

THE ART OF
LEARNING
& THE LEARNING OF
ART

A D.C. MUSEUM & COLLEGE OF THE ARTS
JENNIFER LEIGH STROHKORB

THE ART OF LEARNING AND THE LEARNING OF ART

THROUGH THE MARRIAGE OF HISTORY & INNOVATION

A D.C. Museum and College of the Arts

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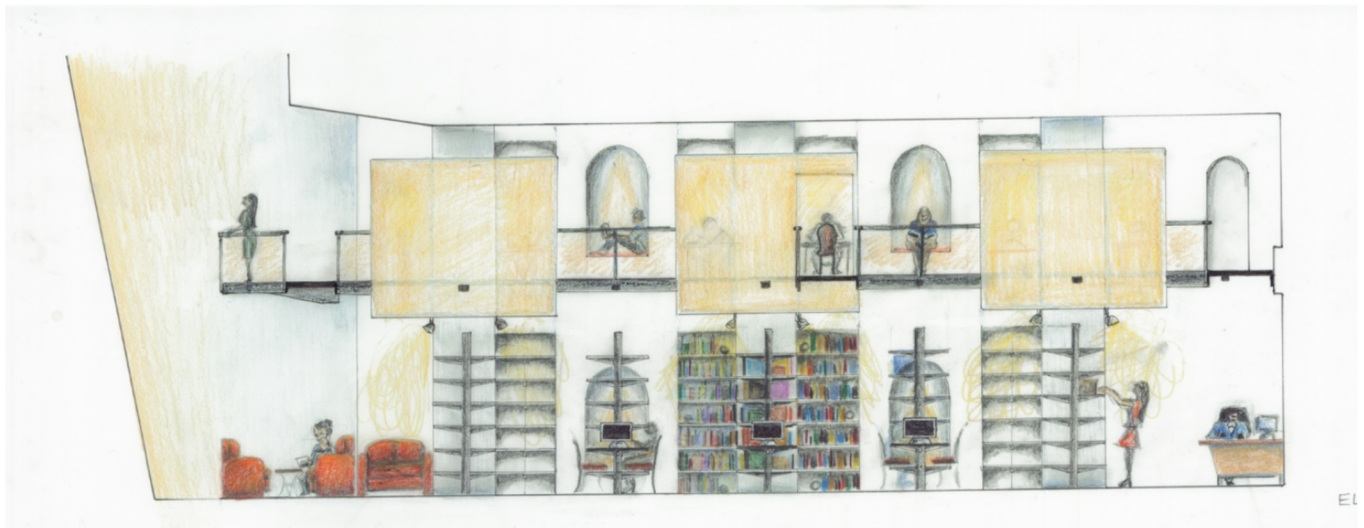


Fig 0.1 Elevation of Library

THE ART OF LEARNING AND THE LEARNING OF ART

THROUGH THE MARRIAGE OF HISTORY & INNOVATION

A D.C. Museum and College of the Arts

ABSTRACT

This project is a study of the process of human learning, specifically related to arts and culture, and how a community interacts with and creates its own art and memory.

Historically, the museum has functioned as a type of self-guided institute of higher learning for the public. It has been utilized to display and memorialize works of cultures throughout history. It has become a place where the public interacts with artifacts from cultures past and cultures present.

This project addresses the following: In addition to a museum's function of educating the public, can a museum function as a classroom or laboratory for tomorrow's artists and educators? Can museum visitors become part of the creative process? Can a college for fine art and museum studies become

integrated creatively into a museum, generating mutual benefit for both institutions and the city? Can the present generation of artists and educators build upon the advancements and setbacks of the generation that went before it?

This thesis is written as a fiction story to best capture and communicate the process of experiential learning and the making of cultural memory. Some people and events are based on true facts; others have been changed, added to or omitted for the sake of a good story.

*Creativity is... seeing something that doesn't exist already.
You need to find out how you can bring it into being and that
way be a playmate with God.*

Michele Shea



Fig 0.2 *Garden of Gratitude* by Author

DEDICATION

For my Father

~Love has no other name. It is Love that saw me through

For my parents

~Who would I be without you?

For my husband

~Dreams came true when I met you. This is one of them

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To my Committee

Susan, Marco, Paul and Jaan

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To all my friends and family

Julie & Luke, Ron & Hollie, Melissa, Michelle, Sharon,
Sallie, my SamCo family, David & Marcia, Tina & Myra

Your prayers were so appreciated and needed! Thank you for helping me to push through and get 'er done

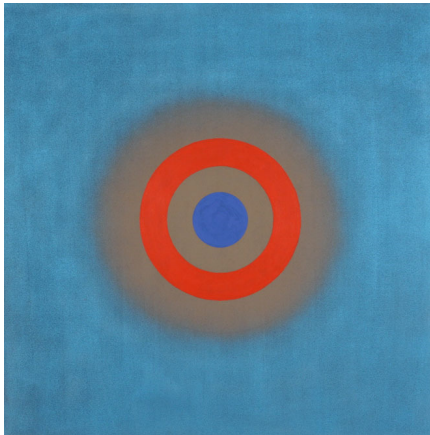


Fig 0.3 *Mysteries: West Light*, Kenneth Noland, 2001. Acrylic on Canvas, 48x48 inches. Greenville Museum, Greenville, NC. © Estate of Kenneth Noland/Licensed by VAGA, New York, NY.

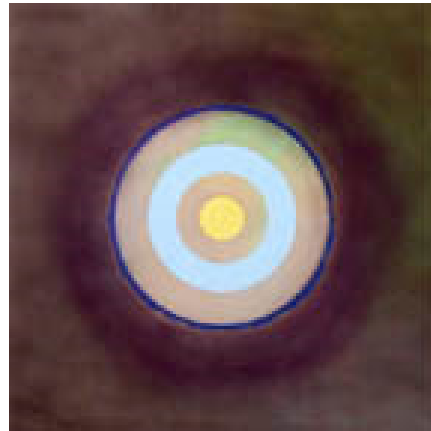


Fig 0.4 *Mysteries: View of Yellow*, Kenneth Noland, 1999. Acrylic on canvas, 60x60 inches. Private Collection. © Estate of Kenneth Noland/Licensed by VAGA, New York, NY.

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Fig 1.1 The Spy Museum, Penn Quarter



Fig 1.2 The National Portrait Gallery, Penn Quarter



Fig 1.3 8th Street, Penn Quarter



Fig 1.4 Chinatown, Penn Quarter

INTRODUCTION

THE RESURRECTION PROJECT

Jenny stood on the corner of the busy intersection, waiting for the crossing sign to change as she felt her cellphone buzz with a new message. She was surprised to see that the message was from her father... strange since he was supposed to be on a silent retreat for the next month. He was off on one of his "inspiration encounters" in preparation for his new series called "Illumine." Her father was a brilliant artist; He had been part of the renowned "DC Colorists" back in the day.

It was now 2013, and Jenny was in his old stomping grounds again, in the heart of historic Penn Quarter. It had been 10 years since her last visit, and how much had changed! As she took in the new sites and buildings, and the streets that buzzed with activity, she realized that the greatest change was not all that she was taking in, but it was all that had changed within her. She was not the same person she was then.

