2005

Experience Music Project : formalizing the vernacular

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EXPERIENCE MUSIC PROJECT: FORMALIZING THE VERNACULAR

A Thesis

Presented to

The Faculty of the School of Art and Design

San Jose State University

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for a Degree

Master of Arts

by

Ann Russell Myhre

May 2005

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ABSTRACT

EXPERIENCE MUSIC PROJECT: FORMALIZING THE VERNACULAR

by Ann Russell Myhre

When Frank Gehry shed architectural precedent and restructured popular imagery into formal achievement at *Experience Music Project* his innovative new forms were not anti-art, nor anti-beauty, but fine art mimicking and formalizing the forms of popular culture. The Seattle museum inspired by popular American music legend Jimi Hendrix and funded by Microsoft's Paul Allen is visually indebted to both the transient auditory experience of Hendrix's music and to his smashed guitars. *Experience Music Project* deviates from vernacular practice because it is monumental and it is sophisticated.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Careful readers of this thesis may recognize that my rudimentary understanding of aesthetics was formed at the University of California, Santa Barbara, when I studied theory under Beatrice Farwell, Professor Emerita, and architecture with the late David Gebhard. I wish to acknowledge them, and other scholars who have shaped my thinking, for exercises in analysis that were initiated in the classroom have provoked conclusions that inform this study.

At San Jose State University, where I have taken seminars with Patricia Sanders, William Gaugler, Kathleen Cohen, Bruce Radde, Arthur Kao, and each of the members of my thesis committee, I have had many opportunities to reexamine, reevaluate, and refine my opinions.

It is to Pamela Sharp El-Shayeb, and the members of my thesis committee, Anne Simonson, Johanna Movassat, and Marilyn Wyman that I am most indebted. Their critical readings of early drafts, and their extreme patience with my lax timeline, must not go unnoted. I deeply appreciate their dedication, for each has generously contributed considerable time to my modest achievement. Those of us who have been fortunate enough to have had teachers such as Anne, Johanna, Marilyn, and Pam, are truly privileged. To each of them, I extend my gratitude.

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INTRODUCTION

This paper is concerned with issues central to current architectural practice. Utilizing a small sampling of layman built structures, I will suggest that formally trained architects, in particular the independent thinking Frank Gehry at *Experience Music Project* (1997-2000) in Seattle, have found source material in popular culture.¹ I will discuss popular materials, sophisticated computer imaging, and aesthetic theories that positioned Gehry at a place in history where he might realize his vision. Further, this study will discuss how American plutocrats are able to legitimize popular taste.²

It is the thesis of this work that despite a wide range of possibilities at *Experience Music Project (EMP)* when Frank Gehry chose to utilize popular cultural motifs as inspiration for his design, he formalized vernacular custom. Other options were available but Gehry, with his patron Paul Allen, confronted the world with a new reality. Gehry has been particularly adept at recognizing new possibilities within the confines of formal architecture. Throughout his career he has playfully rearranged prototypes, creating open-ended, episodic designs that accommodate multivalent interpretations of intention. While his execution remains painstaking,

¹ See fig.1 for aerial view of *Experience Music Project*. Designers and contractors are cited and can be accessed at Great Buildings online and Architectural Record online.

² Designed by architect Frank O. Gehry, *Experience Music Project* is located at 325 Fifth Avenue North, Seattle, Washington. *EMP* was funded by Microsoft co-founder Paul Allen who wanted to create a destination venue for displaying his personal collection of popular music memorabilia.

Gehry's mutations have rewritten convention and have reordered the way many other architects approach design.

Twenty years ago, when she recognized that the definition of sculpture had been enlarged to include anything that was not architecture or landscape, Rosalind Krauss published an essay entitled "Sculpture in the Expanded Field."³ Krauss explained that the classical logic of sculpture was associated with a commemorative monument, and she went on to note that this criterion had begun to fail with Modernism when sculpture became siteless or nomadic. By nomadic, Krauss meant that sculpture had lost its place as a marker and had become self-referential. Subsequently, the definition of sculpture has evolved to include almost any marked intervention of site, from traditional sculpture to earthworks to assemblage.

Unlike earlier twentieth century architects such as Frank Lloyd Wright, Gehry has not tried to integrate his constructions into a specific site. Instead, he has recognized that the arts are interdisciplinary and that architecture, in addition to being an inhabitable structure, might be treated as a modeled artwork. Perhaps Gehry was attempting to invert the lessons noted by Krauss when early in his career as a craftsman-conscious minimalist he initiated inventive explorations and began to create progressively more sculpture-like buildings.

During the 1970s Gehry explored Deconstructive ideas; more recently, he has expanded his mode to accommodate a flowing organic aesthetic. As he examined

³ "Sculpture in the Expanded Field" is available in Krauss's 1985 anthology, *The Originality of the Avant-Garde and Other Modernist Myths*. See pages 276-290.

new methods for exploiting the sculptural possibilities of buildings, Gehry remained sympathetic to the nomadic, siteless nature of manmade edifices cited by Krauss.

Whether it was Krauss or someone else who motivated Frank Gehry toward a sculptural approach to the built world, his unique structures demand attention.

Experience Music Project is a singular structure, an achievement designed inside and out to educate and to entertain. It is also a place that invites reconsideration of certain assumptions. Gehry's inclination to violate old canons of proportion has resulted in new and unusual structures because, on a grand scale, he has exploited techniques previously employed by untrained builders. In my view architect Frank Gehry is equally indebted to the imagery of daily life and to Roman-Renaissance tradition. With a propensity to experiment with postmodern techniques and materials, and knowledge of expectations provoked by past practice, Frank Gehry has envisioned new creations.

I further assert that *EMP* is distinct from other museums because artfulness and ingenuity set this building and the circumstances of its making apart from other contemporary structures. In addition to looking at the landmark building itself, in this thesis I will examine how Frank Gehry has been positioned within postmodern architectural aesthetic constructs, I will present an abbreviated history of programmatic architecture, and I will consider trickster aspects of Gehry and his associates.

EXPERIENCE MUSIC PROJECT/THE PHYSICAL SPACE

Experience Music Project (EMP), a museum for popular American music, was conceived as a civic attraction and an entrepreneurial enterprise. The 140,000 square foot space which cost \$240 million to construct is located at 325 Fifth Avenue North at Seattle Center, Seattle, Washington.⁴ Funded entirely by philanthropist-businessman Paul Allen, the design phase was initiated in 1996 after the firm Frank O. Gehry and Associates of Santa Monica, California was selected to lead the project. Supervising onsite was the Seattle firm LMN Architects. Ground was broken in June 1997 by general contractor Hoffman Construction of Washington. *EMP* opened in June 2000. At eighty-five feet the highest point of the museum is within “Sky Church” the second-level entry foyer that opens to Harrison Street Plaza. The widest point, at 210 feet, is also at Harrison Street, while the longest portion of the structure at 360 feet runs parallel to Fifth Avenue North.⁵

Experience Music Project is a repository for a collection. While it originated to house a straightforward collection of Jimi Hendrix memorabilia, it is not simply the “Jimi Hendrix Museum.” On the surface, the exhibits at *EMP* present a history of popular music. Another aspect of *EMP*’s story is the power and influence of great wealth. While each of us has a collection, very few of us are able to fund a museum to house that collection. Paul Allen is one of those remarkable few. The architect for this visionary

⁴ For building statistics and construction information see *EMP* website at <http://www.emplive.com>. For a complete list of all participating contractors, *Architectural Record* can be accessed online.

⁵ For aerial overview of *Experience Music Project* see fig. 1 of this thesis; fig. 2 for Fifth Street entrance; fig. 3 for Harrison Plaza entrance; and figs. 4, 5, & 6 for floor plans.

creation is also among the remarkable few; Gehry is most creative when he has an interactive relationship with his client and when his work is the result of joint authorship. Gehry and Allen had been exposed to a rich vocabulary of vernacular imagery that could be realized sculpturally. Together the benefactor and the architect created a plaything, a destination building identified with the city of Seattle.

Some patrons might prefer to embrace conventional practices, but Paul Allen and his sister Jody Allen Patton admired the work of Frank Gehry for his previous experiments with disorder. Perhaps endowing him with an avant-garde mystique, they selected Gehry to design *Experience Music Project* and they pushed him to expand his aesthetic. Gehry had patrons eager to take a new creative path and he recognized sculptural possibilities in the popular music artifacts that Paul Allen had assembled. Patton, who serves as executive director at *EMP*, was instrumental in expanding the scope of this undertaking from a mere exhibition space to include opportunities for participatory experiences and provide venues for entertainment.

While the design team listened to music, they envisioned shapes and colors and created a physical reference to the music and rhythms of Allen's boyhood hero and Seattle's son, Jimi Hendrix. Computer-imaging software programs known as CATIA (a French program utilized by Boeing) and CAD (Computer Aided Design) allowed Gehry's staff to exceed the structural constraints of conventional draftsmanship. CAM (Computer Aided Manufacture) software was employed so that the plastic character of the materials (metals and plastics alike) might be fully exploited. Like an overgrown curiosity room, what began as a philanthropic endowment became an amusement

attraction, a local civic symbol, and a commercial venture.⁶ Viewed from the slightly elevated distance of nearby Interstate 5, perhaps ten blocks away, the heavy metal colors (powder blue, red, silver, gold, and purple haze) read like an enlarged trash heap of instruments that might have been destroyed in concert by Hendrix or other legendary Pop artists.⁷

Craig Webb has said that Allen did not like an initial model in which disparate components were woven together, so the design team went back to “individual buildings, individual colors.”⁸ Outwardly *EMP* appears discordant but Gehry recognized that, “essentially the building is a one-room warehouse with exhibits inside, and that makes it difficult to break down.”⁹ Gehry was successful in creating exterior modules because the outside surfaces on this landmark vary from stainless steel in three finishes called “purple haze,” “angel hair” and “gold,” to glass, to metal painted red or blue. Each colored component represents one of Hendrix’s legendary smashed guitars. The entirety is surmounted with elements that resemble several lengths of frets separated from oversized instruments.

