
New Interventions in Art History

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New Interventions in Art History is a series of textbook mini-companions – published in connection with the Association of Art Historians – that aims to provide innovative approaches to, and new perspectives on, the study of art history. Each volume focuses on a specific area of the discipline of art history – here used in the broadest sense to include painting, sculpture, architecture, graphic arts, and film – and aims to identify the key factors that have shaped the artistic phenomenon under scrutiny. Particular attention is paid to the social and political context and the historiography of the artistic cultures or movements under review. In this way, the essays that comprise each volume cohere around the central theme while providing insights into the broader problematics of a given historical moment.

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Art and its Publics

Museum Studies at the Millennium

Edited by **Andrew McClellan**

Having One's Tate and Eating It: Transformations of the Museum in a Hypermodern Era

Nick Prior

Manet's barmaid, a Degas ballerina – all are gleefully slashed. Behind him, The Joker's ugly goons have their work cut out for them. Spraying paint on every canvas their boss man missed. He finally stops at Edward Munch's The Scream and cocks an eyebrow. 'I kinda like this one. Leave it.'

(Batman: The Art of Crime, DC Comics)

In the new terrain of hyperactive consumer culture, the museum is caught in a bind. It can't turn itself into a successful "distraction machine"¹ – providing diversion in a world already saturated with entertainment – without, it seems, threatening the aura of its grand traditions and the presence of a culturally elevated audience. Where William Hazlitt once extolled England's National Gallery, then at Angerstein's house in Pall Mall, as a "sanctuary, a holy of holies, collected by taste, sacred to fame, enriched by the rarest products of genius,"² today's expansive audience descends on the museum with a more secular thirst for visual experience. Indeed, it's become an orthodoxy in academic writings on postmodern culture to record the death rattle of the project of the museum as it was forged in the crucible of European Enlightenment.³ Here, aesthetic contemplation has been replaced by amusement, silence by bustle, education by infotainment, respect by relativism. Museums, it is said, are an



Plate 3 I. M. Pei, Pyramid, Louvre Museum, Paris, 1983–9. Photograph by Andrew McClellan.

endangered species, lumbering dinosaurs of a Victorian era of “rational recreation” and bourgeois solemnity, already displaced by a new breed of easy-learning playgrounds, science centers, and high-tech pleasure domes. In the following essay, I will attempt to assess this vision of a museological endgame, drawing not only upon the theoretical commentaries common to cultural studies, but also an emerging sociological literature on museums.

Whilst museums are certainly at a crucial juncture in their history, this chapter suggests a more complex diagnosis involving the rise of hybridized “hypermodern” organizations.⁴ The most successful of these tap into a key feature of contemporary cultural trends – that of double-coding. The museum might have mutated to cater for a more fickle audience hankering after spectacle, but in many ways it has done so by combining elements of tradition with consumer populism, drawing on, whilst transforming, cultural modernity. Indeed, the most astute and dynamic directors of artistic institutions are those who understand and exploit the dualistic nature of museums, tapping into and enlarging the rich vein of meanings possible in contemporary culture. This suggests that museums are not just passive loci of external patterns and processes but self-reflective agents of social and cultural change themselves. A contemporary sociological approach to museums is more revealing of these ambiguities and more precise in its characterization of the issues and challenges facing the art museum today.

But for a moment, let us consider why critics are heralding a profound transformation of the museum such that it is flung headlong into a world of cultural hedonism and fragmentation fit for an audience *The Joker* would not look out of place in.

Museums and the Trans-Aesthetics of *Sensation*

During the autumn of 1997, the Royal Academy in London hosted one of the most controversial exhibitions of recent times, *Sensation*. Nestled within the spaces of this formerly patrician institution were the works of a feisty generation of *agents provocateurs* famous for their cut-up sheep, stained bed-sheets, and self-portraits cast in blood. Already subject to the kind of hype and branding reserved for new cars and designer fragrances, the “yBas,” young British artists, comprised a synergistic package that included Irvine Welsh’s *Trainspotting*, football, “new laddism,” and an

outpouring of national self-confidence known as “cool Britannia.” And it was a profitable package. What united the objects in *Sensation* was Charles Saatchi, one of a new breed of super-patrons whose collection this was. Famous for heading up one of the most dynamic corporate advertising companies of the modern era, Charles Saatchi has become a new Medici of modern Britain, exercising a virtual monopoly over contemporary British art.⁵

The collection spewed out of Saatchi’s private London gallery into the public sphere and turned the swaggering artists (Damian Hirst, Tracey Emin, Rachel Whiteread) into household names. Scandal attracting exhibits like Marcus Harvey’s portrait of child-killer Myra Hindley – a huge canvas composed of prints from the cast of a child’s hand – fuelled the outrage.⁶ And whilst the Royal Academy defended its exhibition by appealing to a respectable tradition of severed limbs and polymorphous perversity in European art history, controversy wasn’t bad for business either. After attracting 300,000 people to the Royal Academy, the show toured venues in Berlin and New York, the latter after attempts by the Mayor to close it down on moral grounds failed.⁷

As a powerful social metaphor and as an instrument of historical representation, museums are crucial barometers of social change.⁸ Like the Royal Academy, their role and function have been transformed over the last thirty years to cater for complex and sometimes contradictory demands.⁹ From the introduction of plural funding strategies and tougher-minded boards of trustees, to heightened accountability and intensified public scrutiny, museums have been placed in a supercharged climate in which adaptation, flexibility, and product diversification are the watchwords.

One way of characterizing these changes is to subsume them under the category of postmodernity – a term designated to describe a sea-change in the social, economic, and political organization of Western societies¹⁰ – and then analyze the contemporary museum as a particular product of this condition. The museum, in this analysis, has become a key exemplar of postmodern trends. Stripped of the Enlightenment values of authenticity, progress, and judgment, the postmodern museum, instead, feeds the “inflationary era” of late capitalism and its “anything goes” market eclecticism. European modernism’s pantheon, it follows, no longer stands for aesthetic progress but extends the culture of spectacle – feeding an art of a relentlessly expanding world of commerce and merchandising.¹¹

This form of analysis has been particularly influential amongst postmodern writers linked to the cultural studies tradition, such as Frederic Jameson, Jean Baudrillard, and Mike Featherstone. According to these critics, the postmodern museum has become, like other spaces of entertainment, an “apparatus of capture”¹² – a region of cultural intensity designed to control movement, order desire, and translate them into habits of consumption. At the Louvre, for instance, once the exemplar of artistic progress and French cultural domination, the confluence of commerce and art is seen as both a cause for concern and a postmodern delight.¹³ In 1993, a shopping mall was installed in the Richelieu Wing, running directly into the heart of Europe’s first great museum and lavishly promoted in Metro station posters exploiting the Louvre’s most well-known image, the *Mona Lisa*.¹⁴ One such advert juxtaposed the icon with oversized text declaring the presence of “51 stores at her feet,” a reference to the location of the mall below the galleries where the painting is housed. A further advertisement depicted a detail of the *Mona Lisa*’s hands above a list of the various shops in La Carrousel du Louvre. Not only can one now access the permanent collections through the underground shopping mall – from Virgin Megastore to Raphael’s *The Virgin* in one fell swoop – but bathe in the postmodern interplay of art and commodity in a universe of declassified signs and images.