Ten years ago she had been running away from her father and all that he represented. She had not understood him and had no idea how much he loved her. If she would have only known all that he had sacrificed for her, how he had given up his very life for her... how different would things have been?

She even ended up studying architecture in Alexandria, his most beloved city, and had dedicated her thesis project to a museum and college of the arts that would house a permanent collection of the DC Colorists, including the work of her father, in an

attempt to find some kind of connection with him, all to no avail.

Then in 2003 came the call that changed everything. After so many years, she heard her father's voice in tears on the other end. Finally he got through to her, after years of vain effort of which she was completely unaware. As he spoke, suddenly everything changed. He told her how much he loved her, how she was everything to him. He told her that he wanted her with him where he was. Her father was calling her home.

Tears streamed down her cheeks as she remembered that day, how she left everything behind to move back home. She had walked away from her thesis project and never looked back. It was not a loss to her back then, as the project had seemed somehow insignificant in light of the new revelation... her father loved her.

But now, after all these years, she couldn't help but think back on that old museum, and the design she had dreamed up to celebrate the work of her father. She felt life stir within her as she began to dream again, and she knew she just had to revisit the site.

It wouldn't be too far off to think that her father somehow had sensed this old stirring in her again. Maybe this would explain why he surprised her on her birthday with an all-expenses paid trip back into history... his history, and hers as well. There was more to this story that Jenny must relive, must re-



INTRODUCTION

vive and bring back to life. Her very heart depended on it.

Since they had been reunited, her father had been challenging her to go after her dreams. The thought brought a smile to her face. She loved how her father always followed his dreams, no matter how crazy they seemed to everyone else. And what a joy he had. It was contagious. It was beautiful. And she wanted it.

As she listened to the voicemail left by her father, she laughed out loud as he had indeed been on the same page with the thoughts she hadn't even put into words yet, and he encouraged her to revisit the site that had held so many dreams a decade ago. He assured her that nothing could prepare her for what she was about to see and experience. "How intriguing," she thought as she made her way to 8th & E.

As she approached the old site of her thesis project, she gasped out loud as her eyes rested on the building before her. What was once a vacant parking lot was now her very own museum... her thesis project come to life.

"Is this a dream?" she asked herself. Looking up at the newly constructed D.C. Museum and College of Fine Art, Jenny became excited and apprehensive all at the same time. She realized that this building represented the resurrection of a significant part of her heart. And she had a funny feeling that her father had everything to do with it.

I am still learning.

Michelangelo

THE ART OF LEARNING



Fig 2.1 Early Concept Drawing for the Museum Library



Fig 2.2 Front Perspective Drawing looking Northwest

THE ART OF LEARNING

A MUSEUM OF FINE ART

As Jenny approached the museum entrance, a flood of memories crept back into her mind. She was quickly brought back into reality when she remembered her father's voicemail. He had reminded her of the package he had sent along with her, to be opened only when she had arrived at the site. She had been carrying the mysterious package around in her handbag, and now she could finally open it. Inside she found all her old sketchbooks that had captured the design process that she had journeyed upon 10 years ago.

She decided to sit down and peruse through her sketchbooks before entering the building. She noticed the quaint sidewalk café nestled under an overhang where the building stepped back on the ground floor to accommodate about 16 tables, and to provide a wonderful shady retreat on a hot summer's day. "I'm so glad I put this café here," she mused with a smile as she ordered an iced latte and began thumbing through the old memories in her sketchbooks.

Jenny was an artist as well, just like her father. Her sketchbook was full of drawings and sketches, visions and writings about all she had learned during the creative process of the thesis design. Her journey started out with a study on education itself, specifically regarding the role of the museum.

Jenny had always been drawn to the process of education and learning from every aspect of life. If she had a learning philosophy, it would be the experiential kind. So much of her knowledge, understanding and wisdom had been experientially gained.

Jenny also had a great love for museums. She thought of the museum as being a type of self-guided urban center of higher learning, primarily utilized to display and memorialize works of cultures throughout history. She loved to watch the public interact with artifacts from cultures past and works of art and innovation from the present. Every reaction can be said to be unique to an individual, as each person brings a different world-view, beliefs, and personal experiences to the table, that shape the current perception of the object.

Jenny personally loved to read and study an object in context. Though it is generally true that an object can speak for itself, she found it far more enriching to also delve in to the mind behind the object so to speak, and the cultural implications of the objects creator. Just like reading a story or quote out of context, you cannot divorce the meaning of a created object from the intent of its creator. The two go hand in hand. Maybe she was a little biased, as nothing gave her more delight than hearing her father explain the heart and soul behind a work he had

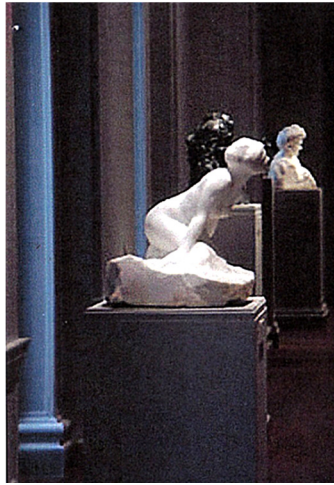


Fig 2.3 National Gallery West Building



Fig 2.4 The Freer Gallery

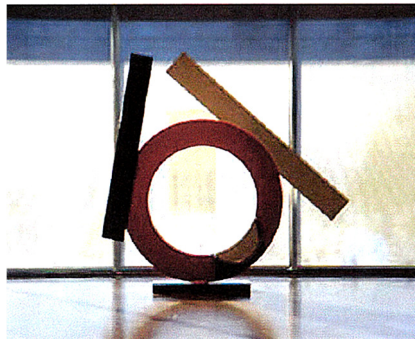


Fig 2.5 National Gallery East Building

THE ART OF LEARNING

THE MUSEUM AS AN URBAN CENTER OF HIGHER LEARNING

created. But she knew there were a myriad of philosophies regarding how a museum should display its works of art, what is the museums' role in guiding the learning process, and even more basic, how do we come to assign a meaning to something, and what is the museum's role in interpreting that disseminating that meaning to the viewer?

Jenny pulled out a printed article that had been folded up and placed inside her sketchbook. It was written by Eilean Hooper-Greenhill titled "Learning in Art Museums: Strategies of Interpretation."

"There is a major difference of emphasis between the way the word "interpretation" is used in theory (in hermeneutics and constructivism) and the way it is used in the museum. "Interpretation" as understood by hermeneutics, is the mental process an individual uses to construct meaning from experience. You are the interpreter for yourself. Interpretation is the process of constructing meaning. Interpretation is part of the process of understanding."

The article goes on to share that the traditional models of the museum has been to interpret objects for the viewer, rather than the viewer constructing the meaning for themselves. A new trend towards constructivist theory has been adopted in museums as it has been adopted in educational institutions for years.