Experience Music Project is sculpture in the round, intended to be seen from any vantage point. Not only is each elevation unique, each elevation is comprised of colors

⁶ “Microsoft lays off 124.” *The Seattle Times*, 10 January 2002. This venture has not been an entirely self-sustaining financial venture, as will be discussed elsewhere in this paper.

⁷ See *A view from the Campidoglio*, 1984:26-33. In “Learning from Pop” Denise Scott Brown writes that, “high art has followed low art before (32).” Scott Brown suggests that when old sources become “stale” designers may find inspiration in popular motifs that are better suited to urban life.

⁸ See Frank O. Gehry in *Gehry Talks*, 1999:236.

⁹ *Ibid.* 237.

that differ from the other sides. Normally an axis or axes might define horizontal and vertical orientations and give character to a space, but Gehry has violated the box so many times and in so many ways that it is impossible to recognize any semblance of the traditional architectural form without viewing a set of plans. *EMP* is a three-dimensional composition that makes scant reference to any previously anticipated cubic framework and like sculpture it animates its space with volume and mass.

Further confounding those who try to understand *EMP*'s structure is Gehry's exploitation of methods commonly used to create illusions of depth within two-dimensional drawings and paintings. At *EMP* the façade is fraught with instances of apparent transparency, of overlapping drapery, and of real deformation. The visual ambiguity of illusionary two-dimensional devices imposed upon the real three-dimensional surface results in an unexpected complexity that is not easily grasped. Interruptions in the colors and forms of the contour create a dichotomy that makes *EMP* simultaneously a single building and several components forced to merge. While there is an urge to visually separate exterior colors and shapes into discrete units, that urge is overwhelmed when forms touch or merge, recreating a compelling unit of irrational figuration, pauses, and emptiness that are transitory like the music of Jimi Hendrix. For those who know his work, mental images of Hendrix performing have not been destroyed, but merely reorganized. *EMP* speaks a new language that attempts to convey auditory experiences that cannot be expressed in words. As Jamake Highwater said,

“[A]rt is about the story, not the facts.”¹⁰ Frank Gehry is highly adept at rearranging facts.

Previously Gehry has found design inspiration in media other than architecture. While he has not cited other artwork as a stimulus for *Experience Music Project*, the museum recalls the abstractions of analytic and synthetic cubism dating from the 1910s. Most particularly one might look at the work of Robert Delaunay who, like Gehry, incorporated color. Delaunay’s “Red Tower” illustrates in two dimensions some of the structural ambiguities that I perceive at *EMP*.¹¹ Delaunay’s planes and colors prefigure the deconstructive aesthetic by sixty years, but the multiple viewpoints of cubism and deconstruction exhibit similarities. In each of these two very different works various components are caused to advance and recede due to planar ambiguity and vibrant color contrasts.

It is difficult to describe the tension derived from distortion at *Experience Music Project*, but if one envisions the projection of a simple cubic form and how it might be articulated when viewed simultaneously from different vantage points, one may grasp what Frank Gehry has achieved. Think further of three-dimensional obliques, the rear wall of a room or front elevation of a building flanked on either side by an adjoining wall, so that one has a simultaneous view of three sides of a room as depicted by Islamic or Japanese illustration. Gehry has utilized some elementary two-dimensional deformations

¹⁰ See Jamake Highwater, *The Language of Vision*. 1994:3.

¹¹ For illustration, see Fred S. Kleiner, Christin J. Mamiya and Richard G. Tansey in *Gardner’s Art through the Ages*, eleventh edition, Figure 22-13. “The Red Tower” (oil on canvas, 5’3” x 4’3”) depicts a colorful and disrupted Eiffel Tower framed on either side by monochromatic multi-storied buildings.

to impose further confusion on three-dimensional surfaces. These techniques are particularly effective because the base of departure, the box one expects to house the museum, remains implicitly present in one's mind.

Experience Music Project reflects modern popular culture but the experiences celebrated at *EMP*, the interactive exhibits and material artifacts, are uncommon. In addition to exterior form, architecture is concerned with interiors and with the provision of useful space. Again Gehry confronts his audience with a new reality by creating open-ended confusions that accommodate multiple interpretations when the apparently irrational exterior gives way to an equally irregular interior space. With a footprint of 35,000 square feet and museum space on three levels, *EMP* is a labyrinthine expanse.¹² Visitors may become disoriented by an apparent maze of connecting exhibition spaces organized by repeatedly violated axes. As one travels through the building, viewing cultural artifacts and interactive exhibits and using support facilities such as the cafeteria, museum store, or lavatories, irregular passageways often provide a sense that one is within the corridors of a fun house.

The tension between illogical organic exhibition spaces and adjoining open areas make it difficult to pinpoint the center of the museum; the entire place is monopolized by a virtual ambiguity of interrupted colors and apparently tilting forms. While simultaneous knowledge of the whole may be impossible to grasp without benefit of the plans, an emotional dynamic allows one to sense relationships of congruence. With the plans at hand (see figs. 2, 3 and 4) the building becomes more straightforward, more grid-

¹² See Noel S. Brady, "EMP challenge: turning sculpture into a building," *The Seattle Daily Journal of Commerce*, 5 May 1998.

like than initially imagined. Except for the enormity of the whole, it is not so different than other inhabitable structures. In certain areas of *EMP* the arrangement of exhibits guides visitors from one point to another, but in the lobby of “Artists Journey” and in “Roots & Branches” ambiguities that oppose logic, and discontinuity of sequences created by interrupting amendments, end linear thinking.

Throughout the vast interior space industrial materials are visible. Exposed ducts and pipe stair railings provide a warehouse ambience not unlike that experienced in many postmodern structures. Ceilings of concrete and outer walls are generally lost in shadows. Overall the effect remains attractive because metallic and primary colors are used to highlight exhibits and interior features such as railings.

Gehry has taken risks by violating conventions previously considered fundamental. *EMP* deviates from vernacular or popular practice because it is monumental and sophisticated. Some folks will be surprised by his unfamiliar forms, and others might question issues about the relationship of new techniques, new materials, and new motifs to traditional fine workmanship. It would seem that Gehry has successfully addressed those concerns in Seattle where he has ably deviated. While some may wish to mimic Gehry’s aesthetic, many find his work distasteful, so designers who practice other modes continue to receive large commissions.

Postmodernism has continued to find expression for example at the Music School and Theatre Academy (1995) Stuttgart designed by James Stirling and Michael Wilford. More recently Venturi Scott Brown Associates conceived the Hôtel du Département de la Haute-Garonne (1999) Toulouse, France. Notable Modernist figures who offer

alternatives to the revolutionary Gehry mode include I. M. Pei at the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame (1993-1995) Cleveland, Ohio and Richard Meier at the Los Angeles Getty Center (1997) and Barcelona Art Museum (1996). While modernist and postmodern edifices were once the avant-garde, today their basis in classicism seems conventional or traditional when compared to the designs of Frank Gehry.

THE SIGNATURE OF PLUTOCRATIC INFLUENCE

Clearly, those graced with special talent or significant economic means have had opportunities to direct the activities of humankind to a greater extent than others. Frank Gehry and Paul Allen are such men. They are also men who epitomize the American myth of unlimited opportunity, and they have chosen to leave a mark. Of the two, it is Allen and his wealth that I wish to discuss here.

Paul Allen grew up in Seattle, attending school with his future partner, Bill Gates. Together, they conceived and developed a new way of looking at how data might be organized, and they created a successful computer information system known as “Windows”, thus assuring their places in history. Their company, Microsoft, has made them billionaires. Furthermore, the construct of systematization that Allen and Gates created is inescapable. Many of us encounter and utilize their revolutionary mode of orderliness everyday.

Allen exerts particular influence in his native region, the northwestern United States. He has invested in ventures that are typical American leisure-time pursuits, professional sports and popular music. Allen owns the Portland Trailblazers and Seattle Seahawks. He has a passion for popular music. With a collection of at least 80,000 artifacts that he wished to display, he funded *Experience Music Project*.¹³

¹³ See Peggy Andersen, “Experience music project nears competition for June opening,” *Seattle Daily Journal*, 17 March 2000.

Generally when one thinks of a museum one imagines the standard neoclassical Beaux Arts building. The transformed purposes of the modern museum, particularly as the anchor building for urban identity and urban renewal, have been noted by Kurt Forster.¹⁴ Like plutocrats before him, Allen set the agenda, but aesthetically his Seattle landmark is not the prototypical “palace in the park,” and his collection has not appealed to the public as he must have wished.¹⁵

Shortly after *Experience Music Project* opened, Folke Nyberg, Professor Emeritus from the Department of Architecture and Urban Planning at University of Washington, wrote a guest column for *The Seattle Times*. Nyberg offered that new wealth was impacting “Seattle’s architectural ambitions,” and that, “[d]ependent upon both public outrage and critical acclaim, this exhibitionistic architecture generates controversy and global media exposure...”¹⁶ While he recognized *EMP* as an effort to dismiss a “provincial” aspect in the region, Nyberg was critical of Seattle for giving attention to museums and stadiums rather than faulty infrastructure.