The effect is suitably capped by I. M. Pei’s immense glass pyramid entrance to the “Grand Louvre,” itself a forceful emblem of an ambient culture in which architecture – the “new cool” – competes with the art object for attention.¹⁵ It’s somehow only half surprising that Robert Venturi, architect of the Sainsbury Wing of the National Gallery in London (an extension financially endowed, incidentally, by a British supermarket chain), pairs the gallery with sports stadia in the scale and crowds attracted to both.¹⁶ For commerce and culture are now increasingly melded into a seamless entity, further withering the line between high culture and popular culture, and turning the museum into a playpen of consumption.¹⁷ The visual art complex itself has grown massively to accommodate accelerated levels of entertainment and sense experience, drawing the museum into the ruthless business of crowd-pulling. Hence, the shop and the café – definitively postmodern spaces, in this argument – are now lodged at the heart of the museum: not necessarily somewhere to go *after* the visit as an adjunct to aesthetic experience, but a prime locus of consumption itself.¹⁸

And this is happening, in many cases, at the behest of directors and boards of trustees. Since the mid-1980s, established boards of trustees have been replaced with enterprise culture managers whose sole purpose has been to bring museums into line with the “for-profit” sector of the economy. One such instance has been the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, which has undergone a series of makeovers since the 1980s, including a Saatchi and Saatchi campaign in the 1990s stating it to be “an ace caff with quite a nice museum attached.” It has lent paintings to Harrods, put on co-exhibitions with Habitat and Burberry’s and arranged a pre-auction exhibition of Elton John memorabilia. In 1985, Sir Roy Strong of the V&A stated that the future of the museum was bright and predicted that the museum “could be the Laura Ashley of the 1990s” (quoted by Robert Hewison).¹⁹ In 1988, the V&A marketing manager, Charles Mills, in a similar vein, declared the museum to be a place as attractive, popular, and replete with consumers as the top London stores. The implication is clear: if culture is “show business”²⁰ then the art museum (or rather the museum “experience”) is one stage where the business of culture is unfolding in ever more concentrated ways.²¹

But where does all this leave the audience for art? What norms of perception instruct the visitor’s relationship to the museum’s objects? What, in short, is a postmodern museum public? For writers like Baudrillard, Featherstone, and Virilio,²² the expansive crowds going to the new “supermarkets of culture” move through at a bewildering speed, impatient and carnivorous, no longer searching for aesthetics but agitated in an aesthetics of the search, scanning the cultural horizon for more intense forms of entertainment. Inside the Pompidou Center in Paris, for instance, Baudrillard spies a contradiction between the static objects of a frozen modernist canon and the mass of people who “swarm to enjoy it.”²³ And they do swarm, for Baudrillard, like fomented locusts devouring a crop – seeing everything, eating everything, touching everything. The masses “charge at Beaubourg,” he says, “as they do to the scenes of catastrophes, and with the same irresistible impulse . . . their number, their trampling, their fascination, their itch to see and touch everything comprises a behavior that is in point of fact, catastrophic.”²⁴ The catastrophe, in this case, is the collapse of high culture and its meanings – pathos, depth, transcendence – under the weight of mass consumption. The commodity has succeeded, in other words, where avant-garde

groups like the Futurists failed, destroying the very essence of the museum as a realm of autonomy and elite distinction. In its place the masses summon a culture of “simulation” and popular enthrallment, a “manipulatory play of signs without meaning.”²⁵ Or, as Baudrillard himself puts it:

They are summoned to participate, to interact, to simulate, to play with the models... and they do it well. They interact and manipulate so well that they eradicate all the meaning imputed to this operation and threaten even the infrastructure of the building. Thus, a type of parody, of oversimulation in response to the simulation of culture: the masses, meant only to be cultural livestock, are always transformed into the slaughterers of a culture of which Beaubourg is just the shameful incarnation.²⁶

The advent of the agitated mass implies a collateral change in the perceptual conventions brought to the museum. Jameson declares new postmodern arenas of visual consumption to be dependent upon a kind of “aleatory” or “schizoid” orientation in which the images of contemporary culture rush towards the senses in random fragments. Under these conditions, the eye is never allowed to settle, but is constantly distracted, drawn into a culture of simultaneous presence, what Jameson calls “the permanent inconsistency of a mesmerising sensorium.”²⁷ The very extension of visual culture – from fashion and advertising to Hollywood and cyberspace – undermines the possibility of aesthetic judgment precisely because aesthetic experience is everywhere. Speed and motion have drowned out the deliberative sensibilities of the disinterested or “pure gaze” called for by Kant and other Enlightenment thinkers. The audience yearns not for the lineaments of moral betterment, refined judgment, or gentlemanly conduct, but for a permissive and hedonistic “trans-aesthetics” characteristic of postmodern sensation. This means, for Virilio at least, “that, as in narcotic states, the series of visual impressions become meaningless. They no longer seem to belong to us, they just exist, as though the speed of light had won out, this time, over the totality of the message.”²⁸

The age of computer-aided perceptions and wall-to-wall visuals has, from this perspective, colonized sight and dissolved aesthetics. As in McLuhan’s description of an “outering of the senses,”²⁹ consumers of the visual wear their brains on the outside of their skulls, maximally exposed

to the post-aesthetics of titillation and sensation. Naturally, the audience becomes tolerant of art designed to shock (as in *Sensation*) because it has already seen it in the plethora of screens and sensorial domains that constitute the postmodern regime of signs and signification.³⁰ Just as the dissolution of emotional intensities associated with the bourgeois ego leads to what Jameson calls the “waning of affect” in contemporary culture, so, to use the parlance of postmodern theory, the “derealized” subject is lost in the dizzying universe of an unmappable hyperspace and can only submit to the immediacy of the “hysterical sublime” – “a free-floating and impersonal feeling dominated by a peculiar kind of euphoria.”³¹

So, where Malraux once declared photography to have diffused artistic images throughout society, giving rise to the “museum without walls,”³² commentators are now pointing to a more current metamorphosis that spells the end of the museum itself.³³ It’s not just that the rise of “virtual museums” and “24-hour museums” expands the sites through which the museological is accessed, doing away with the physical boundaries of the museum, but that visual culture itself has reached a level of intensity and circulation that makes it no longer possible to differentiate between different domains of the image.³⁴ In essence, the museum, the theme park, the bank lobby, and the mall are transferable, all equally appreciated in a state of distraction. By this transformation, the foundational principles of the museum – the pure aesthetic, bourgeois contemplation, the disciplinary efforts of the nation-state – disintegrate. I. M. Pei’s glass pyramid becomes a headstone on the grave of the project of the museum.