Professor George E. Hein of Lesley College, Cambridge, MA in his article titled "Constructivist Learning Theory: The Museum and the Needs of People" gives a great explanation of Constructivist Theory:

"What is meant by constructivism? The term refers to the idea that learners construct knowledge for themselves---each learner individually (and socially) constructs meaning---as he or she learns..."

If we accept constructivist theory, then we have to give up Platonic and all subsequent realistic views of epistemology. We have to recognize that there is no such thing as knowledge "out there" independent of the knower, but only knowledge we construct for ourselves as we learn. ⁴ Learning is not understanding the "true" nature of things, nor is it (as Plato suggested) remembering dimly perceived perfect ideas, but rather a personal and social construction of meaning out of the bewildering array of sensations which have no order or structure besides the explanations (and I stress the plural) which we fabricate for them.

Jenny did not fully agree with constructivism, specifically that there is no absolute truth or knowledge outside of us, but she wanted her museum to be free enough in its design to allow the students to experiment with different learning theories and to make their own conclusions based on what they observe from their experiments.

*Every child is an artist. The problem is how to
remain an artist once he grows up.*

Pablo Picasso

THE LEARNING OF ART



Fig 3.1 *The Path of Discovery*, by Author



Fig 3.2 Front Façade Perspective, College Entrance, looking Northeast

THE LEARNING OF ART

A COLLEGE OF FINE ART & MUSEUM STUDIES

Her next area of study was the education process of the artist. This was near and dear to her heart because of her father's gift as well as her own. She wrestled with questions like, how can artists be prepared to thrive and succeed in the ever-volatile world of art? With so many theories swirling around about art itself, what is art? Who defines it? Who creates it? Where is art's place in culture? Does art reflect cultural trends or does it create them?

Jenny loved the idea of an art college being nestled within a museum. Art is a created work that expresses some aspect of the thought or emotion of the artist. These works often give insights into the culture and collective thought of the time era in which the artist lives. Art is created to impact the observer in some way. What better way to learn art then to be in an environment where the art is able to be displayed to the public?

Jenny had drawn upon her memories of art school back in the late 90's to receive inspiration for what kind of atmosphere causes an art student to thrive in creativity and truly succeed as an artist. It was one reality to receive feedback and critique from peers and professors who were "in the know" so to speak, regarding art, aesthetics, etc. Then it was another reality entirely to observe the way the general public interacted and responded to the same work of art.

Because of her own experience, Jenny believed that part of the learning process for producing excellent works of art could only be improved by actually observing the public's interaction with the work itself. She also observed that the method of display can greatly affect the viewer's experience. Thus Jenny had concluded that the process of continual interaction with and observation from the public with newly created works of art would benefit both the artist and museum studies students greatly.

Thus was birthed the idea to build a college of fine art & museum studies within the same building as a museum of fine art.

Jenny observed several art students having coffee at the café while observing and sketching busy city life. One thing is for certain, the students will never be lacking in live action models! Washington D.C. is a great place to have an art school. There is no lack of inspiration, beauty, city life, cultural diversity, controversy, and history all wrapped up in the political center of the nation.



Fig 4.1 Nighttime Arial View of Washington D.C., Library of Congress

THE “NATIONAL CITY”



No man can know where he is going unless he knows exactly where he has been and exactly how he arrived at his present place.

Maya Angelou



Fig 4.2 Historic Monuments in Washington D.C., LOC



Fig 4.3 Ariel View of Washington D.C., LOC



Fig 4.4 DuPont Circle, LOC



Fig 4.5 Georgetown, LOC



Fig 4.6 Declaration of Independence, by John Trumbull, LOC

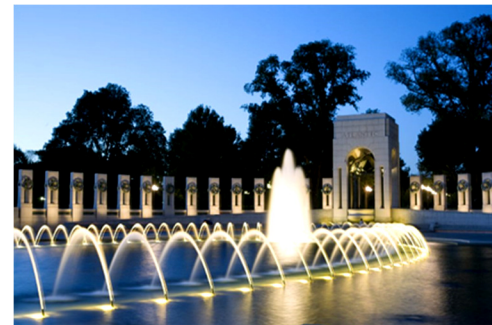


Fig 4.7 WWII Memorial, LOC

THE “NATIONAL CITY”

FINDING THE CULTURAL IDENTITY OF THE “NATIONAL CITY”

As she sipped her latte and watched the passersby on a busy Tuesday morning, Jenny marveled at this city called Washington D.C. It is truly a unique place, she thought. There was no better place to have conducted her research on museums and colleges, and the process of cultural learning, then in Washington D.C. And there was no better place to build both as well!

The city itself was a real inspiration for her thesis journey and the decisions she made during the design process. No other city so was so much like a museum in itself. And no other city had such a plethora of museums to visit and conduct research in.

She thumbed through her notes and came upon the section dedicated to this great “city,” though technically, was it even a “city” at all?

Jenny had never been a resident of the “national city,” but her father had, and she remembered all the stories he had told her about what an interesting quandary it was.

She had recorded the following in her sketchbook from the website of the Smithsonian regarding the history of D.C.:

“Washington, the District of Columbia is not a state, nor is it part of any state. It is a unique “federal district” established by the Constitution of the United States to serve as the nation’s capital. As the capital of the world’s most powerful democracy, it is ironic that residents of Washington lack full self-government, and limited self-government was only restored in 1974 after nearly 100 years with an appointed commissioner system. Representation in Congress is limited to a non-voting delegate to the House of Representatives and a shadow Senator. 1964 was the first Presidential election in which Washington residents were able to vote.”

What always intrigued Jenny about D.C. is that it is not only the center of national history, it can also be said to be the center of innovation. New laws, lobbyists, protests, and the seat of government. In no other place will you find more history, more museums, more collections of archives and cultural records, as well as innovation, technology and forward thinking (as well as some backward thinking too) than in our nation's capital.

Works by Kenneth Noland

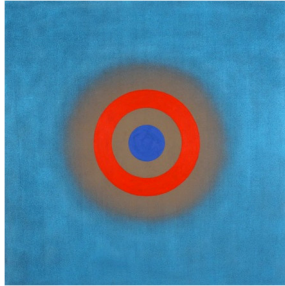


Fig 4.8 *Mysteries: West Light*, Kenneth Noland, 2001. Acrylic on Canvas, 48x48 inches. Greenville Museum, Greenville, NC. © Estate of Kenneth Noland/Licensed by VAGA, New York, NY.



Fig 4.9 *Mysteries: View of Yellow*, Kenneth Noland, 1999. Acrylic on canvas, 60x60 inches. Private Collection. © Estate of Kenneth Noland/Licensed by VAGA, New York, NY..



Fig 4.10 *Mysteries: Night Blues*, Kenneth Noland, 1999. Acrylic on Canvas, 60x60 inches. Private Collection. © Estate of Kenneth Noland/Licensed by VAGA, New York, NY.

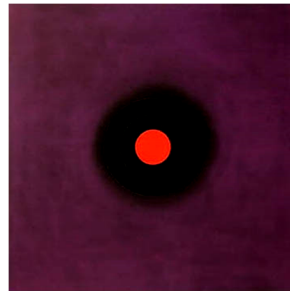


Fig 4.11 *Mysteries: Red Light*, Kenneth Noland, 1999. Acrylic on Canvas, 60x60 inches, Private Collection. © Estate of Kenneth Noland/Licensed by VAGA, New York, NY.