A columnist for the same newspaper, O. Casey Corr, had written previously that in Seattle, “Great wealth is starting to seem routine...” as “individuals with peculiar

¹⁴ See Francesco Dal Co and Kurt W. Forster, *Frank O. Gehry*, 1998:26.

¹⁵ D. Parvaz asked readers of the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* what should be done with the building if *Experience Music Project* should fail. On 1 April 2005 about half of the one hundred respondents would see the structure destroyed. Typical was Frank Koral who offered, “Tear it down! It is a monstrosity and a monument to (Paul) Allen vanity... The reason it is failing, which was predictable, is simple. It has no universal appeal since the music it celebrates has no universal appeal...”

¹⁶ See Folke Nyberg, “Seattle edifice complex a blow to civic life,” *The Seattle Times: Editorials & Opinion*, 4 September 2000.

interests” underwrite special causes.¹⁷ Corr noted that, with their considerable influence, plutocrats direct not only their own endowments, but they often set a course that will direct how public monies are allocated. How funds are expended has a significant impact on how decisions are made, and what becomes available to the public. Whether cultural venues, sporting events, or political decisions, ultimately, it is funding that drives results.

When Allen, perhaps moved by sentimentality, used a portion of his wealth to create an exhibition space for musical memorabilia that references the era of his youth, he apparently misjudged his potential audience. Attendance at *Experience Music Project* has dropped each year.¹⁸ Despite high admission fees, and despite reducing museum staff by three hundred people, nonprofit *EMP* operates at a deficit. Yearly, Allen must augment the budget. In early 2004 he anticipated a shortfall of \$10 million.¹⁹ Revenue Allen derives from fees on admission is insufficient to replace monies he infuses into the enterprise.²⁰ There are live performances regularly, with three hundred and seventy events held during the first year of operation. *EMP* also draws visitors and hosts conferences. Furthermore, Allen has not been above merging corporate agenda with

¹⁷ See O. Casey Corr, “Seattle’s wealth explosion changes the civic landscape,” *The Seattle Times: Editorials & Opinion*, 9 August 2000.

¹⁸ Douglas McLennan, *The New York Times*, 15 February 2004 writes, “Attendance, brashly predicted at the opening by E.M.P. staff to be about 800,000 annually, was a figure it came close to reaching. But each year since, attendance has dropped—to 433,000 in 2003.” Furthermore, McLennan states that during the first four years of operation, there was a complete turnover of curatorial staff and employment was reduced by three hundred people to a workforce of two hundred.

¹⁹ See <http://www.emplive> for fee schedule. Anticipated 2004 deficit was cited by Douglas McLennan, *The New York Times*, 15 February 2004.

²⁰ Information regarding Allen’s exclusive right to sell tickets to *EMP* came to me through conversation with a private individual in Seattle and has not been documented.

public purpose. When Microsoft's most recent operating system, Windows XP debuted, it was unveiled at *EMP*.²¹

In a recent effort to improve fiscal operations at *EMP*, Allen spent \$20 million converting "Artists Journey" (see fig. 5 for *EMP* plan) into a science fiction museum and hall of fame. Donna Shirley, formerly a scientist with NASA, is director of the 13,900 square foot space.²² There is an additional charge to visit *Experience Science Fiction*. Besides augmenting revenues at *EMP* Allen's new vanity project seems to be an attempt to focus public interest on another of his ventures, SpaceShipOne, the privately developed rocket plane designed for space flight.²³

With *EMP* a financial burden, some philanthropists might reassess the curatorial value of items held personally precious. Perhaps that has happened for it appears that, as with Windows XP and SpaceShipOne, Allen may continue to utilize *Experience Music Project* as a mechanism to promote his business interests. If that is his new purpose, future renovations could accommodate additional information about explorations of space. Recently it was revealed that Allen has donated \$13.5 million to the Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence (SETI) in Mountain View, California.²⁴ This contribution follows \$11.5 million previously expended on research and development at SETI.

²¹ See Brier Dudley, "Awaiting a new generation of windows," *The Seattle Times: Business & Technology*, 11 February 2001. Also see Michael Carney, "Bill Gates unveils Microsoft Windows XP," *Media Workstation*, 13 February 2001.

²² See "NASA scientist to head sci-fi museum," *Daily Journal of Commerce*, 12 February 2004.

²³ See "Paul Allen revealed as SpaceShipOne investor," *Space.com* 18 December 2003.

²⁴ See "Microsoft co-founder Paul Allen supports the search for extraterrestrial life (SETI)" *NewsTarget.com* 10 March 2005.

While it has not been unusual for American plutocrats to endow universities, libraries, and museums, or to invest in causes they deem worthy, one must recognize that large amounts of money render knowledge provisional by allowing a single individual to promote his view of what is important. At *EMP* Paul Allen initially directed attention to the music culture of his youth. More recently he has developed exhibits that coincide with his financial ventures. It seems particularly ironic to examine plutocratic persuasion upon access to information, when the man of seemingly limitless influence is Microsoft co-founder Paul Allen who derived his personal wealth, and thus power, from the development of information systems.

EMP AS VERNACULAR

Throughout this work I will argue that Frank Gehry's *Experience Music Project* perpetuates American myths of originality and genius. In this chapter, I will look at one-of-a-kind, layman built structures, for the most part commercial enterprises, that have served our modern needs, and I will assert that Gehry's Seattle museum is simply a more formal and more complex realization of this vernacular tradition.

America's eclectic taste results from time to time in fantastic architecture. Some of our buildings have expressed ideas in a most direct manner, that is to say, these buildings have been self-descriptive, their form repeating the very function of the building. Buildings that convey their purpose are generally referred to as programmatic. Individual taste and commercial success are the criteria that drive aesthetic preference for such efforts. Many critics call this architecture Pop. However, these buildings predate 1960s Pop art that utilized images drawn from popular culture, images such as soup cans, cartoon characters or the portrait of Marilyn Monroe.

Pop buildings directly express functional aspects of popular culture. The best edifices play boldly on symbols of the everyday world. A unique blend of fantasy and reality transforms ordinary objects into visually vital, easily understood statements. Whether one encounters a motel of wigwam cabins to house nomadic travelers, or coffee pots large enough to accommodate coffee shops, the functions of these building are instantly understood. Structures of this type span the age of the automobile, from the Bedford Coffee Pot (mid-1920s) in Pennsylvania to the James River Coffee Pot (1950) in

Lexington, Virginia, nearly all developed as advertising promotions for a specific service or product.²⁵

Americans have been inventive and adventurous problem solvers. During the early half of the twentieth century good roads were built throughout the country. In response to conditions that evolved when Americans began to travel in personal automobiles, enterprising business people developed commercial ventures along well-traveled routes. Recognition was important to the success of such establishments. Language that could be quickly translated as a potential consumer motored by was essential, so the message needed to register quickly from a distance. Billboards, rapidly linking buyer with seller, have been one method for reaching the drive-by consumer. An idea directly presented can be immediately understood, so the natural evolution from sign to a signature building is easily imagined, more easily imagined because history has provided documented examples. Although relatively few, self-descriptive buildings are numerous enough for one to examine theoretical characteristics of their emergence and existence.

Commonplace objects of mass culture, constructed on a grand scale, succeed in their simplicity when they demand a second look. Typical would be the giant lemon or orange on California Route 99. With an overabundance of fruit for sale, orchardists communicated the availability of fresh squeezed juice to thirsty travelers. Since two lane roads were the norm, drivers could easily pull to the shoulder at will. These symbolic structures were commonly designed and made within the folk tradition by local lay

²⁵ For images see J.J. Andrews, *The Well-built Elephant*, 1984:20, 103.

craftsman. The synthesis of sign and building takes the unsuspecting viewer by surprise with a very direct message. It might elicit a giggle at first sight, but the strength of the message relies on symbolism that speaks specifically to the situation and to the moment. Some may have been an instinctive reaction against impersonal big business. Nearly all were the result of individual caprice, popularly created and accepted.

Historically, the presentation of ideas has been an objective of architecture. The revival of the Gothic cathedral form in the nineteenth century contributed to the expression of the transcendent nature of religious belief. Classical Greek and Roman forms, repeated in our nation's capitol buildings, can be read as messages of enduring democratic and republican ideals from ancient Athens and Rome. In a fantasy building never realized, late eighteenth century French architect Jean-Jacques Legueu designed a barn in the form of a giant cow, and his contemporary, Claude-Nicholas Ledoux, drafted a home that resembled a charcoal oven to house a wood gatherer's family.²⁶ Two hundred years later, Frank Gehry did something comparable when he envisioned a heap of oversized guitars embellished with stylized references to the indigenous peoples of the Northwest, then saw that vision realized as a repository for musical memorabilia.

While many programmatic buildings are the creation of unknown and untrained designers, the most widely publicized is probably the *Long Island Duckling* conceived by Martin Maurer, a commercial duck producer.²⁷ Maurer had his idea designed and

²⁶ See Daniel Le Conte, *Boullée Ledoux Legueu*, 1969.

constructed professionally, and for over sixty years, the structure has continued to function as an egg store. While it can be considered a joke on traditional architecture, the big duck must be taken seriously as an advertising medium and a successful commercial venture. Still, planners may see clutter, rather than humor when the opposing interests of outdoor advertising and highway beautification happen to be placed in conflict by programmatic buildings. Because Pop buildings must communicate quickly, in this era of multi-lane streets, and highways that do not facilitate rapid exit, they have become less useful advertising vehicles. Further, it was James Wines who said, "[I]f you have seen it once, you have seen it all."²⁸

Nevertheless, vernacular buildings endure. Extant examples include Doc Manning's Big Red Piano (1930) on Venice Boulevard in Los Angeles; and in Hollywood, California, the circular Capitol Records Building resembles a stack of records.²⁹ Throughout America, especially throughout the West, food vendors operate

²⁷ William Collins and his brother designed the Long Island Ducking; Smith and Yeager built it in 1931. See James Wines, "The Big Duck," *Architectural Forum*, April 1972:60-61, 72.

