102nd Floor Observatory at **34th Street Station** - memory of the Manhattan's first sight is remembered, only with a world of difference. Staring at the endless fields of flickering lights under the darkened sky, New York City is no longer an accumulation of built construct where people spend their lives. Instead, it is a field of spatial and temporal events, where the act of living is performed. Being in the city is to move through these events that are defined by engagement with activities, by movement of multiple dimensions, by encountering the emergence of the virtual and collapse

of the actual, by inhabiting the non-physical and dissolving of the physical. The multiplicity of intense Mobile Sections. As the New York City is a field of spatial and temporal fluctuations, it is, therefore, a state of change. The city is dynamism, a constant shift, a flow, where life constantly unfolds through the reverberation of space and time. New York City is a verb.



Figure 8: View of the New York City from Empire State Tower

003 ARCHITECTURE as FIELDS

The city is considered as shifting fields of spatial and temporal events, a flow of constant change. Then, how does architecture, a built construct of finite physicality, operate within this dynamism? Can it still be thought of as a finished “product” or an absolute “object”?

Architecture must also be conceived as a state of change. Architecture is a continuation. Architecture is a field where the act of life continues to unfold, a phase where life leaves its past in order to occupy the present, an in-between where all the possibilities are inhabited and left behind.

Witnessing how the new Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) effortlessly weaved itself into New York City fabric, it becomes clear how architecture can transcend its formal and physical values to become the one with the dynamics of the city. By the design approach that focused on the specific urban conditions of the Museum’s midtown location, the architect - Yoshio Taniguchi - the new MoMA engages itself with the city. Situated between the commercial area of

the 53rd Street in the south and the more residential area of the 54th Street in the north, the Museum responds to this simultaneity by placing the Museum's commercial and cultural elements accordingly. The north and south streets are linked by the Museum's linear entrance hall. It not only extends the public space of Manhattan's streets into the Museum, but also redefines the structure as having a volumetric definition rather than a front and a rear.¹⁶ New Yorkers seamlessly enter the museum, departing the confusion of the street without realizing that they have arrived. Taniguchi mentioned in his competition statement that the dual mission in the twenty-first century – exhibition of the collection and education of the public – are best given their own symbolic identities. These two realms are housed in separate structures facing the garden, in forms of two rectangular volumes of equal heights. One provides for viewing of real objects and the other, their representations: the virtual museum as counterpoint to the actual one. As an architectural composition, however, the two structures work together to define the new public facade of the Museum. A seamless architectural expression of simple geometric volumes will create a powerful horizontal presence on 54th Street, in stark contrast to the random verticality of Manhattan, establishing the Museum as a new urban landmark, clearly visible from Fifth Avenue.¹⁷

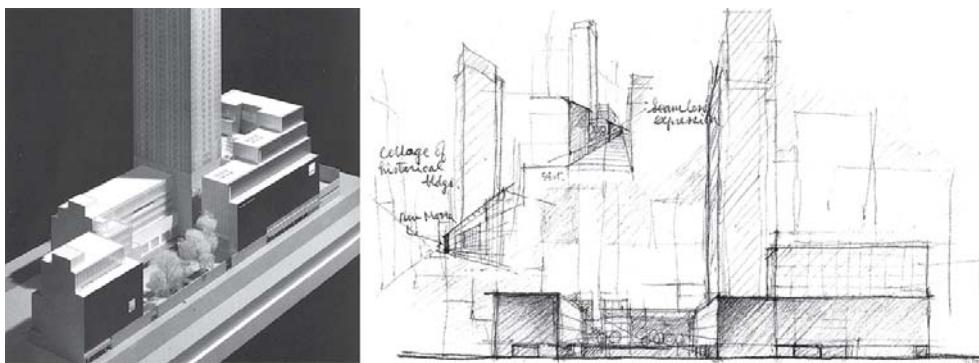


Figure 9: Taniguchi's competition sketches and study model
(image from *Imagining the Future of the Museum of Modern Art*)

Entering the Museum, the one-flight stair leads up to the main level where the gigantic five-storey atrium awaits. This massive vertical void, defined by white planes and flooded by filtered sunlight, acts as a pivotal space that orientates

¹⁶ Riley, Terence. *The New Museum of Modern Art*. New York: Museum of Modern Art, 2005. p 40.

¹⁷ Studies in Modern Art 7. *Imagining the Future of the Museum of Modern Art*. New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1998. p 242.



Figure 10: Photograph of the 5-storey Atrium dissected into 5 sections of the Museum's Gallery

the visitors, signifying the beginning of the journey into the different periods of contemporary art. The atrium is surrounded by the regularly shaped galleries extending to the exterior facade, resulting in the intertwining of composed exterior volumes and dynamic central atrium.¹⁸ The logic of the relationship between the size of the gallery and its attendant public space resulted in the contemporary galleries being placed on the lowest floor, adjacent to the largest public space, while the successively more historical galleries are placed above, thus, restoring the contemporary art to a central place in the Museum.

¹⁸ Riley, Terence. *The New Museum of Modern Art*. New York: Museum of Modern Art, 2005. p 48.

The achievement in man's creativity throughout modern history is condensed into sections vertically placed on top of one another. Each floor has become a section of time that is filled with masterpieces, and moving between them is to travel back and forth in time. At the new MoMA, the work of art stands out while architecture recedes back. The white planes of neutrality, the open enclosures, the vertigo of sun-lit atrium, the occasional voids offering unexpected views to the city beyond seems to have dematerialized and dissolved the massive physicality of architecture to the point where the only experience remains is a vivid and intense journey into history represented by the colors and matters of drawing, paintings, photography and sculptures.

Having traveled between different periods of the past, one steps into Sculptural Garden to occupy the present. A contemplative present. With its open-air charm, the garden is a horizontal void that is defined on three sides by the geometric volume composed of transparent / translucent glass, light grey aluminum and deep black African granite. The remaining one side of the Garden faces the residential buildings along the 54th Street, arousing the stark contrast between the serenity of the Garden and the diversity of Manhattan's brownstone buildings. Once in the Garden, it becomes evident that architecture is orchestrated in such a way that the materiality is rendered abstract, the music of matter is meditative, the symphony of space is surreal. White, weightless and withdrawn, the whispering tranquility of the garden invites the visitors to contemplate; to watch and listen to city unfolds while being detached from it; to absorb the richness of life's past and immediate present; and to look forward to the imminent future. It is here that architecture, landscape and urban intertwines, all exist as one, allowing one to pause and reflect upon the continuum of life, momentarily transcending one to another level without having to leave the ground. A celebration of eternal wandering.



Figure 11: MoMA's Sculptural Garden looking towards the residential 54th Street

004 WHAT...IF...

What if the first thing we learned to draw is not “form”; not squares, not rectangles nor circles?

What if the first thing we learned to draw is “flow”; blowing wind, moving cloud or pouring rain?

How would we draw it? What would it look like?

What if worldly forms cannot be reduced to the elements we casually called “simple”?

What if worldly forms are not static but are always in a state of change, together with time?

Can we define forms not by noun, but by verb? And call them “flowing matters”?

What if we see the world not as a place of forms, but a space of flows?

How different will all things mean to us?

Will we only be “constructing” our own place in this world? Or will we also be “maneuvering” the eternal transition?

Will we still think like we think today?

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