Fig 4.12 *No Bid*, Kenneth Noland, 1965. Acrylic on Canvas, 46x46 inches, David Mirvish Collection. © Estate of Kenneth Noland/Licensed by VAGA, New York, NY.



Fig 4.13 *Shoot*, Kenneth Noland, 1964. Acrylic on Canvas, 103.5x126.75 inches. Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington D.C. © Estate of Kenneth Noland/Licensed by VAGA, New York, NY.

THE “NATIONAL CITY”

A HISTORY TO BUILD UPON: THE D.C. COLORISTS

One Saturday afternoon several years ago, as Jenny and her father perused the modern art collection at MoMa, they stumbled upon one of Kenneth Noland's paintings from his *Mysteries Series*. This sparked a long conversation about the heart behind the D.C. Colorists, also known as the Washington Color School.

Her father shared that the Washington painters had gained distinction in the 1960's-70's, and were classified as part of the Color Field painters. He never liked being “classified,” he joked, but he explained that critics gave them this “classification” because their work could be characterized by large fields of flat, solid color spread across or stained into the canvas. This painting method produces areas of continuous surface and a flat picture plane.

In some ways, her father said that this new technique of painting was in direct response to the current trend in art at the time, called abstract expressionism. Other prominent artists, such as Jackson Pollock, were known as Abstract Expressionists, and they had made a splash in the art world at that time. These artists were known for their emotional energy and gestural surface marks and paint handling. (Wikipedia)

He explained that he and other D.C. Colorists, like Kenneth Noland and Gene Davis, desired to place less emphasis on gesture, brushstrokes and action in favor of an overall consistency of form and process. In color field painting “color is freed from

objective context and becomes the subject in itself,” he shared excitedly. As a result, the Color Field movement greatly impacted modern art by vastly simplifying the idea of what constitutes the look of a finished painting.

Her father was getting excited now as he shared the heart of he and his cohorts, “Color Field painting sought to rid art of superfluous rhetoric. Artists used greatly reduced formats, with drawing essentially simplified to repetitive and regulated systems, basic references to nature, and a highly articulated and psychological use of color. In general we eliminated overt recognizable imagery in favor of abstraction. In general, color field painting presents abstraction as an end in itself.” (TheArtStory)

In addition to the simplification of a finished painting, the color field painters also revolutionized the way paint could be effectively applied. With the creation and availability of acrylic paint, new application techniques were possible, such as staining, which was a main reason for the success of the movement. Her father explained how they would apply the acrylic paint, acting it out for her as he went along. First they would mix and dilute their paint in buckets or coffee cans or anything else they could find, making a fluid liquid. Next they would pour it (or spray it, roll it, brush it or even throw it!) onto raw unprimed canvas. The paint would then spread into the fabric of the canvas. He shared that pouring and staining opened the door to innovations

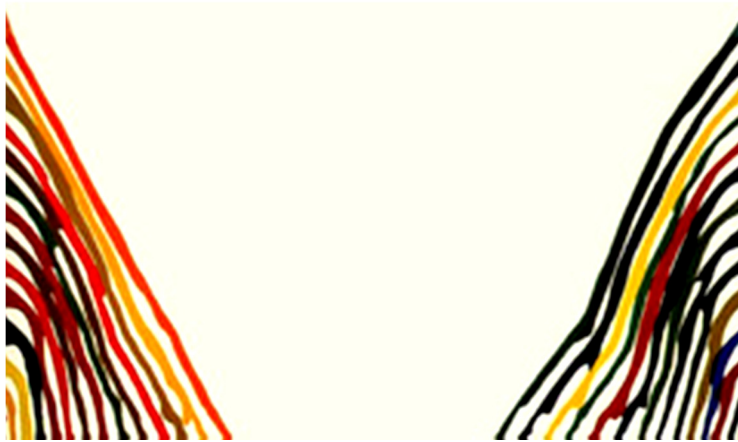


Fig 4.20 Morris Louis, *Beta Kappa*. Copyright © 1961 Morris Louis.



Fig 4.21 Morris Louis, *Nun*. Copyright © 1959 Morris Louis.

THE “NATIONAL CITY”

and revolutionary methods of drawing and expressing meaning in new ways. (Wikipedia)

In 1972, former Metropolitan Museum of Art curator Henry Geldzahler said:

Color field, curiously enough or perhaps not, became a viable way of painting at exactly the time that acrylic paint, the new plastic paint, came into being. It was as if the new paint demanded a new possibility in painting, and the painters arrived at it. Oil paint, which has a medium that is quite different, which isn't water based, always leaves a slick of oil, or puddle of oil, around the edge of the color. Acrylic paint stops at its own edge. (Wikipedia)

Jenny could see how innovation and new technologies provide great inspiration and impetus for up and coming artists to break into a new form and expression in the art world. This caused her to feel confident in her design choices for the college portion of the building, representing technology and innovation built upon and supported by the knowledge and achievements of the past.