²⁸ Ibid. 60.

²⁹ The Capitol Records Building is located at 1750 Vine Street, Los Angeles, California. Mathew Haskins provided new insight about the building in his 26 March 2005 paper, "In the eye of the beholder: architectural intention, public perception and the design of the Capitol Records Building."

Haskins recently interviewed Lou Naidorf who designed the building while working for Welton Becket Associates. Becket did not divulge the identity of the client when he assigned the project to Naidorf, so resemblance of the building to a stack of records is happenstance. Naidorf selected the cylindrical format because he was seeking to provide light throughout the structure and reduce outlay for materials since the unknown client required disproportionate executive office space and was concerned about cost.

Aesthetically Naidorf was eager to project a Futurist aspect that would anticipate the year 2000. Without provision for adequate support staff, Naidorf anticipated that executives would utilize mainframe computer technology so he designed the rectangular base (where subsequently recording studios were housed) to accommodate computers. His client was not pleased with the circular design, considering it an insult. Naidorf and Beckett suggested that because space was to be leased to outside entities, the insurance company which underwrote the loan should determine whether the design would be accepted. With

out of hotdogs, tamales and watermelons.³⁰ In Minnesota, a silo has been decorated to replicate a can of 7-Up and Utilmaster Corporation fashions delivery truck trailers to replicate six-packs of beer or soft drinks.³¹ Tourists at Gatorland in Kissimmee, Florida enter a gate placed in an alligator's mouth.³² The National Fishing Hall of Fame in Haywood, Wisconsin, takes the form of a trophy fish, the muskie, and is one hundred-forty feet long and four and a half stories high.³³ Rather than borrowing from and expanding upon the language of the past, popular commercial vernacular has been a type of slang.

Frank Gehry has mined the quarry of folk tradition on more than one occasion. On Main Street in Venice, California where Claes Oldenberg's and Coosje van Bruggen's binoculars (see fig. 11) define the entrance of Chiatt/Day, it was Gehry who envisioned the idea. Initially Gehry thought of a tripartite façade. On one side he imagined a boat to reference nearby harbors, and on the other he thought of trees that once grew to the ocean. Binoculars at the midpoint emerged from an initial conception of turrets. They feature skylights in each oculus and function as conference space. Subject to extensive review because of its location within the jurisdiction of the California

financing secure, the project was accepted. The design became associated with a stack of records while the building was under construction.

³⁰ Many of these remarkable buildings are illustrated in Jim Heimann, *California Crazy & Beyond*, 2001.

³¹ See *Sign Design*, edited and published by Sign Design Magazine, 1986:233, 235.

³² See Priscilla Painton, "Fantasy's Reality," *TIME*, 27 May 1991:55.

³³ For images see J. J. Andrews, *The Well-built Elephant*, 1984:69, 70.

Coastal Commission this site was also problematic because of local density requirements and height constraints.³⁴ All the same, Gehry and his client prevailed.

Jay Chiatt, art collector and corporate advertising executive, has had a noteworthy professional relationship with Frank Gehry. The lasting nature of their collaborative process and the creative work which has emerged when Chiatt and Gehry worked together recall analysis of Kurt Forster who remarked that when the fifteenth century theorist Filarete discussed the relationship between architect and patron, he recognized that no one can conceive alone.³⁵ Filarete considered the architect the mother of the building and the patron its father. Forster goes on to suggest that this analogy can be carried further, with maternal (designer) interest in detail, and paternal (client) concern with expense. Certainly Frank Gehry has been at his best when his patron was eager to exploit his creative potential. At Chiatt/Day, at Bilbao, and at *EMP* Gehry teamed with his client to give birth to new practice. In each of these instances, vernacular forms provided inspiration. While one must remember that it takes a long time for new forms to acquire formal value, popular arts often infuse the fine arts with new vitality. Some ideas expressed in popular architecture of the last century have been reasserted in formal terms at *Experience Music Project*, and other Gehry buildings. Certainly the work of Frank Gehry is subtler, more nuanced, and more intellectual in its design than the output of vernacular architects mentioned above, but as with each of them, one of Gehry's objectives at *Experience Music Project* was commercial success.

³⁴ For discussion of conceptual process and problematic site, see Francesco Dal Co and Kurt W. Forster, *Frank O. Gehry*, 1998:68-72.

³⁵ See Kurt W. Forster, *Frank O. Gehry*, 1999:11-13.

FRANK O. GEHRY, WORKING METHODS

Throughout his career, Gehry has worked to dissolve the order of things, thus reaffirming the relevance of the old in relation to his new methods.³⁶ Like Joseph Campbell's mythic hero, Gehry has repeatedly answered the call to adventure. He has faced the obstacles of conventional practice and gained an expanded consciousness that has allowed him to bring a new aesthetic into our world.³⁷

Michael Sorkin has likened Gehry to Wile E. Coyote, for Sorkin believes there "is a moment of ambiguous intersection between gravity and the unconscious..." when Gehry, like Wile E. Coyote "barreling off a cliff, takes a few moments to realize he is running through thin air."³⁸ It is telling that Sorkin compares Frank Gehry to the coyote, a renowned American Indian trickster, for, like the coyote not only does Gehry challenge the establishment, but he also perpetuates the Western myth of originality.³⁹

Gehry is also William Hyne's trickster, full of metaplay, dissolving the traditional order of things, and forcing one to see a different order.⁴⁰ He creates irreverent tensions

³⁶ Myths are cultural constructs that define acceptable behavior and allow individuals and groups to function. For functions of myth, see William Hynes and William Doty, *Mythical Trickster Figures*, 1993.

³⁷ Joseph Campbell, *The Hero With a Thousand Faces*, 1949.

³⁸ Frank O. Gehry, *Gehry Talks*, 1999:31.

³⁹ Trickster figures subvert established rules of conduct, thus bringing those constructs to attention. Sometimes established practices are transcended and new modes or forms become acceptable; on other occasions, when tradition is called to question by tricksters, myths may be reaffirmed.

⁴⁰ See William Hynes and William Doty, *Mythical Trickster Figure*, 1993:Chapter 13.

with inconsistencies that bring his audience “face to face with the richness of life.”⁴¹

Jamake Highwater, who wrote extensively on the trickster, explained that people who capture their vision invent a new language.⁴² Frank Gehry has developed a very personal and novel architectural vocabulary, a new language. Attempting to capture transient sound and convey it visually at *Experience Music Project* is work for a uniquely talented individual.

Frank Gehry, like his patron Paul Allen, and like Allen’s hero Jimi Hendrix, is also a mythic hero as described by Joseph Campbell.⁴³ After crossing respective thresholds to new adventures, each has gained an expanded consciousness of their particular expertise. Despite labyrinthine journeys and delaying obstacles during their periods of separation and discovery, each has returned as knower and master to share his adventure and to show others the way. I have been captivated, not by Allen or Hendrix, but by the saga of Frank Gehry. That is the story I wish to pursue for as historian of popular architecture Dell Upton has said, “[O]nly a few architects can succeed as artists.”⁴⁴

Stories are among the most ancient of art forms. They are our window to the world. They provide entertainment and construct our understanding of truths. Stories further convey information, define boundaries, and establish interpretations. Because I think his story is important I will relate an abbreviated version of the Gehry narrative.

⁴¹ Ibid. 216.

⁴² See Jamake Highwater, *The Language of Vision*, 1994:3.

⁴³ See Joseph Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* 1949.

⁴⁴ See Dell Upton, *Architecture in the United States*, 1998:263.

Architect Frank O. Gehry opened his own practice in 1962 after working ten years for other firms.⁴⁵ In his words, he “came up through the ranks.”⁴⁶ As an undergraduate at the University of Southern California, he was influenced by teachers familiar with Bauhaus precepts of craftsmanship and with Japanese techniques. He embraced the use of natural materials and a Japanese affinity for compartmentalization. In pursuit of Bauhaus principals, Gehry has expressed interest also in materials suited to machine production, and he has embraced an anti-historic creative posture. After fifty years, these lessons remain with him, for Gehry’s buildings continue to honor fine workmanship. Furthermore, the appearance of individual rooms melded together that is characteristic of his designs, exhibits a debt to the open-ended modular aesthetic of Japanese construction.

While attending the University of Southern California, Gehry was well acquainted with local artists. He regularly visited Harwell Harris who emphasized Craftsman sensitivity to site and materials. Gehry was also familiar with the forms and materials of International Modernism employed variously by Raphael Soriano, Rudolph M. Schindler and Richard Neutra. While studying at Harvard, Gehry began to examine Frank Lloyd Wright’s organic, site-specific architecture. His debt to Wright is exhibited in Gehry’s recognition that interior/exterior relationships are an extension of one another. Gehry like Wright also understands that the thoughtful overall whole results from careful

⁴⁵ See biographical information at *Great Buildings Online*: Frank Gehry (born Ephraim Goldberg, Toronto, Canada, 1929) and his family moved to California in 1947. Gehry studied architecture at the University of Southern California. He interrupted work at Victor Gruen Associates to attend Harvard School of Design in 1956, returned to Gruen until 1960, then joined Andre Remondet in Paris. In 1962 he entered private practice in Los Angeles.