The Audience is Not a Mass

But seductive as this analysis is, there are theoretical and empirical lacunae to be addressed. Cultural commentators are too often disposed to look for indicators of postmodernity in order to make larger sweeping claims about social change, in the process ignoring counter-examples and evidence that falls outside this grand schema. How different social groups “read” museums according to their own social backgrounds and cultural experiences is certainly glossed in these theories. Characterizing the audience as a “mass” fails to capture the sociological coordinates

of the viewing public as well as the complex motivations behind the museum visit. Any analysis of the art museum must move beyond cursory dismissals of the audience as an undifferentiated aggregate in order to grasp the meanings and agendas that shape the visit.

It's clear, for instance, that visiting the art museum remains a fairly *restricted* (rather than mass) social phenomena. Recent surveys have overwhelmingly demonstrated that museum visiting in the UK, Europe as a whole, and the United States is largely a middle-class pastime, despite a new wave of arts policies and culture initiatives. Reference to these studies provides a grounded counterpoint to the often high-falutin rhetoric of postmodern cultural theory.³⁵ Studies in the United States, for instance, reaffirm DiMaggio, Useem, and Brown's survey of 300 surveys,³⁶ which found little or no recent change in the socio-economic profile of arts attenders.³⁷ Efforts to increase access to the arts for those on low incomes have clearly failed, as arts attendance and participation increase dramatically for those in higher income groups and with higher educational status. Whilst figures recently released by the National Endowment for the Arts indicate that around 35% of American adults visit an art museum or gallery at least once during the year, these figures also reveal that, for every arts activity, participation rates increase with higher educational attainment and household income. Only 4.9% of the art gallery public earn \$10,000 or less, and only 8% earn \$20,000 or less; to put it another way, only 16% of the 15 million people earning an annual income of \$10,000 or less visit an art museum at least once a year.³⁸

In Britain, museum attendance is significantly lower amongst social groups C2, D, and E – the lower middle and working classes. Individuals from social groups A, B, and C1 – professionals, managers, and the upper/middle strata of the middle classes – are much more likely than other social groups to visit museums. As figure 2.1 below shows, 34% of ABs visited museums in 1993/4, as did 23% of C1s. Lower down the social scale, however, museums appealed to significantly less of the population, only 14% in the case of C2s and 10% in the case of DEs (*Cultural Trends*, 1995: 40). The frequency of visits to museums among lower social groups is also smaller, the norm being just one visit a year.³⁹ Non-visitors (those who have never visited a museum) are disproportionately represented amongst lower class groups and those who left school at an early age.⁴⁰

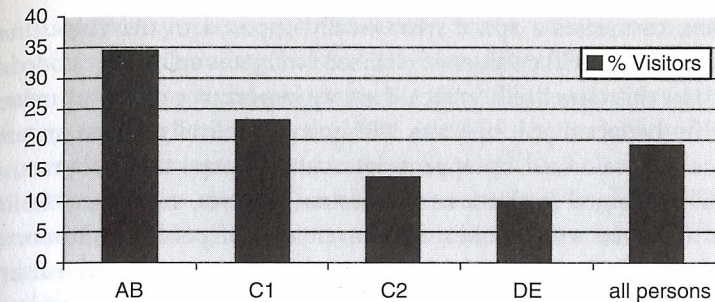


Figure 2.1 Participation at UK museums by social class, 1993/4.

Source: Adapted from *Cultural Trends*, 1995, no. 28.

Museums as Class Distinction and Exclusion

What figures like these show is that the visit maps a relationship between cultural preference and social background, pointing up the importance of sociological links between visiting museums and social class. Bourdieu and Darbel's survey of art museum audiences in 1969⁴¹ may now be a little dated, but the overall conclusion that visiting art museums is a form of cultural distinction remains relevant today.⁴²

According to Bourdieu's analysis, social differentials in visiting museums make sense if we accept that high culture legitimates social differences. The "love of art" does not express universal or *a priori* faculties towards aesthetic pleasure, but rests on the possession of class-specific "cultural capital" – particular cultural competences and systems of perception acquired through formal and informal processes of socialization. The sensitivity to experience higher artistic pleasures, a pleasure that for Kant, at least, may be experienced by any human being, is revealed by Bourdieu as the privilege of those who have access to the conditions in which "pure" and "disinterested" dispositions are acquired. Taste, in other words, is not a neutral or free-floating sensibility dependent on individual preferences – as in the phrase "each to their own" – but is a function of one's social position and a means by which higher social groups are marked out as superior.⁴³ Museum visiting is, therefore, unveiled as a socially differentiated activity relying on the possession of educational and cultural dispositions towards art works and, as such, "almost exclusively the domain of the cultivated classes."⁴⁴

"Free entry," in short, "is also optional entry,"⁴⁵ in practice put aside for those who feel at home in the museum's confines. The art museum, for

Bourdieu, comprises a space symbolically opposed to the vulgarities of mass culture, where the values of civilized bourgeois culture are coded and decoded by this class itself. In fact, the very importance of the art museum rests with the fact that it operates within a symbolically potent system of classification, valorized by appropriate cultural experts, discourses, and nationally ordained institutions (orchestras, theatres, and other “serious” civic institutions with established conventions of public demeanor and cultural restraint) that bind elites ever closer to consecrated culture.⁴⁶ Museums, therefore, act as the meeting point of class formation and social reproduction, reinforcing the cultural separation of different social classes, and underpinning the sense of belonging of “cultivated” individuals and families in the museum.