*All the arts we practice are apprenticeship.
The big art is our life.*

M. C. Richards

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING



Fig 5.1 *The Creative Spirit*, by Author

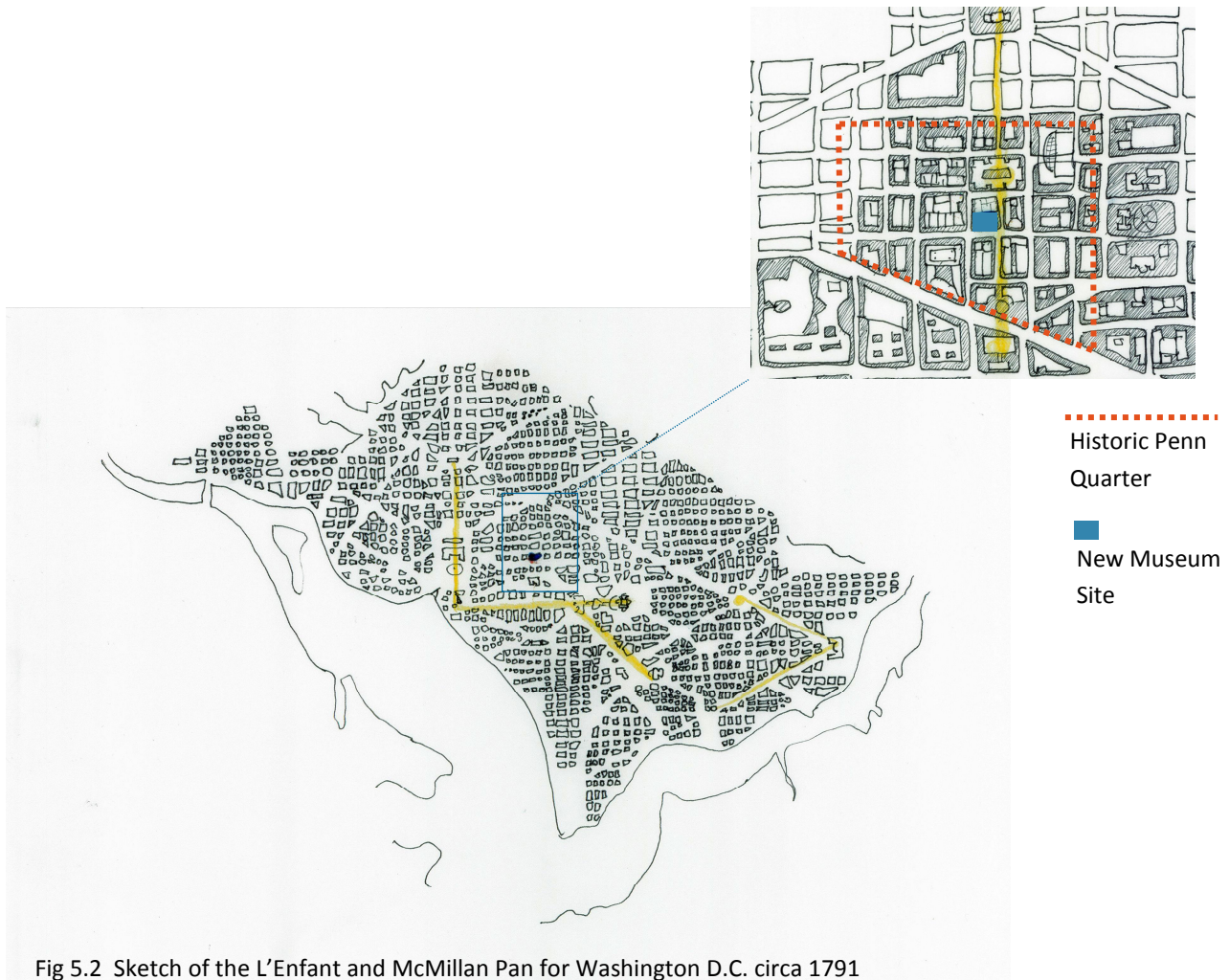


Fig 5.2 Sketch of the L'Enfant and McMillan Pan for Washington D.C. circa 1791

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

THE SITE

After all this reminiscing about the D.C. Colorists, Jenny thought about the site she had chosen for her museum and college. She unfolded the map that was nestled into her sketchbook, and looked over the original L'Enfant plan (left) at the layout of the capital. To her mind, L'Enfant modeled the city like a museum, where focal points and vistas were created to highlight specific buildings of cultural history and interest. In a sense, these buildings are “displayed” like works of art, from a distance down various streets and intersections throughout the city.

Historic Penn Quarter, also known as Old Downtown, was the perfect site for the museum and college, as it represented to her the marriage of the past and future, especially now with all the emphasis going in to the restoration and revitalizing of the district., making it a hotspot for arts and entertainment.

Penn Quarter was a thriving neighborhood and shopping district through the mid 20th century. It contained Ford's theatre (where President Lincoln was assassinated), the Patent Office (now the National Portrait Gallery), the Tariff Building (now the Monaco Hotel) and the Pension Building (now the National Building Museum) and the National Archives. (WeLoveDC, 2009)

After the great exodus to the suburbs in the '50s the area become desolate and run down. President Kennedy initiated the President Council on Pennsylvania Avenue in '62 which helped jumpstart the revitalization of the area and things began to pick up. The real boom came in 1997 with the addition of the Verizon Center. This brought in a plethora of mixed use projects, and other cultural highlights like the Spy Museum, thriving restaurants, art galleries, department stores and posh new apartments. This neighborhood is a perfect picture of resurrection and revitalization of history interspersed with modern innovation and flavor. (WeLoveDC, 2009)

The area also has great access to transportation, with Metro stops at both the National Portrait Museum and the National Archives. And of course, just a few blocks away to the south is the National Mall.

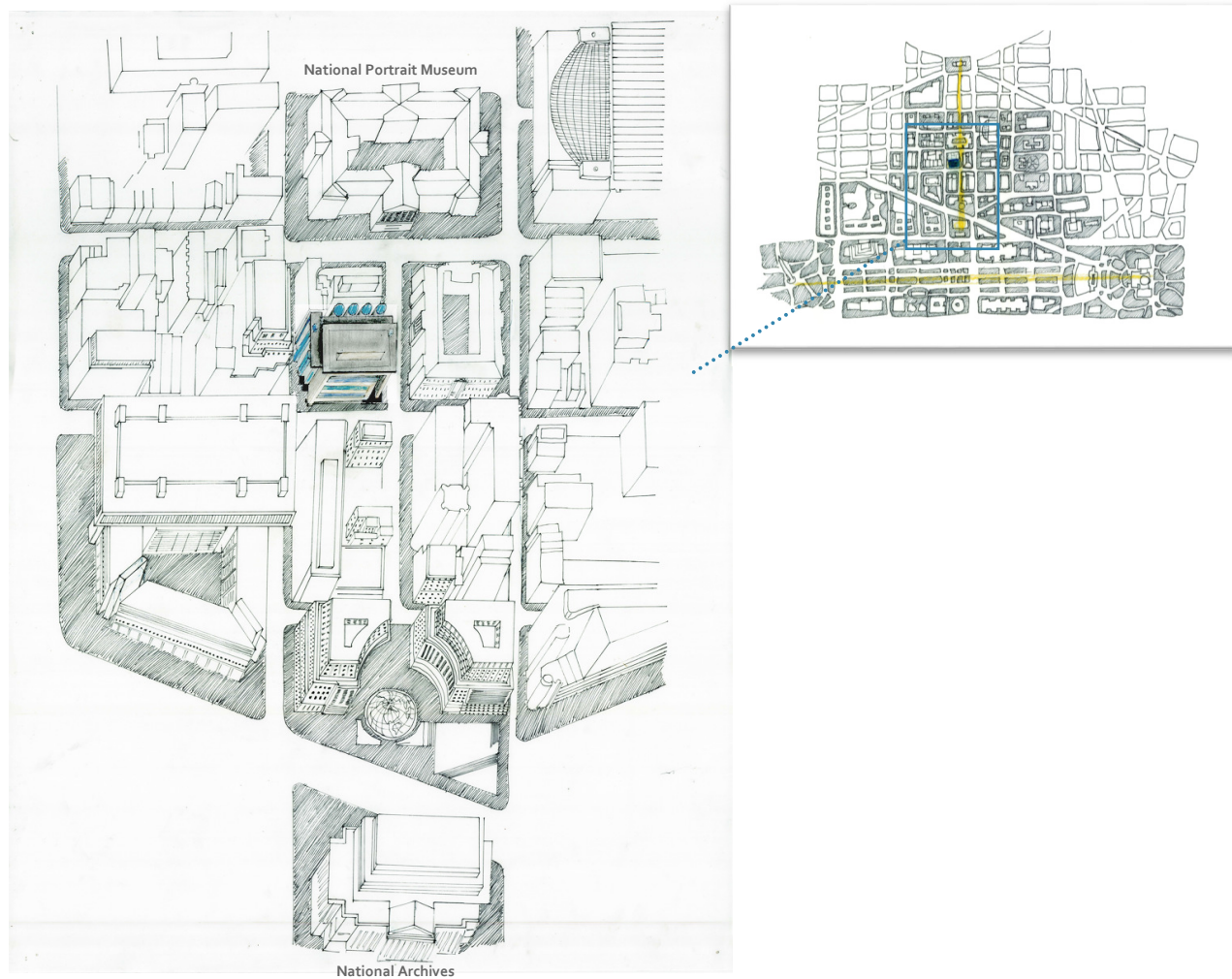


Fig 5.3 Ariel View of the new Museum and College Site

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING



Fig 5.4 South Axis to the National Archives (inset)