⁴⁶ See Frank O. Gehry, *Gehry Talks*, 1999:43-45.

deliberation over the several impacts resulting from each choice an architect might decide to implement.

All of these architects would influence the aesthetic of Frank Gehry. Despite this exposure Gehry remained apart from other designers. Having found his “community among artists,” he approached buildings as if he were a sculptor.⁴⁷ When he opened his own practice, Gehry began to go in his own direction and to utilize materials formerly reserved solely for industrial purposes. In homes and public buildings alike, after defining the box, Gehry disrupted the integrity of classic design with protruding forms constructed of raw wood and rudimentary non-traditional materials.⁴⁸ In a 1985 conversation with Peter Arnell, Gehry said that buildings under construction look nicer than finished buildings. He compared their immediacy to paintings, stating that he has been influenced by both painting and sculpture, and he further asserted that he attempts to bring those ideas to buildings.⁴⁹

In 1978 he altered his own home, a 1910s Colonial Dutch Revival, into a dynamic form that subverts one’s expectation of residential comfort with its unfinished appearance. The status quo was challenged when Gehry covered the kitchen floor with asphalt, adorned his home with chain link fencing, and exposed the posts and beams. Gehry has said:

...When Arthur Drexler came here for dinner one night, he thought the house was a joke. Berta told me afterward that he asked if the peeling paint was intentional.

⁴⁷ See Kurt W. Forster, *Frank O. Gehry*, 1998:9-11.

⁴⁸ For example, see Gehry’s residence illustrated figs. 7 & 8 of this thesis.

⁴⁹ See Peter Arnell and Frank Bickford, *Frank Gehry*, 1985:xii-xvii.

That's what was strong about it. What he was laughing about was what made it. You were never sure what was intentional and what wasn't. It looked in process. You weren't sure whether I meant it or not. There was something magical about the house. And I knew that the thing a lot of people hated or laughed at, was the magic.⁵⁰

The alteration of his home was a breakthrough, his Campbellian experience of discovery. Like a mythic hero, Gehry emerged from the remodeling project transformed. Liberated from conventional expectation, he freely initiated continuously more remarkable designs of apparent chaos and fragmentation that in actuality required masterfully controlled planning. His tricky plans continue to elicit diverse responses. They are most inventive, and thus successful, when Gehry works closely with his client.⁵¹

In 1989, Gehry's staff numbered twenty and his office held only two computers.⁵² Today, a much larger staff uses computer modeling to render three-dimensional shapes that seemingly turn architecture into sculpture. One such Gehry building, affectionately referred to as *Fred and Ginger*, allows one half of the form apparently to collapse against the other half.⁵³ Gehry credits Bellini's *Madonna and Child*, with the "little before the big," the child resting against the mother, as a source for *Fred and Ginger*. Another time,

⁵⁰ See Frank O. Gehry, *Gehry Talks*, 1999:57.

⁵¹ See Francesco Dal Co and Kurt W. Forster, *Frank O. Gehry, the Complete Works*, 1998. Gehry worked closely with Jay Chiatt to design offices for the advertising firm, Chiatt/Day, Venice, California where Claes Oldenberg binoculars grace the entrance. They also collaborated at Chiatt/Day offices in Toronto, Canada. His collaborative clients have included Thomas Krens for the Guggenheim in Bilbao, Spain, and Paul Allen who funded *Experience Music Project*, Seattle.

⁵² See Frank O. Gehry, *Gehry Talks*, 1999:16.

⁵³ See Francesco Dal Co and Kurt Forster, *Frank O. Gehry, the Complete Works*, 1998. Frank Gehry and Vladimir Milunic designed *Fred and Ginger*, an apartment house in Prague, Czech Republic, that stands in marked contrast to the surrounding historic setting. While staggered windows somewhat reflect adjacent row houses, the rippled façade serves as a reminder that the building is sited in a space left empty after World War II bombing in Central Europe.

he found inspiration in the drapery motion of Giotto. Though his work does not resemble the text of either Giotto or Bellini, Gehry has insisted that these and other artists influenced him.⁵⁴

Prior to designing *Experience Music Project* in Seattle, Gehry worked with Thomas Krens on the Guggenheim Bilbao Museum. After twenty years at Williams College, Krens considered museums an eighteenth century idea, essentially a box framing exhibited materials within an encyclopedic system.⁵⁵ When he went to the Guggenheim, Krens learned that Frank Lloyd Wright's Guggenheim Museum in New York was an asset, both a destination and a visual association of the Guggenheim identity with avant-garde aesthetics.

When an opportunity for construction of the new museum in Salzburg fell through, the Guggenheim was invited to consider northern Spain. Krens did not wish to go to Bilbao. However, he discovered that Bilbao was a promising location for a new Guggenheim because the Basques in northern Spain (Pais Vasco/Gobierno Vasco) had negotiated fiscal autonomy from the central government after Franco's death and were independently able to raise money to finance the museum. Although someone would take notes, Frank Gehry and Thomas Krens had complete control. Gehry and Krens met together frequently but were never required to seek design approval from anyone else.

⁵⁴ See "Let a Thousand Flowers Bloom" in *Frank O. Gehry*, 1988; *Gehry Talks*, 1999; and Peter Arnell and Ted Bickford, *Frank Gehry*, 1985.

⁵⁵ See Peter Noever, "Developing the Museum for the 21st Century: A Vision Becomes a Reality," *Visionary Clients for New Architecture*, 2000:45-74.

Politically, fiscally, and creatively the entire procedure was an easy process, and the project was completed on time and under budget.⁵⁶

The Guggenheim Bilbao Museum (1991-1997), sheathed in titanium, is a high-tech object that occupies space along the waterfront. During the design phase, Gehry and Krens consciously selected metaphoric images provoked by Fritz Lang's *Metropolis*, Brancusi's studio, and because Bilbao is a seaport, the sails of a ship.⁵⁷ Kurt Forster has suggested that the atrium plan for the unbuilt Peter Lewis House (1989-1995) provided the breakthrough that would ultimately inspire Gehry's Bilbao design because it could not have been attempted without computer assisted planning.⁵⁸ Later, in New York, Toledo, Cleveland, Los Angeles, and other cities, plans and projects that recall Bilbao have been generated.⁵⁹

During the past fifteen years, it would seem that Gehry has become inclined subtly to reference local sources. At Bilbao the overall impression of cargo ships and ships' sails in the adjacent harbor inspired him. At Chiatt/Day in Venice, California he looked to an earlier era when cruise ships and forests hugged opposing edges of the Pacific shoreline. Gehry's use of native source material in Seattle has already been mentioned. In addition to saluting the local popular music scene, at *Experience Music*

⁵⁶ Kurt W. Forster, *Frank O. Gehry*, 1999.

⁵⁷ Ibid. 58-61.

⁵⁸ Ibid. 13.

⁵⁹ See John E. Czarnecki, "Guggenheim scraps East River museum plan," in *Architectural Record*, December 2003. Gehry's design for a second Guggenheim in New York was placed on hold. Among Gehry's recent achievements, are Weatherhead School of Management at Case Western Reserve University (2002), Cleveland, Walt Disney Concert Hall (1989-2003), Los Angeles, and Frederick Weisman Museum (1990-1993), Minneapolis.

Project, Frank Gehry employed an indigenous motif; a window near the Fifth Avenue exit is shaped like a bear, a stylized totem (see fig. 2) of the Northwest.

Others before Gehry have designed structures that deviated from expectation. Examples include Frank Lloyd Wright's Guggenheim (1943-1959) in New York, Le Corbusier's Notre Dame du Haut (1950-1955) at Ronchamp, and Jørn Utzon's Sydney Opera House (1959-1972). Each of these buildings embraces a duality that is part sculpture, part inhabited environment. At *EMP*, Gehry asserted his philosophy in a monument that embodies contradictory elements of Pop, Deconstruction, Dada, Surrealism and Minimalism. The result is a disquieting object, positioned among other familiar, yet unusual, Seattle landmarks dating from 1962.⁶⁰ In Seattle, a series of components, rather like bloated one-room buildings, merge into a composition that registers with the impact of a three-dimensional assemblage. Like rusticated ruins in a picturesque garden, the enticing organic forms of *EMP* and the nearby Space Needle (1962) appear misplaced.⁶¹

A huge programmatic building which dwarfs ordinary visitors, *EMP* is a suitable space for housing the artifacts of mythical musical figures such as Jimi Hendrix, Quincy Jones, Gary Puckett, and other artists who emerged from the American Northwest. Motivated by left-handed Jimi Hendrix who was known for onstage antics, as his

⁶⁰ See Noel S. Brady, "EMP challenge: turning sculpture into a building," *The Seattle Daily Journal of Commerce*, 5 May 1998. *EMP* is sited near the Space Needle that was built for Seattle's 1962 World Fair. Slight structural modifications have allowed the monorail, also constructed for the World Fair, to run through the museum structure.

⁶¹ In his MFA thesis Robert Venturi noted that architecture can "enhance or impair landscapes" and that when new structures are introduced, they change the character of all surrounding elements. For published thesis, see "The Campidoglio: a case study" in *A view from the Campidoglio*, 1984:12-13.

biographer Victor Sampson points out, Hendrix “saw himself as a cosmic messenger, communicating awareness of ‘the other side’ through his music.”⁶² “[Hendrix] took every chance imaginable, from his music to his love of life to the safety of his person.”⁶³ This is the man who inspired Allen and Gehry and the Gehry design team.