By this logic, art museums are felt to be repellent, formidable, or unwelcoming places to visit by lower demographic groups. In the minute details of their functioning, museums demand respectful distance. The hushed reverence, the intimidating atmosphere, the sacred possessions, all serve to separate the aesthetic from the popular, institutionalizing refinement and reinforcing the sense that art has no clear purpose or benefit. In fact, one of the assets of recent *qualitative* social studies of the museum is the focus on the interpretations and meanings given to the visit by attenders and non-attenders alike.⁴⁷ Many of these indicate that the working classes find art museums to be irrelevant, that the arts are for “other people,” “for the toffs . . . people with money. Not for us, simple as that” (cited by Moore).⁴⁸ Infrequent visitors are more likely to enter the museum for non-specific or casual reasons – to shelter from the rain, to use the toilets, to pass the time, or to fulfill the requirements of other agencies, such as schools. They are also less likely to see the museum as some kind of library or cultural resource than to see it as a monument to the dead.⁴⁹

Unable to shake the image of the quiet, formal, dusty enclave, museums have, for sociologists like Bourdieu, become low-priority places for the disadvantaged, not least because they make ordinary people feel inferior. On an ethnographic level, Bourdieu and Darbel note that museums provide few, if any, concessions to visitors who lack knowledge of art and artists.⁵⁰ Far from being some kind of manic excursion to the fun-house, a trip to an art museum is still suffused with a sense of gentility and religious awe, a fact guaranteed by the solemn and dignified arrangements, as well as vigilant security guards. They are daunting places for these groups, crammed with exhibits that mean nothing to them – “dingy places with different kinds of bits.”⁵¹ Unsurprisingly, the lower classes tend to

favor accessible, popular, and affordable forms of entertainment and leisure that provide the stuff of everyday sociability. The highest levels of attendance for these social groups are for the pub, the short-break holiday or the cinema, the latter attracting 38% of C2DE respondents and 48% of the unemployed in one recent survey in Britain.⁵²

All this reaffirms the notion that museum meanings are “diversely determined in relation to the class trajectories of the subjects.”⁵³ What people bring to the museum in the way of “cultural capital” is as important as “supply side” issues concerning the museum's artefacts, display arrangements, or norms of behavior. Not only do audience studies show a stark contrast to the postmodern image of a teeming mass descending on the gallery, but they reinforce Bourdieu's declaration that “culture is only achieved by denying itself as such, namely as artificial and artificially acquired.”⁵⁴ If access to and understanding of high culture express cleavages between low and high social groups, then the result is the widespread symbolic legitimation of the latter as culturally superior. But exclusion is never as effective as when it is self-exclusion, and, inasmuch as the uninitiated lower classes respect (or “misrecognize”) the divisions as natural or right, accepting their inability to “play the game,” they are complicit in their own definition as inferior.⁵⁵ Patterns of social and cultural inequality are thereby internalized and legitimated, a process Bourdieu and Passeron call “symbolic violence.”⁵⁶

But, again, some questions and doubts arise here. More than one theorist has noted an implicit functionalism or circularity in Bourdieu's theories. In the main, a Bourdieusian analysis is better at analyzing how culture works to stabilize social arrangements or legitimate a status quo than examining the complexities of social change or rupture.⁵⁷ Whilst it might historically be true that one of the main functions of the museum has been to maintain bourgeois norms of distinction and purify itself of lower-class tendencies, we have to ask to what extent it can be reduced to this unitary function today. Is the museum really such a hermetically sealed space hived off for the middle classes? Are lower social groups really so passive and universally excluded? And, if museums are merely conservative agents of social reproduction, how can they ever reflect upon their own function and power, or attempt more open-ended and democratic forms of representation? There remains a need to understand why some groups consistently avoid entering museums, but also, in the wake of an expansion in visual art and museum attendance, as well as, in Britain at least, the scrapping of entry charges for national institutions,

why museums are increasingly self-reflective, popular, and spectacular places.

The Museum as Reflexive Allotrope

Ready-made characterizations of the populist/postmodern museum or the restricted/elite museum are misplaced and imprecise. Both explanations have obvious credibility but they are somewhat too closed and neat to be singularly plausible in these complex times. Graña, for instance, sets up a fairly rigid distinction between patron-oriented museums, represented by the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, and public-oriented museums, represented by New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art.⁵⁸ Where the former defends a traditional object-oriented approach, letting the museum's artefacts "do the talking," the latter is a more contemporary manifestation of visitor-centered values, articulating with utilitarian intentions to engage the community in the museum's educational aims. For Graña, these two models of the American museum express distinctions between the orientations of those that run them – the patrician and didactic tendencies of Boston's elite versus the more democratic, status-hungry dispositions of New York's industrialists and financiers.

There is certainly truth in this claim: typological distinctions should be made, for instance, between big "Universal Survey Museums"⁵⁹ – often trustee-based, lacking experimental autonomy, and tending to defend values of connoisseurship – and smaller, local art galleries, where institutional obligations towards conventional models are less pressing. If nothing else, then, Graña's distinction alerts us to the sociological conditions under which different museums are founded and run. And yet, such a characterization also overlooks the more complex truth that *all* museums contain elements of *both* orientations. Zolberg points out, for instance, that even in supposedly populist museums, like the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Art Institute of Chicago, there is as much evidence of institutional elitism and the pursuit of pure scholarship as there is the encouragement of a broad-based public.⁶⁰ This is despite the rhetoric claiming a wholehearted commitment to increasing visitor numbers in these institutions. McTavish, similarly, recognizes the residual presence of an elite defense of high art in today's Louvre museum, despite the recent development of La Carrousel du Louvre and the potential declassification of high and low culture.⁶¹ In this case, the cultural authority and national

identity of the Louvre have been reinscribed through a number of strategies – including vetting shops for propriety and excluding undesirable groups from the mall – the ultimate effect of which has been to increase the number of conceptions of the museum that exist simultaneously.

All of this points to the museum as a radically syncretic institution in which variant tendencies coexist – aesthetic contemplation *and* entertainment, connoisseurship *and* consumption, private delectation *and* public provision. Few, if any, museums have pursued a single tendency if it has meant systematically abandoning others.

A case in point is Britain's summer blockbuster of 2001, *Vermeer and the Delft School* at the National Gallery, London. Possessing all the trappings of the *über* exhibition, the show, at first sight, stands as the ideal candidate for the postmodern spectacle. The thirteen Vermeer works at the center of the exhibition generated the kind of media frenzy reserved for football matches and pop concerts.⁶² More than 10,000 advance tickets were sold for the exhibition, the highest number of advance bookings in the National Gallery's history; opening hours were extended on Saturdays and Sundays to accommodate 270,000 visitors during the three-month exhibition run; and the commercial spin-offs included a film, an opera, poetry, five works of fiction, a new biography, study tours, websites, customer reviews, as well as the usual selection of souvenirs. Inside the gallery, viewing conditions were, at times, reminiscent of Baudrillard's swarming mass at the Pompidou Center. One bruised and battered reviewer described the "jostling, anxious sea of arty humanity... heaving, shoving and pleading to get into the exhibition," the queues for advance tickets "already stretched back to the street door and the National Gallery's ticket computers, used to running at a more sedate pace... showed dangerous signs of wobble."⁶³ On television, Vermeer mania swept arts review programs and news items alike, sparking a series of spin-off documentaries and gallery-side snippets of *vox pop*. Vermeer's tranquil, domestic interiors now found themselves at the center of a mass-appeal show, transforming the canon into a commercial fetish.