Fig 5.5 North Axis to the National Portrait Museum (inset)

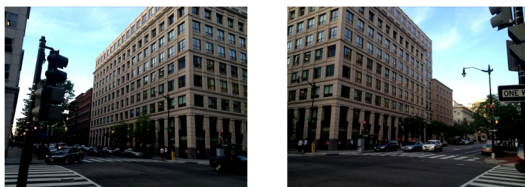


Fig 5.6 Current Office Bldg housing DL Piper

The new museum is situated north of the Mall, in Penn Quarter on E Street between 7th & 8th Streets NW. The entrance to the museum is on the corner of E & 8th, which is one such vista created by two major points of cultural and historical interest, the National Archives on the south end of the axis, and the National Portrait Museum on the north end. (see Fig 5.4 and 5.5).

The rear of the building is adjunct to the International Spy Museum. The college entrance, on the corner of E & 7th, faces diagonally to the FBI Headquarters. (Note: The site was used as a parking lot at the genesis of this project in 2002. Currently, the building is occupied by an office building that houses DL Piper (see Fig 5.6).

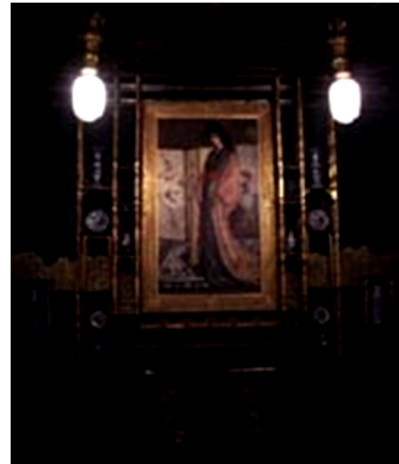
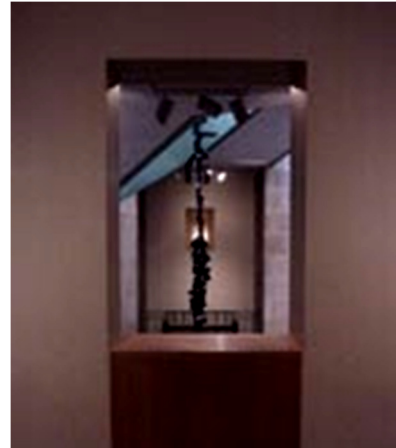
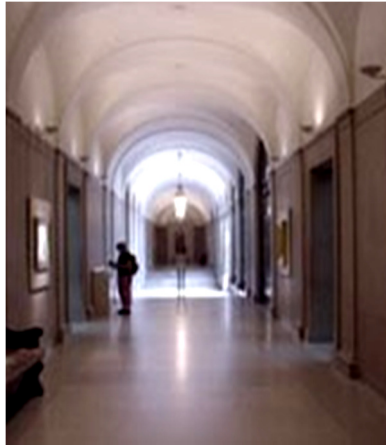


Fig 5.7 Freer Gallery, Washington D.C.

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

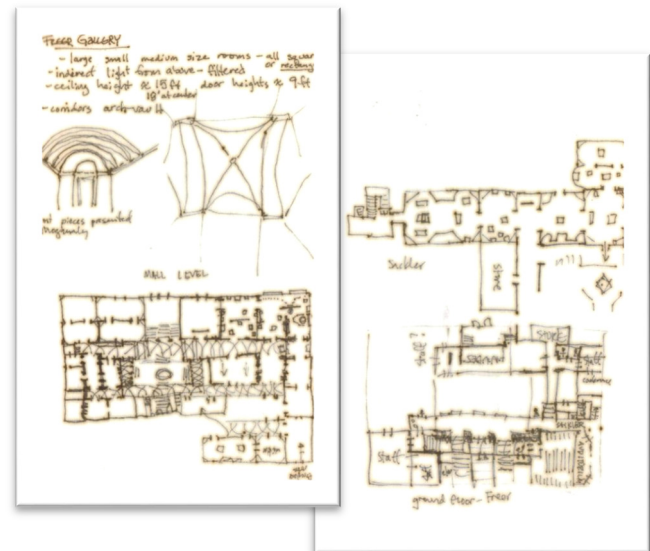
MUSEUM STUDIES AND DISCOVERIES

Jenny remembered in her research wrestling with the common debate about museums, should they simply be a “box” that contains works of art that does not interfere with the art work but is a sterile blank box, or is the museum a work of art in itself? How should the museum display various works of art, should it have no input into the context or meaning of the art, or should it “educate” the public with regards to culture, context, meaning and intent?

To find answers to these age-old questions regarding the role of the museum building, Jenny conducted extensive research, not through second-hand knowledge obtained through books and articles, but through experiencing as many art museums as she was able. This was most certainly the favorite part of the learning process. She discovered many different approaches to displaying works of art and was able to experience them first-hand, and observe others interacting with them as well.

She looked back at her old notes, sketches and pictures of the museums she visited. The first museums she visited were in the DC area: starting with the Freer Gallery, a Smithsonian museum dedicated to Asian art.

The first thing Jenny noted about the Freer Gallery was its use of visual connection points through large portions of the museum, utilizing architectural elements to highlight artifacts as vista points, such as long corridors that end with lighted niches displaying eye-catching works of antiquity. Most of the artifacts were displayed in sterile containers with unobtrusive colors and surroundings. There were a few rooms however (opposite, lower right) that had some contextual elements representing royal palaces where the artifacts would typically be found. Jenny liked the use of context to “tell the story” of the artifacts and culture being highlighted.



Jenny's sketchbook

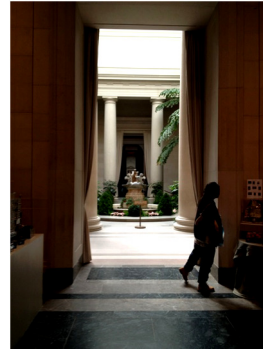


Fig 5.8 National Gallery, West Building

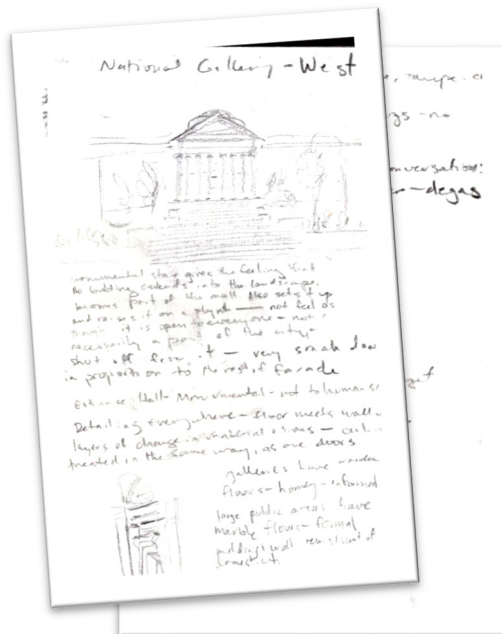


Fig 5.9 Jenny's Sketchbook Pages

Jenny's next visit was to the National Gallery, starting with the West Building. This part of the museum is dedicated to historical works dating from antiquity to the beginning of the 20th century. The East Building is dedicated to Modern Art.