Captive of his new aesthetic, Gehry has continued to quote himself. He also has been emulated recently by other architects who have made use of sophisticated computer imaging and reflective materials such as titanium and aluminum. Among those who have expanded upon the aesthetic is Daniel Libeskind, architect of the 2004 Graduate Centre at London Metropolitan University.⁶⁴ While modest in size, a mere seven thousand square feet, this stainless clad structure demonstrates sympathy with Gehry’s use of industrial materials. Libeskind honors Gehry’s signature style further by mimicking his complex geometric organization.

Artists express visions which language is incapable of conveying. In the words of Frank Gehry, “I think all of us are, finally, just commenting in our own way about what is going on in our cone of vision.”⁶⁵ Gehry’s complex and contradictory vision is that of a mythic hero. With his departure from the willful logic of the three dimensional grid Gehry discovered a new aesthetic, and like Campbell’s hero he returned to communicate his new aesthetic to others.

⁶² See Victor Sampson, *Hendrix*, 1984:104.

⁶³ See David Henderson, *‘Scuse me While I Kiss the Sky*, 1978:156.

⁶⁴ Libeskind has been selected to design the new World Trade Center, New York City. Like Gehry, he utilizes computer aided modeling software; however, his designs always begin with physical models.

⁶⁵ See Peter Arnell and Ted Bickford, *Frank Gehry*, 1985:xiv.

COMPLEXITY AND CONTRADICTION

A cursory look at America's built world and at the theoretical platforms that have informed twentieth century architects may aid the reader of this thesis in understanding why *Experience Music Project* is a significant achievement. While Americans are historically eclectic users, appropriating any form of culture whether popular or formal, during the mid-twentieth century the most influential architects in America espoused formalism. Among those who articulated formalism in actual buildings, were Ludwig Mies van der Rohe and Philip Johnson at the Seagrams Building (1956-1958), New York. Elsewhere Frank Lloyd Wright continued to explore his Prairie style while other architects pursued variations on the Craftsman tradition or International Modernism.

When Robert Venturi published *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture* in 1966, he stated that he purposely promoted "richness of meaning rather than clarity of meaning" and opened the way for new discussion.⁶⁶ Arthur Drexler noted that Venturi's book opposed "established opinions" on architecture.⁶⁷ Vincent Scully stated that Venturi's theories have remained more convincing than his actual buildings.⁶⁸

With *Learning from Las Vegas* (1977) Venturi identified a source of vitality in vernacular architecture. Venturi's theoretical treatises continue to inform practicing

⁶⁶ See Robert Venturi, *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture*, 1966:16

⁶⁷ See Arthur Drexler in "Forward," *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture*, 1977 edition:8.

⁶⁸ See Vincent Scully, "Introduction," *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture*, 1966:9-12.

architects and theorists, thus it can be asserted that it was Robert Venturi who set the stage for postmodern architecture when he championed “messy vitality” as an antidote to International Style and the picturesque.⁶⁹ Although Venturi remained a Modernist, when he advocated contradiction, many architectural theorists began to reexamine the built world. A good number became proponents for vernacular practice. Those who designed buildings were influenced by Venturi’s ideas and some architects began to deconstruct previous prototypes. Charles Moore and Michael Graves tinkered with classical elements; Frank Gehry experimented with materials.⁷⁰

In Venturi’s own work, the ambiguity he advocated was manifested in complex exterior tensions created with multivalent forms and meanings extracted from Roman-Renaissance visual vocabulary. His self-conscious use of the past subverted its function as a referent by mimicking the original as he challenged our visual memory of previously expressed hierarchies of scale. The implications of his rich paradoxical contrasts, and his violations of classical scale liberated other designers such as Frank Gehry.⁷¹

In contrast to Venturi’s aesthetic, Gehry’s “complexity and contradiction” has been exhibited, as previously noted, through the novel use of materials. Like Robert Venturi, Gehry has subverted traditional canons of scale (at Loyola Law School in Los Angeles, for example) and like other deconstructive and postmodern artists he has

⁶⁹ See Robert Venturi, *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture*, 1966:16.

⁷⁰ For illustrations see James Steele, *Architecture Today*, 1997. See Charles Moore’s “St. Matthew’s Episcopal Church (1980),” Pacific Palisades, California, p 176; Michael Grave’s “Portland Building (1980-1983),” Portland, Oregon, p. 22.

⁷¹ Ibid. Robert Venturi and Denise Scott Brown, *House in Delaware* (1978) p 22.

oftentimes forced structure to the forefront. Sometimes exposing previously concealed architectural elements such as studs and rafters he has chosen to create an unfinished appearance. Other times structural elements have ruptured the conventional confines of the defining cube. Noteworthy is Gehry's residence in Santa Monica (see figs. 7 & 8).

Architecture is another way of stating an abstract idea so one cannot look at the built world without noting a relationship between the visual and the verbal. That is not to diminish the utilitarian purposes of buildings, but for a theorist the idea behind the building is also important. Thus preliminary expressions hold special significance. In addition to texts or pattern books, architectural theory is expressed and conveyed through drawings and models. Ideas that, for a variety of ideological or financial reasons, are not fully realized in the built environment may survive in drawings and models to be studied by others. In some instances, photographs are the only record of buildings now destroyed. During the nineteenth and twentieth centuries exhibition sponsors regularly erected buildings (sometimes temporary structures) to represent ideas they wanted to express. Additionally, three-dimensional scale models are useful tools. They can serve as study pieces, sales devices, and instructional aids that allow an architect's vision to be better understood.

Because visual aids are important and often available, one might ask, why write about architecture? First, theory is a natural tool of salesmanship. Moreover, there has been a tradition of self-conscious Western historicism dating from Imperial Rome. Even when theory is not recorded it can be discovered in every practitioner. As an example, Roman and Greek styles have been used to convey different meanings at different times.

When Nazi architect Albert Speer appropriated elements from classical Mediterranean architecture, he was not referencing times and places of democracy. Instead Speer recognizing the power of ruins, wished to create buildings that would assure posterity for Third Reich Germany. If this example demonstrates the limitations of didactic architecture, how an architectural illiterate might misread intention, Adolph Hitler was not the only leader to ever have his message misinterpreted.

This is a thesis about the formalization of vernacular architecture in postmodern America, so I will present a brief foundation for some of the precepts that Frank Gehry modified when he imagined Paul Allen's *Experience Music Project*. Beyond revealing an affinity for the Craftsman movement, Gehry's philosophy is compatible with that of the Ecole des Beaux Arts, the French Academy that embraced methodology and studio-taught science of design as a means for creating beautiful things. When one understands Frank Gehry one can see that all of his creations have incorporated both method and beauty. However, Gehry departs from Beaux Arts practice when he uses modern industrial materials and seeks sources in vernacular models.⁷²

While his long career is difficult to summarize and not part of this thesis, the influential practices of Frank Lloyd Wright are not to be dismissed. Elaborate packaging sometimes obscured Wright's theories, but it can be said that his *organic* embodied empathy for the American heartland and that his Prairie style was a regional response to

⁷² The Beaux Arts (France) and Craftsman (England and Scotland) art movements originated in Europe during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. American architects learned lessons there and put them into practice here. For example California architect Julia Morgan studied at the Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris. While her practice in California employed various modes, she used Beaux Arts classicism at Hearst Castle (1919-1942), at San Simeon, California, and at the Los Angeles Examiner Building (1915) in Los Angeles. Among practitioners of Arts & Craft, were Greene & Greene of Pasadena, California.

the Arts and Crafts movement. Although many architects from the Craftsman tradition opposed mechanized building techniques, Frank Lloyd Wright held no antipathy toward the use of machines. Like Wright, Frank Gehry has expressed interest in both industrialized methods and fine craftsmanship, but with his own work, Gehry initiated an alternative to Wright's organic site-specific work, for Gehry considers buildings a violation of the natural world. As such there is no reason that their unnaturalness should not be accentuated.

Gehry was also informed by thoughtful and comfortable accommodations to modern life that were embraced by Irving Gill and other early twentieth century architects.⁷³ Indebted to Craftsman traditions, the Japanese use of natural materials and Frank Lloyd Wright's horizontal signature, these practices were among those that established the accepted norm from which Gehry's would depart.⁷⁴ And depart he did, for almost as soon as Gehry designed his first independent structure, he began to violate the three dimensional grid that informs the traditional box. In 1968 he designed the O'Neill Hay Barn at San Juan Capistrano, an unremarkable pole barn sheathed in corrugated tin except for its oddly tilted roof.⁷⁵

Besides challenging customary roof orientations, Gehry began to violate the internal grid with off-axis diagonals that were progressively more inventive. When he

⁷³ See fig.15 of this thesis for illustration of Irving Gill's Horatio Court West (1919-1921), Santa Monica, California.

⁷⁴ Gehry's early buildings include Steeves House (1959), Brentwood, California, Ron Davis House and Studio (1970-1972), Malibu, California, and the Performing Arts Pavilion (1975-1977), Concord, California.

⁷⁵ For O'Neill Hay Barn see fig. 91 in Francisco Dal Co and Kurt W. Forster, *Frank O. Gehry*, 1998.

had an understanding client, he employed his new found aesthetic in homes, commercial places, and exhibition spaces.⁷⁶ At Spiller House (1980), Venice, California he flaunted conventional methods by exposing interior supports and sheathing the exterior in corrugated steel, thus utilizing modes and materials previously reserved for industrial purposes.