And yet, at the same time, alternative meanings flourished around the exhibition, including those denoting a more "exclusive" relationship to the art works. We should note, for instance, that patrician magazines like *Country Life* heaped praise on this exhibition of "pure painting" despite "the obnoxious advertising hype surrounding the exhibition."⁶⁴ Critics throughout the broadsheet press, similarly, waxed lyrical about the exhibition's artistic charms, predictably invoking traditional art-historical standards of form, contemplation, and beauty – the very stuff of the

educated middle-class *habitus* and a still intact high culture.⁶⁵ We should note, further, that the National Gallery decided to limit its visitor numbers to 270,000 by extending the opening hours precisely because it wanted to preserve an air of “quiet contemplation” for its visitors, especially in the “sacred” Vermeer rooms. This doesn’t quite square with the image of a flat post-culture in which visitors search for and submit to conditions of perceptual overload and immediate gratification. Nor does it fit *tout court* with the tightly bounded values of a purified bourgeois culture. It rather suggests the complex coexistence of meanings and experiences contained within the hybrid form of the museum: not less (or post) modern but more modern, deepening tendencies towards ambiguity that were, perhaps, inherent in the museum from the start.⁶⁶

The point is, contemporary museums are complex, double-coded organizations in which composite tendencies are absorbed and played out. It’s disingenuous to apply an either/or, before/after, modern/post-modern logic to museums and their publics because this short-circuits a more precise examination of how these dynamic institutions adapt and survive. Like chemical allotropes,⁶⁷ museums can exist in two or more forms whilst inhabiting a broad (museological) state of matter. As a result, they can, and do, package themselves in different ways to different audiences. Scholars can study, hedonistic tourists can “do” the blockbuster exhibitions at speed, “informed” visitors can regularly tackle the intricacies of the permanent collection, and computer-literate schoolchildren can scan the museum’s objects from their desktops. If not quite all things to all people, then the museum (and, indeed, the audience) is a great deal more multifaceted than is assumed by contemporary mass-culture theorists. Indeed, the very proliferation of discursive sites through which collections are rendered guarantees this plurality: not just interactive websites and CD-Rom technology but traditional art-history monographs and academic conferences; not just cynical business sponsorship and Hollywood, but workshops for local schools and organized visits.

“Museums,” write Boniface and Fowler, “are wonderful, frustrating, stimulating, irritating, hideous things, patronizing, serendipitous, dull as ditchwater and curiously exciting, tunnel-visioned yet potentially visionary.” And they continue: “The real magic is that any one of them can be all those simultaneously.”⁶⁸ Once, museums may have been able to survive on the basis of one or two experiential repertoires or modes of presentation: now they must multiply the range of services and events on offer – a trend that parallels developments towards flexible accumulation and rapid in-

novation in industry at large.⁶⁹ The success of institutions like the Getty Center in Los Angeles, the Burrell Museum in Glasgow, the Tate Gallery in London, and the various Guggenheim Museums, as well as lesser-known museums such as the Museum for Contemporary Art in Helsinki, can be assigned to the rich mix of objects and experiences tendered and, by implication, the range of visitor perceptions possible. These are places which combine wide-ranging collections with spectacular architecture and elaborate settings – places to eat and loiter as well as to view the exhibitions.

Indeed, perhaps the most innovative and clear-sighted museum directors are those who have recognized and exploited the plasticity of the museum idea in order to overlay various levels of aesthetic experience. What makes the likes of Thomas Krens and Nicholas Serota so notable, for instance, is the way their respective institutions have caught up with (and in some cases out-sprinted) trends towards the hypermodern in contemporary culture – the massive expansion of a high-tech visual art complex, the rise of mass higher education, and the globalization of the art market, in particular. This breaks the orthodox relationship between the museum and society, in which the former plays the role of historical conservator, lagging behind the most exciting developments in the latter. It also suggests that directors are social actors who may cultivate possibilities arising from conscious separations between their own and other institutions.

In Serota’s case, the doubling of visitor numbers to the Tate Gallery demonstrates an abandonment of rather sedate norms of museum management in favor of advanced rotation policies and a more thorough understanding of the expectations of the audience. As Serota himself reveals, the intensification of the gallery experience lies with the promotion of “different modes and levels of ‘interpretation’ by subtle juxtapositions of ‘experience’... in this way we can expect to create a matrix of changing relationships to be explored by visitors according to their particular interests and sensibilities.”⁷⁰ The museum does not just rest on the (curatorial) authority of its collection, in other words, but finds ways of responding to the different frames of reference of the audience – encouraging unexpected readings of the collection and inviting visitors to discover alternative routes. By implication, the museum sets itself up for the critic as well as the tourist, the artist as well as the “ordinary” visitor: in its design it strives for “interpretation” and “contemplation” as well as “spectacle” and “experience.”

It is at this level that the Tate Modern, Serota's most recent allotropic museum, works. Housed in a disused power station on the south bank of the River Thames, the gallery extends across a range of services and points of contact in a way that heightens the bourgeois canon of international modernism whilst transforming the conventional means of viewing modern art. From the glass-topped café and iconic industrial chimney, to the on-line shop and smattering of "reading places" (where visitors can consult books relating to nearby works), the Tate Modern aggregates, exploits, and translates the old and the new. On the one hand, it switches between ambiances and modes of presentation, self-consciously inflating the sphere of contemporary art and generating scales of display reminiscent of totalitarian regimes. On the other hand, the very grandeur of the Tate Modern has injected a degree of interest – if the three million visitors in the first six months are anything to go by – in an art which, traditionally, has had limited appeal in Britain.

The Tate Modern, in many ways, echoes the megalomaniacal vision of the Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art (Mass MoCA), planned in the late 1980s by Thomas Krens. Krens, who has a specialist degree in public and private management, directs modern art museums with immense popular appeal. Mass MoCA was his consumerist vision of a branded mega-museum, bursting with shops, cafés, hotels, condos, and high-tech exhibition spaces, but which, by spreading the museum idea itself, exposed new audiences to "inaccessible" movements like Minimalism and Conceptualism. Lauded as an economic savior for the de-industrialized mill town of North Adams, Massachusetts, MoCA ultimately flopped as a business venture in the early 1990s (to be resurrected in a more down-scaled form). However, Krens's more recent projects symbolize the same aims of economic convergence, cultural synergy, and multi-functionalism that underpin the recent cycle of museum innovation. Indeed, as director of the Guggenheim, Krens has undoubtedly transformed the international art museum to resemble a diversified super-product, replete with all the inevitable paradoxes and consequences (intended and unintended) of such an endeavor. And whilst the likes of Serota and Krens are harangued as "dumbing down" contemporary art, they have certainly helped clear the way towards museums that circulate a broader spectrum of experience.