The first thing Jenny noted in her sketchbooks was the difference in the treatment of the exteriors of the two buildings, which really exemplified each building's purpose. The West Building was designed with a more classical approach, like much of the architecture in the capital, with colonnaded porticos on both entrances to the building, and interior galleries with a similar classical approach.

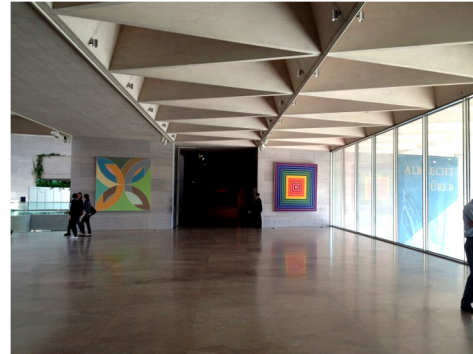
EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

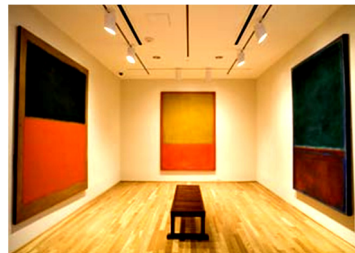


Fig 5.10 National Gallery, East Building

The East Building, designed by I.M. Pei, takes on a modern approach to exemplify the move towards pure form. The triangular site played a large role in the theme of triangles seen throughout the design. The central atrium space is transversed by several large pathways and stairways linking the 3 wings together.

The galleries within the East Building stay minimalistic for the most part. Large white walls are the norm with little to no ornamentation in the galleries, with the exception of occasional traveling exhibits.





Next stop was the Phillips Collection, named for its founder, Duncan Phillips, whose historic home displays the collection, along with several modern additions. Jenny really enjoyed this museum, as it offered so many varied experiences in which to view the different styles of art.

Much of the more classical collection is displayed in the historic house, a very different feel to see a Degas mounted over the fireplace in a sitting room! The modern galleries take on the stark white walls with no trim or embellishment as not to interfere with the abstract simplicity of color, best seen in the Rothko room (opposite, bottom left) also known as the Chapel.

Fig 5.11 The Phillips Collection

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

The Hirshhorn was a unique experience for Jenny, as the building approach was quite different to the other museums she had visited thus far. The Hirshhorn, which houses an extensive collection of modern sculpture, seemed to portray itself as a work of sculpture as well. Whether or not this treatment benefitted the experience of the visitor was another story, perhaps different for each museum visitor.

The central exterior courtyard with fountain seemed to be a lot of wasted space, but it did give an interesting back drop to the sculpture that was displayed along the circular corridor that faced the inner courtyard. The modern galleries below ground were treated similar to other museums thus mentioned, large white walls and wide open spaces.

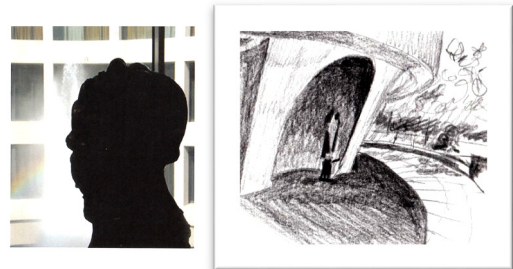


Fig 5.12 Hirshhorn Museum

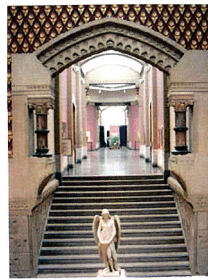


Fig 5.13 Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Art

Jenny then traveled to Philadelphia and made several discoveries that greatly impacted her design process. Her first stop was the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Art, the oldest art school in the country, which also houses a museum. It was interesting to see how this art school built upon its own history, and though there were a lot of similarities to her own thoughts and ideas of how to bring together an art school and museum, along with the past and future, this school's approach was to have two separate buildings. One building was more historic and it housed the museum. The other was more modern and housed the majority of the art school. Jenny appreciated their approach, but wanted to see these problems addressed in ONE building.

Her most surprising and influential discovery during her research was found in the Brancusi gallery in the Philadelphia Museum of Art. This had a large impact on the final design concept. This gallery contained overhead walkways of a mysterious nature. It was unclear who had access to them and how they were even accessible. The walkways also created a unique niche to place sculptures underneath. In this gallery was where Jenny had the initial idea of creating the school system as an interweaving "ethereal world" that existed above the world of the museum

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

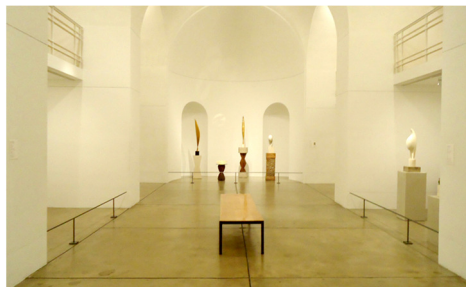


Fig 5.14 Philadelphia Museum of Art, www.philamuseum.org

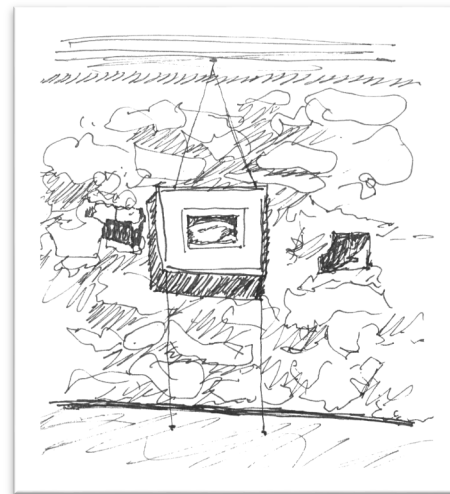


Fig 5.15 Photos and Sketches of the Mattress Factory, Pittsburgh, PA

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

THE EXPERIENCE OF LIGHT AND COLOR

When Jenny visited the Mattress Factory in Pittsburgh, PA, she fell in love with the “raw” feel of the gallery, with rough stone walls and floor and exposed rough cut wooden beams exposed at the roof. The building was also not sound proof, so you could hear the creaking floor above and water through the pipes. The paintings on the first floor didn’t actually touch the rough wall, they were suspended by wires (see opposite)

The exhibits were the highlight though, Jenny’s first experience of the work of James Turrell. She had never before seen light and color used in art in such pure forms and experienced 3-dimensionally. There were rooms you would enter where you would be surrounded by red light, to the point that you could almost feel it weighing down on you. In a similar room where she experienced the color blue, it had an almost floating effect.