Initially Gehry addressed many issues that were examined by architects Michael Graves and Eric Moss when they used color and eclectic abstracted forms to reinterpret Le Corbusier's rational designs.⁷⁷ In some respects, the early work of Gehry, Moss, and Graves exhibited commonality with the assemblage work of Minimalist sculptors. Moss's home (1979-82, see fig. 14) and Gehry's Loyola Law School (1981-84, see fig. 10), like Michael Graves's Plocek House (1982) rely playfully upon color to define and accentuate disparate architectural components.⁷⁸ Furthermore, each of these designers has experimented with nontraditional materials. Moss's renovation for Scott, Mednick & Associates (1988-1990), Culver City is a reorganization and reconciliation of four preexisting buildings that features exposed ductwork, and pipe railings. Other Moss projects in Culver City, "The Box" (1995) and IRS Records (1993), and his Lawson-Westen House (1993) in Brentwood would seem to paraphrase Gehry both in selection of materials and an affinity for the complex manipulation of form.

⁷⁶ For instance: Norton Simon Guest House (1976), Malibu, California, Cabrillo Marine Museum (1977-1979), San Pedro, California, and Spiller Residence (1979), Venice, California.

⁷⁷ For instance, consider Danziger Studio and Residence (1964), Hollywood, California.

⁷⁸ See Plocek House (1982), Warren, New Jersey in James Steele, *Architecture Today*, 1997:22.

While the referential box remained visible and implicit with Gehry, throughout the 1970s and 1980s his designs would become increasingly complex. Occasionally he used the cylindrical form.⁷⁹ At the California Aerospace Museum (1982-1984, see fig. 4) in Los Angeles, Gehry used a sphere for embellishment, violated a three-dimensional hexagon both vertically and horizontally, and, with a touch of Pop attached an airplane to the façade.⁸⁰ During the late 1980s Gehry was particularly intrigued with the fish shape, and designed fish installation pieces, functional fish lamps and a fish-shaped entrance to a restaurant in Japan.⁸¹ At Chiatt/Day (1989) in Venice, California, binoculars define the entrance.

When Homi Bhabha noted that Postmodernism has a “populism about it” that does not displace the original but “eludes” it, he was speaking about a value free, self-conscious use of the past.⁸² Bhabha was saying that postmodern designers have eluded

⁷⁹ Cylindrical columns (decorative and supporting) appeared at Loyola Law School (1981-1984), Los Angeles, California and World Savings Bank, Denver, Colorado.

⁸⁰ See fig. 9 of this thesis for California Aerospace Museum (1982-1984), Los Angeles, California.

⁸¹ Sculpted fish motifs have appeared in Gehry’s work many times. They include 1983 *Folly: The Prison*, a snake-shaped prison and fish-shaped viewing platform for the Leo Castelli Gallery. Another fish appeared with a horse and eagle in a folly that would adorn Charles Jencks front porch. There is also the *Fishdance Restaurant* (1986-1989), Kobe, Japan; and from 1983-1986, *Formica Lamps*. A thirty-five foot installation piece with laminated plywood scales was exhibited in Turin and Florence, Italy 1985-86. *Standing Fish* appeared at the 1986 Walker Art Center Retrospective Exhibit. 1992 Olympic Village, Barcelona, Spain was also adorned with a fish. For further information see Francesco Dal Co and Kurt W. Forster in *Frank O. Gehry*, 1998.

At D.G. Bank (1995-2001), Berlin each office opens into a six-story sky lit atrium inhabited by a fish form. Two conference rooms are located within the fishhead. Championed as a destination building and a profitable venture, the exterior is less remarkable because structures located near the Brandenburg Gate are required to conform to planning regulations. See “Something fishy inside Gehry’s new building,” *The Art Newspaper*, September 2001:31.

⁸² See Homi K. Bhabha, “Postmodernism/Postcolonialism,” in *Critical Terms for Art History*, 1996:307-308.

the past referent with mimicries that are unfaithful in imitation; that while the original reference remains, the impersonator is something new. Frank Gehry has focused his practice on issues not unlike Bhabba's postmodern populism with his designs for his home in Santa Monica, at Bilbao, and at Seattle. While the possibilities of the built world are not endless, Gehry has been adept at recognizing opportunities. At his residence he referenced the roughshod construction of nearby commercial areas; at Bilbao and Seattle he looked to finer materials and forms.

Gehry's visual statement is profound at each of these sites. The built world is not the natural world because it is a creation of man. Whether the design is professional or not, all buildings are artifacts that interrupt the natural environment. Frank Gehry has repeatedly exploited this alien aspect of construction.

THE VIRTUAL PLACE

It was Suzanne Langer, in a discussion of the perception of pictorial space, who coined the term “virtual space.”⁸³ As Langer explained, one cannot physically enter the visual space/place that exists behind the organization of a two-dimensional surface. Thus that place, existing in essence but not in fact, is virtual. While the semblance of space one perceives beyond the tactile surface of a picture plane was once an unchangeable creation, with the advent of computers we are able to manipulate virtual spaces. However, we remain unable to taste, smell, hear, and otherwise participate sensually in virtual experiences without additional special effects. Thus, the optical experience allowed by paintings and computers remains virtual.

Similar virtual spaces related to architecture are often overlooked. How does three-dimensional space, essentially a volume not a scene, create virtual space/place? For Langer it was a “continuity of emptiness,” not the direct experience of entering negative space but the optical perception of that implied space.⁸⁴ This unenclosed empty place is a continuity of voids, the sphere of influence made knowable by the volume of actual form.

Langer further recognized that for some a virtual place has great power, power that may be stronger than actual physical experience because artists have the ability to create emotive images that ignite the mind. Distinguishing between actual and virtual experiences is particularly appropriate to understanding the conception and reality of

⁸³ See “Virtual Space,” 69-85 and “The Modes of Virtual Space,” 86-103 in Suzanne Langer, *Feeling and Form*, 1953.

⁸⁴ Ibid. See 88 for quote, 88-90 for discussion.

Experience Music Project. Within the actual physical place occasions for virtual experience are plentiful. Some of these opportunities may provoke strong emotions, but there are also practical aspects that must be considered when one examines public buildings.

James Steele noted in *Museum Builders* that museums today must accommodate food services, the museum store, educational experiences, and amusement attractions. Further, modern museums are identified by their “visceral impact.”⁸⁵ Steele’s idea of “visceral impact” appears to be related to the undefined emotive power that Suzanne Langer associates with virtual space. Certainly the organic nature of *EMP* is visceral, and one might term the aesthetic experience of the building as visceral, transcendent and virtual referring not to tactile sensations but to extraordinary perceptions and emotional responses that are difficult to recount.

Steele sees museums serving particular purposes, namely marking the sacred precinct, establishing cultural literacy, and heightening aesthetic pleasure. If those are the criteria, *Experience Music Project* is a successful museum. *EPM* may be the destination of a sacrosanct pilgrimage for some visitors. Others might enjoy participatory musical opportunities and the several exhibits at *Music Experience Project*. Many will be enchanted with the building itself.

When Paul Allen and Frank Gehry created the “Jimi Hendrix Museum” they realigned a previous space so that a new and special place might exist. Exhibits at *EMP* honor the origins of popular American music. Mythical accounts of Jimi Hendrix and

⁸⁵ See James Steele, *Museum Builders*, 1994:7-9.

many other musicians allow patrons to (re)learn legendary stories. Augmenting the histories are physical artifacts and opportunities to experience musical performance so that visitors can know the actual music and again feel the abstractions of the work.

The building which houses a sizable collection of musical instruments is entered through the eighty-five foot high “Sky Church.” In contrast to items in protected collections, at “Sound Lab,” visitors may touch everything because they are encouraged to attempt to play the guitar, bass, keyboard, or drums. This is an opportunity for real experience. The unaltered performance is played back to performers secluded in soundproof rooms. More confident visitors may wish to perform at “Onstage” so that they might know real stage lighting and thousands of virtual fans. Professional sound technicians mix amateur “concerts,” thus enhancing each performer’s work.

When *EMP* opened, an actual/virtual attraction called *Funk’s Blast* was sited in “Artists Journey.”⁸⁶ This temporary exhibit provided a brief history of funk music, and was also an amusement attraction that offered a disorienting ride on a motion platform positioned before a cinerama-like screen. Augmented by multiple sound sources and occasionally emitting odors, *Funk’s Blast* utilized the special effects one expects to encounter at an amusement park.

There are other virtual places and experiences ancillary to *Experience Music Project*. The extensive website is a virtual museum/place that serves as an extension of the actual place. At <http://www.emplive.com>, one is provided with educational essays,

⁸⁶ I visited *Funk’s Blast* in March 2001. It has since been dismantled. The space formerly called “Artists Journey” now houses *Experience Science Fiction* which opened in June 2004. See page 15 of this thesis for further information; see fig. 5 for level two floor plan.

access to the museum store, and practical aspects of commerce such as hours of operation, membership and employment opportunities. The website offers biographies, video clips, music and more. All of these features are available virtually and may be downloaded for offline access.

Culture is constantly evolving. What was once accessible only to the few has become widely available. Divergent voices have joined the community, for just as technology extends our ability to construct the built environment, it also extends our ability to participate virtually in more varied, more inclusive cultural experiences. There are risks associated with departing from past practice. It would seem that when everybody has access to all that is produced, the standard of expectation might be realigned. With limitless alternative voices empowered to become part of the process that informs and renegotiates culture constructs, popular culture could eventually overwhelm previous procedures. Former criteria for excellence could erode. They might cease to exist.