I want to suggest, then, that one *can* have one's (traditional) Tate and yet still eat (in) it. Competing with other leisure domains has not, on the whole, meant museums abandoning *in toto* the cultural conventions and

grounds on which they were established. Directors are increasingly running their museums as open-ended compendia that must appeal to various constituencies. And recognizing this involves the reflexive acceptance (if not celebration) that contradictory tensions that once might have threatened the idea of the museum are now permanent fixtures within it. Museums face significant dilemmas, of course: how to deal with a more diverse, savvy, and critical audience, fulfilling directives of an expectant government or board of trustees, and keeping up with a spectacular consumer culture. In fact, the museum is under scrutiny as it has never been before. But fatal characterizations are all too loose, ahistorical, and inexact. Rumors of the death of the museum are much exaggerated.

Indeed, museums still thrive, albeit in transmuted form. For not only is the number of museums increasing across the globe – the US alone has spent \$4 to \$5 billion on building museums in the last decade⁷¹ – but they are also diversifying in form and content, recycling (and perhaps enhancing) the modernist impulse whilst transforming it. They still, on the whole, celebrate values worked up by nineteenth-century aesthetics, including ideas of genius, expression, and cultural transcendence, but to these they have added new approaches, technologies, and flamboyant modes of exhibition more suitable to a hypermodern era. And they have done so, in the main, by acts of an increasingly reflexive nature – a fact picked up recently by a new academic literature on museums.⁷² It is no longer possible for museums to ignore the social and epistemological bases on which they work. Like other complex institutions, museums are having to contemplate their own efficacy and socio-historical location in order to satisfy both internal monitoring procedures and external calls for legitimation.

Institutional self-consciousness is an increasingly predominant feature of the modernization of all organizations in contemporary society, according to sociologists like Beck, Giddens, and Lash.⁷³ Decision-making now happens under conditions of "reflexive modernization" – a transition in the character of social organization which brings into question expert systems, scientific and technological progress, and rapid economic growth. For the museum, "institutional reflexivity" is a process of self-examination through which the institution comes to know itself better, questioning its own auspices and social function. But the instigation of filter-back mechanisms also bestows on museums the opportunity to pioneer more socially inclusive and progressive initiatives and exhibition strategies, responding

more thoughtfully to the local community. A case in point is the attempt by some museums (the Geffrye Museum and the Museum of London, for instance) to bring ethnic minorities and local communities more meaningfully into the museum through local schemes and outreach projects, as well as stage exhibitions dedicated to the representation or inclusion of previously silent voices and marginalized cultures.⁷⁴ Theoretically speaking, reflexive modernization has afforded more “agency” to the museum – more powers of productive introspection and action in relation to broader structural constraints. And, whilst one should not underestimate the continued class constraints and incessant commercialization of the museum, it has, at least, become possible for museums to inhabit a more democratic, open-ended “third space,” beyond elitism and consumerism, giving a positive twist to the Enlightenment’s vision of cultural modernity.

Under these conditions, museums cannot be considered as passive providers of didactic materials, delivering the same product to all visitors. Nor are they inert reflectors of preconstituted social and economic relations, or one-dimensional conservative agents of social reproduction and bourgeois culture. Reorganized and reshaped from the late twentieth century, they are more plural, open, and contingent than the mass culture or elite image suggests – self-aware and able to confront their own limitations and reifications. Which is to say that the contemporary museum is not irredeemably scoured with the practices of a monolithic postmodernity. It is not a symptom of an end of modernity, but an extension, acceleration, and radicalization of it: consumerist, global, virtual, corporate, for sure, but still modern – an institution where opportunity and constraint are balanced in equal measure. In this respect, as far as museums are concerned, today is like yesterday, only more so.

Notes

- 1 F. Guattari, *Chaosmosis: An Ethico-Aesthetic Paradigm* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995); P. Virilio, *The Vision Machine* (London: British Film Institute, 1994).
- 2 William Hazlitt, “Sketches of the Principal Picture Galleries in England and Notes of a Journey Through France and Italy, 1824” in *The Complete Works of William Hazlitt*, ed. P. P. Howe (London and Toronto: J. M. Dent, 1932), vol. 10, p. 7.
- 3 Jean Baudrillard, “The Beaubourg Effect: Implosion and Deterrence,” *October*, vol. 20 (Spring 1982), pp. 3–13; Frederic Jameson, *Postmodernism, or, The Cultural*

- Logic of Late Capitalism* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1991) and *The Cultural Turn: Selected Writings on the Postmodern, 1983–1998* (London: Verso, 1998); Mike Featherstone, *Postmodernism and Consumer Culture* (London: Sage, 1991); Robert Hewison, “Commerce and Culture,” in *Enterprise and Heritage: Crosscurrents of National Culture I*, ed. J. Corner and S. Harvey (London: Routledge, 1991).
- 4 As will become clear towards the end of this chapter, the term “hypermodern” is preferred to “postmodern” in the more precise meanings attached to the former as a term that captures the present as an extended and radicalized moment of change, as opposed to a definitive break with the past implied in the latter (see A. Pred, “Re-Presenting the Extended Present Moment of Danger: A Meditation on Hypermodernity, Identity and the Montage Form,” in *Space and Social Theory*, ed. G. Benko and U. Strohmayer (Oxford: Blackwell, 1997).
 - 5 Lisa Jardine, “Modern Medicis: Art Patronage in the Twentieth Century in Britain,” in *Sensation: Young British Artists from the Saatchi Collection* (London: Thames and Hudson in association with the Royal Academy of Arts, 1997).
 - 6 In this case the portrait made news when protesters pelted it with ink and eggs. Three weeks later, after special restoration, it was reinstalled, but this time protected by glass and dedicated security guards.
 - 7 P. Wollen, “Thatcher’s Artists,” *London Review of Books*, October 30, 1997, pp. 7–9; R. Cook, “The Mediated Manufacture of an ‘Avant-Garde’: A Bourdieusian Analysis of the Field of Contemporary Art in London, 1997–99,” in *Reading Bourdieu on Society and Culture*, ed. B. Fowler (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000).
 - 8 R. Lumley (ed.), *The Museum Time-Machine: Putting Cultures on Display* (London: Routledge, 1988).
 - 9 E. Hooper-Greenhill (ed.), *Cultural Diversity: Developing Museum Audiences in Britain* (London: Leicester University Press, 1997); E. Barker, *Contemporary Cultures of Display* (London: Open University Press, 1999).
 - 10 Z. Bauman, *Postmodernity and its Discontents* (New York: New York University Press, 1997); S. Lash, *The Sociology of Postmodernism* (London: Routledge, 1990); D. Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1989); A. Huyssens, “Mapping the Postmodern,” *New German Critique*, no. 33 (Fall 1984), pp. 5–52.
 - 11 Barker, *Contemporary Cultures of Display*; D. Crimp, “On the Museum’s Ruins,” in *Postmodern Culture*, ed. H. Foster (London: Pluto, 1985).
 - 12 G. Deleuze and F. Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus* (London: Athlone Press, 1988), pp. 424ff.
 - 13 Hewison, “Commerce and Culture”; P. Boniface and P. Fowler, *Heritage and Tourism in the “Global Village”* (London: Routledge, 1993); J. McGuigan, *Culture and the Public Sphere* (London: Routledge, 1996).
 - 14 L. McTavish, “Shopping in the Museum? Consumer Spaces and the Redefinition of the Louvre,” *Cultural Studies*, vol. 12, no. 2 (1998), pp. 168–92.
 - 15 The provision of striking display spaces (the Tate Modern, the various Guggenheim museums, the Pompidou Center, the Musée d’Orsay) has become a recent feature of museum building. Designed by celebrated postmodern architects or

- refashioned out of erstwhile industrial spaces, such iconographic buildings feed the expanding cultural economy of Western cities (see A. Scott, *The Cultural Economy of Cities* [London: Sage, 2000]). The very fate of cities in a post-industrial era is increasingly dependent on their status as cultural centers, placing more emphasis on the symbolic goods, images, and lifestyle experiences that make up a city's "cultural capital" (S. Zukin, *The Cultures of Cities* [Oxford: Blackwell, 1995]; Featherstone, *Postmodernism and Consumer Culture*). Not surprisingly, private corporations, city administrators, and national policy-makers are increasingly disposed to invest in aesthetic and symbolic forms as cultural value is inextricably linked with economic value.
- 16 Barker, *Contemporary Cultures of Display*.
- 17 Featherstone, *Postmodernism and Consumer Culture*.
- 18 In a rush of postmodern irony, two of the artists exhibiting at *Sensation*, Sarah Lucas and Tracey Emin, opened a shop in Bethnal Green, London, which sold T-shirts, badges, prints, drawings, and sculptures and was open all Saturday night to self-consciously meld art, shopping, and clubland.
- 19 Hewison, "Commerce and Culture," p. 162.
- 20 Umberto Eco, *Travels in Hyperreality* (London: Pan, 1987), p. 151.
- 21 The most recent reinvention of the V&A has seen the opening of the "British Galleries," a 31 million-pound refurbishment conceived by the out-going director, Alan Borg, to boost visitor numbers. The scheme comprises fifteen new galleries displaying the history of British design from 1500 to 1900, supported by high-tech lighting and contextual displays. Daniel Libeskind's proposed architectural extension – a collapsing, twisting, geometrical spiral – has also been heralded as the savior of the museum, a significant rebranding device that might root the museum in a more contemporary era.
- 22 Baudrillard, "The Beaubourg Effect"; Featherstone, *Postmodernism and Consumer Culture*; P. Virilio, *The Aesthetics of Disappearance* (New York: Semiotext(e), 1991) and *The Vision Machine*.
- 23 Baudrillard, "The Beaubourg Effect," p. 5.
- 24 Ibid., p. 7.
- 25 Ibid., p. 6.
- 26 Ibid., p. 7.
- 27 Jameson, *The Cultural Turn*, p. 112.
- 28 Virilio, *The Vision Machine*, p. 9.
- 29 Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media* (London: Sphere, 1966).
- 30 Jean Baudrillard, *The Ecstasy of Communication* (Paris: Semiotext(e), 1987); S. Lash, "Discourse or Figure? Postmodernism as a 'Regime of Signification,'" *Theory, Culture, and Society*, vol. 5 (1988), pp. 311–36.
- 31 R. Krauss, "The Cultural Logic of the Late Capitalist Museum," *October*, vol. 54 (1990), pp. 3–17, at p. 14.
- 32 André Malraux, *Museum Without Walls* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1967).
- 33 Crimp, "On the Museum's Ruins"; D. Roberts, "Beyond Progress: The Museum and Montage," *Theory, Culture and Society*, vol. 5 (1988), pp. 543–57.

- 34 Lash, "Discourse or Figure?"
- 35 See *Cultural Trends*, Issue 2 (London: Policy Studies Institute, 1988). Interesting as the essay is, we might reasonably ask, for instance, how Baudrillard's characterization of mass implosion at the Pompidou Center sits with surveys of audience composition at around the same time, which showed a strong bias towards the educated middle classes at this museum (see N. Heinich, "The Pompidou Centre and its Public: The Limits of a Utopian Site," in *The Museum Time-Machine: Putting Cultures on Display*, ed. R. Lumley (London: Routledge, 1988). Are postmodern authors generalizing the middle-class experience as the limits of the social world? If so, what does this say about the limits of postmodern theory itself? Is it a form of what Murray Bookchin (*Remaking Society* [Montreal: Black Rose, 1988], p. 165) calls "yuppie nihilism"?
- 36 P. DiMaggio, P. Useem, and P. Brown, *Audience Studies of the Performing Arts and Museums: A Critical Review*, National Endowment for the Arts, Research Division, Report no. 9 (New York: Publishing Center for Cultural Resources, 1979).
- 37 J. Heilburn and M. Gray, *The Economics of Art and Culture: An American Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).
- 38 National Endowment for the Arts, *Demographic Characteristics of Arts Attendance: 1997*, Research Division, Report no. 71 (Washington, DC: National Endowment for the Arts, 1999).
- 39 *Cultural Trends*, Issue 25 (London: Policy Studies Institute, 1995), p. 40; *Cultural Trends*, Issue 12 (London: Policy Studies Institute, 1991).
- 40 N. Merriman, "Museum Visiting as a Cultural Phenomenon," in *The New Museology*, ed. P. Vergo (London: Reaktion Books, 1989).
- 41 Pierre Bourdieu and A. Darbel, *The Love of Art: European Art Museums and their Public* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991).
- 42 This study was based on a series of surveys conducted between 1964 and 1965 on the visiting publics of various art galleries and museums in Europe, mainly in France. The authors identified different viewing orientations to the museum and related these to the social characteristics of the visitors. Despite its fairly obvious conclusions, the study provided a social-scientific rejoinder to an intransigent truth of art discourse, that art appreciation was somehow autonomous from, or beyond, social forces. The study also reinforced one of Bourdieu's central claims, that capital and class should be conceived in both economic and cultural terms (see Bourdieu, *Distinction* [London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1979]).
- 43 P. DiMaggio, "Classification in Art," *American Sociological Review*, vol. 52 (August 1987), pp. 440–55.
- 44 Bourdieu and Darbel, *The Love of Art*, p. 14.
- 45 Ibid., p. 113.
- 46 P. DiMaggio, "Cultural Entrepreneurship in Nineteenth-Century Boston, I: The Creation of an Organizational Base for High Culture in America," *Media, Culture, and Society*, vol. 4 (1982), pp. 33–50.