Often, popular practice is so lacking in refinement that it remains on the edge of absurdity. At *EMP* it is not absurdity at issue, but the value of exhibits and the vanity of the exhibitor that must be examined. From the building itself to the exhibits housed within, and the associated web site, the Frank Gehry/Paul Allen team has attempted to validate popular experience. Gehry at *EMP* has co-opted many earlier ideas, but whatever the source, popular or formal, the makers of *Experience Music Project* rearranged aspects of popular culture into formal presentation so that information could

be relayed in multivalent forms, both actual and virtual, to the layperson and to the sophisticate.

CONCLUSION

As I examine and reexamine *Experience Music Project*, I become ever more certain that this is a seminal building, a *fin-de-siècle* monument that summarizes twentieth century America. Moreover, realizing that American culture pervades the world, I believe Frank Gehry's Seattle landmark could be the *naissance-de-siècle* statement on worldwide culture of the twenty first century. At *Experience Music Project*, Gehry has appropriated lay traditions and melded those modes with fine art. It is the lack of distinction between the formerly fine arts and the vernacular arts that may characterize material culture produced during the twenty first century.

In *Other Criteria*, Leo Steinberg described how the valuations that are attached to an artist, a specific work, or an art movement emerge "after many trial cuts by venturesome critics."⁸⁷ While Steinberg was focusing on Jasper Johns, one can apply his remarks to the aesthetic of Frank Gehry. There is every indication that Frank Gehry will remain notable because his irreverent ideas, grounded in Modernism, Postmodernism and Deconstruction continue to evolve. They are the rare few who stay continuously relevant over decades; however, Gehry has remained innovative throughout his career, becoming more assured as he has matured.

Unlike earlier avant-garde figures who aimed to shock the cultural middle, Frank Gehry's signature, one-of-a-kind buildings challenge formalist modes by creating an alternative dialogue with elite, erudite viewers who may find his aesthetic distasteful.

⁸⁷ See Leo Steinberg, *Other Criteria*, 1972:23.

His voyage, a journey that includes his entire audience, has called old terms of practice into question. Today, at the opening of the twenty-first century, Gehry buildings are destinations, structures sought out by travelers. Many major cities want a Gehry designed edifice. Smaller cities also covet Gehry. In January 2006, a modest museum in Biloxi, Mississippi is scheduled to house the work of potter George Ohr. Gehry has planned pavilions to dance with oak trees overlooking the Gulf of Mexico.⁸⁸

The practice of architecture involves more than technical expertise; it requires sensitivity to multiple views. The past, thoroughly studied and thoughtfully assimilated, has guided Gehry. His knowledge base, modified by experience and by exposure to topics outside the realm of his primary discipline, has resulted in a precise and nuanced manner of ordering. Perhaps that progression is a metaphor for the human mind; in youth, a messy confusion of alternatives presents itself, yet eventually the human urge to systematize may provide a framework for new comprehension.

In buildings, actual practices can be contradictory, causing a violent confrontation of spaces and activities, a catalyst for changes. At the same time mutually exclusive experiences of actual architectural space, and the theoretical concept of the building, are destined to clash. In Gehry's buildings, there is a sculptural aspect at odds with function, a tension or antagonism between form and use. Also, there is extra-verbal content, an associated chain of images. Orchestrating a multitude of details without losing control over the whole at *Experience Music Project*, Gehry should be valued for his artistry.

⁸⁸ "If the museum had been one large building," he says, "they would have had to tear down some of the oaks. But once I saw those trees, I created pavilions to dance with them." See Bruce Watson, "Frank Gehry, on to OHR," *Smithsonian*, February 2004:93.

EMP is an enormous piece of sculpture, perhaps the largest piece ever created. It converses with the vernacular, inside and out. Inside, popular culture is housed and promoted; outside, popular culture is signified. This building, this sculpture, this summary of twentieth century America is fine art, conceived and designed by a highly trained professional who has mastered his trade and taken technical practice to new level.

In addition to the conversation between designer and patron, a building has an interpersonal relationship with its users, with all who might experience the work whatever the circumstances. The playful nature of Gehry's monuments suggests entertainment. Many times, what is housed within a Frank Gehry building will indeed be entertainment, for in addition to creating museums, Gehry has been involved with spaces for musical and theatrical performance.⁸⁹

Roger Shattuck noted in his essay "The Demon of Originality" how difficult it is for artists and others to overcome "artificial barriers within the mind."⁹⁰ Shattuck, citing the nineteenth century French self-protective device labeled *La Blague*, recognized that originality may require a creator to work close to the "edge of laughter."⁹¹ While Frank Gehry may not wish to elicit laughter, Shattuck makes a compelling argument that novel or even bizarre art forms have challenged previous notions of acceptability. Perhaps Shattuck's most important point is that something new cannot be created if old models

⁸⁹ The Richard B. Fisher Center of Performing Arts, Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson, New York was completed in 2003. Plans for expansion or transformation are underway at the Art Gallery of Ontario, Ontario, Canada, the Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington D.C., and the Theater for a New Audience, Brooklyn, New York.

⁹⁰ See Roger Shattuck, *The Innocent Eye*, 1984:62-81.

⁹¹ *Ibid.* For reference to *La Blague*, see page 70.

are unknown. Certainly late twentieth century theorists have discussed the importance of historical reference as a point of departure and wondered if art has been compromised forever by a society willing to accept uncritically all human creations without consideration for quality. An artist like Frank Gehry renders those concerns moot.

Gehry has continuously challenged the past with chaotic disassembly. Designer of museums, exhibit spaces, museum installations, and cardboard furniture, of homes, commercial spaces, artist studios, and places for musical performance, Gehry has realized visions others might never imagine. Enduring change depends upon engaging spectators in the process of discovery and establishing new theoretical models. Normally those in power dictate culture, embracing conformity and cultural prejudices with an arrogance that confronts creative individuals with invisible barriers. Despite these roadblocks, Frank Gehry has overwhelmed tradition and led the way to a new aesthetic. He has reformulated the built world and created improbably and unexpectedly sculptural architecture, sculpture with a function.

As an observer of Gehry, I have not remained detached from the complex relationships between creating and experiencing. When Frank Gehry cast off certain anchors from the past, he allowed new ideas to find expression. At this fertile juncture where knowledge continuously shifts, and difference reveals itself, prior assumptions are confronted. Gehry's voyage has created a second flood of exploratory energy among both imitators, and those of us who might question and analyze what is rightfully part of contemporary American experience. This evolving narration offers the possibility of radically new orientations and relationships.

Shaped by assumptions and expectations, each viewer of a work of art will produce a personal pattern of associations that set the stage for reflection. My individual habits of thought and my ways of organizing do not exclude additional possibilities that I have not pursued. Other viewers of *EMP* may recognize further potentials. Together the reactions and associations of Frank Gehry's entire audience will probably include more than the artist himself intended. Ambiguity and complexity may obscure portions of his didactic, so some intended messages may remain elusive.

Whatever may have been overlooked by this thesis, Frank Gehry has had a lot to say. Throughout his career he has remained the proverbial trickster, engaging in a lengthy dialogue with himself, other artists, and the public. He has addressed formalist issues and popular culture and he has emerged with an aesthetic that is pure Gehry. While his style remains unnamed, it is not without influence.⁹²

⁹² While Gehry's multi-coded style can be termed variously: Postmodern at Loyola University Law School (see fig.10), Deconstructive at his residence (see figs. 7 & 8) and Pop at Chiatt/Day in Venice (see fig.11), I have argued that there is no stylistic term for Gehry's work at Guggenheim Bilbao (see fig.12), Walt Disney Concert Hall (see fig. 13), or *Experience Music Project* (see fig. 1).

ILLUSTRATIONS

@ 2001 *Experience Music Project* by Stanley Smith

1. Aerial photograph of *Experience Music Project*, January 23, 2001
325 Fifth Avenue North at Seattle Center, Seattle, Washington

2. Fifth Street Entrance, *Experience Music Project*, Seattle, Washington

3. Harrison Street Plaza Entry, *Experience Music Project*, Seattle, Washington

@ 2000 Experience Music Project

4. Level One Vector Map, *Experience Music Project*, Seattle, Washington

@ 2000 Experience Music Project

5. Level Two Vector Map, Experience Music Project, Seattle, Washington

@ 2000 Experience Music Project

6. Level Three Vector Map, Experience Music Project, Seattle, Washington

7. Frank O. Gehry Residence (1979 and 1987)
Twenty-second Street at Washington Avenue, Santa Monica, California
Entrance as it appeared March 1991.

8. Frank O. Gehry Residence (1979 and 1987)
Washington Street alignment, Santa Monica
View of exterior kitchen wall and garage entrance, November 2002.

9. California Aerospace Museum (1982-1984)
700 State Street at Exposition Park, Los Angeles, California

10. Loyola Marymount University Law School (1981-1984)
West Olympic Boulevard at 919 South Albany Street, Los Angeles, California

11. Chiatt/Day Office Building (1989)
Main Street, Venice, California
Binocular entrance by Claes Oldenburg and Coosje Van Bruggen

12. Guggenheim Museum Bilbao (1997)
Abandoibarra Et 2, Bilbao, Spain
Jeff Koons sculpture

13. Walt Disney Concert Hall (1989-2003)
Music Center of Los Angeles County
135 North Grand Avenue at First Street, Los Angeles, California

14. Eric Owen Moss Residence (1979-1982)
708 El Medio Avenue, Pacific Palisades, California
Architect: Eric Owen Moss

15. Horatio Court West (1919-1921)
140 Hollister Avenue, Santa Monica, California
Architect: Irving Gill

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