- 47 J. Moore, "Poverty and Access to the Arts: Inequalities in Arts Attendance," *Cultural Trends*, Issue 32 (1998), p. 31; J. Harland, K. Kinder, and K. Hartley, *Arts in Their View: A Study of Youth Participation in the Arts* (Slough: National Foundation for Educational Research, 1995); G. Fyfe and M. Ross, "Decoding the Visitor's Gaze: Rethinking Museum Visiting," in *Theorizing Museums*, ed. S. Macdonald and G. Fyfe (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996).
- 48 Cited in Moore, "Poverty and Access to the Arts," p. 60.
- 49 N. Merriman, "Museum Visiting as a Cultural Phenomenon."
- 50 Bourdieu and Darbel, *The Love of Art*.
- 51 Cited in *Cultural Trends*, Issue 12, p. 77.
- 52 *Cultural Trends*, Issue 32 (London: Policy Studies Institute, 1998).
- 53 Fyfe and Ross, "Decoding the Visitor's Gaze," p. 127.
- 54 Bourdieu and Darbel, *The Love of Art*, p. 110.
- 55 V. Zolberg, "American Art Museums: Sanctuary or Free-For-All?" *Social Forces*, vol. 63, no. 2 (December 1984), pp. 377–92.
- 56 Pierre Bourdieu and J. Passeron, *Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture* (London: Sage, 1977).
- 57 R. Jenkins, *Pierre Bourdieu* (London: Routledge, 1992).
- 58 C. Graña, *Fact and Symbol: Essays in the Sociology of Art and Literature* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971).
- 59 C. Duncan and A. Wallach, "The Universal Survey Museum," *Art History*, vol. 3, no. 4 (December 1980), pp. 448–69.
- 60 Zolberg, "American Art Museums," p. 385.
- 61 McTavish, "Shopping in the Museum?"
- 62 The show in London followed a stint at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, where more than half a million people visited the show, with queues of up to 10,000 visitors a day.
- 63 Michael Kennedy, "Vermeer Matchless When it Comes to Brass Tacks," *Guardian* (June 19, 2001), p. 1.
- 64 B. Gray, "Vermeer and the Delft School," *Country Life* (June 2001) http://www.countrylife.co.uk/ArtsAntiques/FineArt/exhi_vermeer.htm, p. 1.
- 65 Reviews of *Vermeer and the Delft School* were most obviously coded for an informed and cultivated middle-class audience familiar with the language of high culture. Reviewers spoke of "the anonymity of surface, the determinedly uncalledigraphic brush strokes, the dispassionate attention which gives every part of the canvas the same look" (P. Campbell, "At the National Gallery," *London Review of Books* [July 5, 2001], p. 26); the "naturalistic rendering of daylight, an interest in optics and the careful application of the laws of perspective" (A. Searle, "Only Here For Vermeer," *Guardian* [June 21, 2001], p. 12); the "silent stillness we admire in Vermeer... the transience of earthly pleasures" (W. Januszczak, "The Show We've Been Waiting For," *Sunday Times: Culture Section* [June 24, 2001], pp. 8–10). These extracts confirm the boundaries between high and low even if, at the same time, they inhabit an increasingly commodified (journalistic) space. Bourdieu's concept of *habitus* – a system of socially acquired dispositions which

- function "at every moment as a matrix of perceptions, appreciations and actions" (*Outline of a Theory of Practice* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977], p. 72) – proves to be a useful analytical tool in deciphering the frames of reference and cultural codes through which particular class groups make sense of art. In particular, it points to the way social agents act and react to particular situations or products in a way that is neither necessarily calculated, nor simply generated mechanically according to rule obedience. This is what Bourdieu refers to as *sens pratique* (*The Logic of Practice* [Cambridge: Polity Press, 1990]), the practical sense or logic which is often characterized as a "feel for the game." It is this "feel for the game," embodied in the *habitus*, that somehow propels agents to act and react in the ways they do.
- 66 T. Bennett, *The Birth of the Museum* (London: Routledge, 1995); Nick Prior, *Museums and Modernity: Art Galleries and the Making of Modern Culture* (Oxford: Berg, 2000). For at one level, museums have always been ambiguous institutions, oscillating between the governmental aims of the nation-state, the exclusionary aspirations of ascendant social classes, and the recreational trends of new leisure regimes. In fact, to quote Nochlin ("Museums and Radicals: A History of Emergencies," *Art in America*, vol. 54, no. 4 [1971], p. 646): "As the shrine of an elitist religion and at the same time a utilitarian instrument of democratic education, the museum may be said to have suffered schizophrenia from the start."
- 67 According to the *Columbia Electronic Encyclopedia* (<http://www.encyclopedia.com>): "A chemical element is said to exhibit allotropy when it occurs in two or more forms in the same physical state; the forms are called allotropes. Allotropes generally differ in physical properties such as color and hardness; they may also differ in molecular structure or chemical activity, but are usually alike in most chemical properties."
- 68 Boniface and Fowler, *Heritage and Tourism in the "Global Village,"* p. 118.
- 69 Flexible accumulation and flexible production are seen as features of a restructured political economy in which "postindustrial" or "postfordist" methods of production predominate (Harvey, *The Conditions of Postmodernism*). Firms are, on the one hand, more likely to produce smaller batches of a product and, on the other hand, to widen the range of goods on offer. This allows for quick response and just-in-time forms of production which are catalysts for rapid innovation in both culture and economy.
- 70 Nicholas Serota, "Experience or Interpretation: The Dilemma of Museums of Modern Art" (1996), reprinted in *Art and its Histories: A Reader*, ed. S. Edwards (London: Open University Press, 1999), p. 282.
- 71 J. Trescott, "Exhibiting a New Enthusiasm Across US, Museum Construction, Attendance, Are on the Rise," *Washington Post* (June 21, 1998), pp. A1, A16.
- 72 Hooper-Greenhill (ed.), *Cultural Diversity: Developing Museum Audiences in Britain*; S. Macdonald and G. Fyfe, *Theorizing Museums* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996).
- 73 U. Beck, Anthony Giddens, and S. Lash, *Reflexive Modernization: Politics, Tradition and Aesthetics in the Modern Social Order* (Cambridge: Polity, 1994).

- 74 N. Merriman, "The Peopling of London Project," in *Cultural Diversity*, ed. E. Hooper-Greenhill (London: Leicester University Press, 1997); S. Hemming, "Audience Participation: Working with Local People at the Geffrye Museum, London," in *Cultural Diversity*, ed. E. Hooper-Greenhill (London: Leicester University Press, 1997).