She felt that this was the next generation of what the DC Colorists were trying to achieve on a 2-dimensional surface. James Turrell’s exhibit allows one to step into the painting, no longer restricted by the canvas or paint limitations, but to experience the color with all the senses.

This led Jenny to consider the use of light and color in her building as well. Some studies of light and dark are shown on pages 54-55 of this publication.

"I am dealing with no object. Perception is the object. Secondly, I am dealing with no image, because I want to avoid association, symbolic thought. Thirdly, I am dealing with no focus or particular place to look. With no object, no image and no focus, what are you looking at? You are looking at you looking."

James Turrell

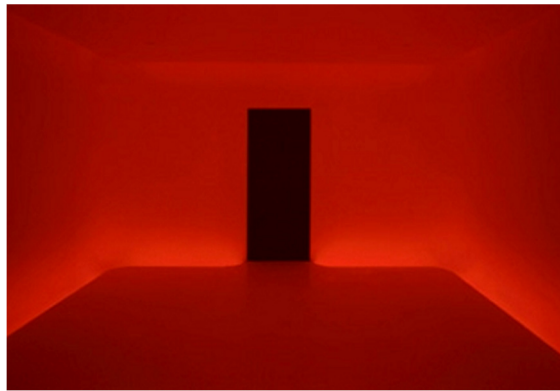


Fig 5.16 *Lunette*, James Turrell



Fig 5.17 *Catso (White)*, James Turrell

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

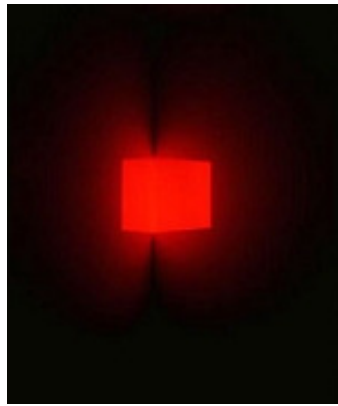


Fig 5.18 *Catso (Red)*, James Turrell



Fig 5.19 *Gard Blue*, James Turrell

I was raised as a Quaker and they always talked about going inside to greet the light. I was interested in that. Not only in the visible light but in the light seen with the eyes closed, the light and color in dreams."

James Turrell, Gasworks



Fig 5.21 Sketch of *Portal Room*, Robert Irwin



Fig 5.22 Sketch of *Window Room Exterior*, Robert Irwin

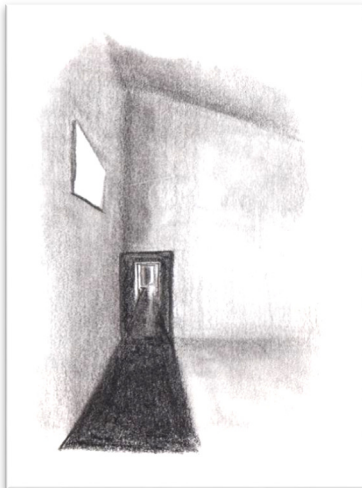


Fig 5.23 Sketch of *Arhirit*, James Turrell

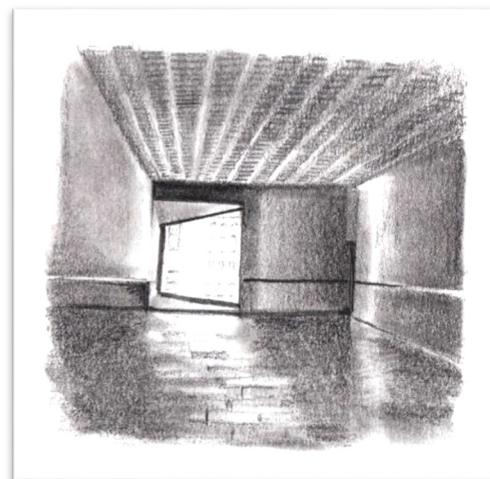


Fig 5.24 Sketch of *Screen Veil-Black Rectangle - Natural Light*, Robert Irwin

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

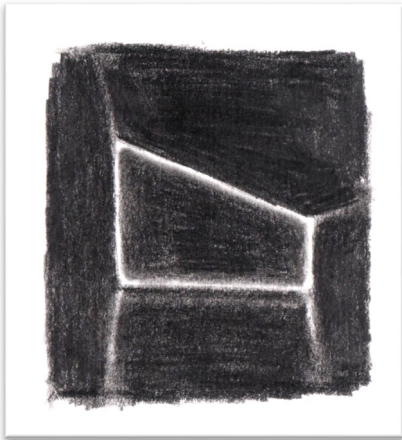


Fig 5.25 Sketch of *Untitled*, Douglas Wheeler

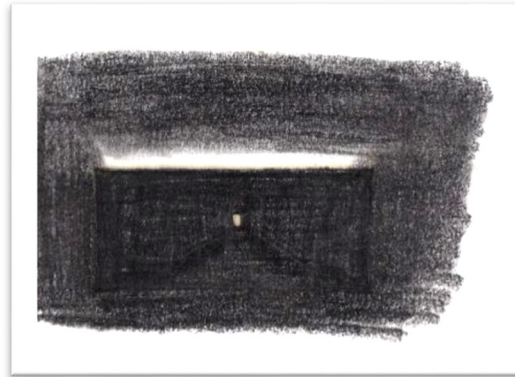


Fig 5.26 Sketch of *This Side and Beyond*, Susan Kaiser Vogel,



Fig 5.27 Sketch of Noashima Art Center, Tadao Ando

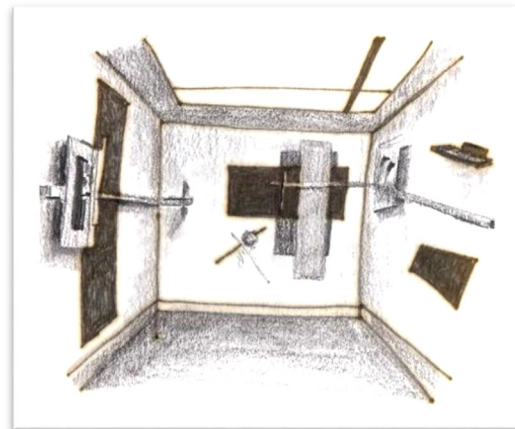


Fig 5.28 Sketch of *Proun Space*, El Lissitzky

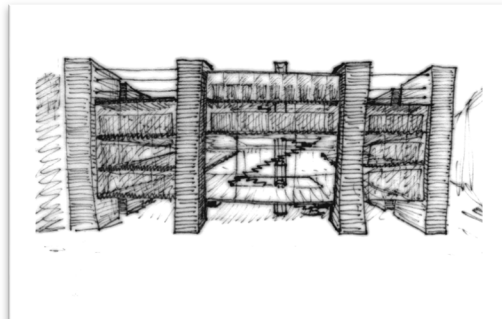
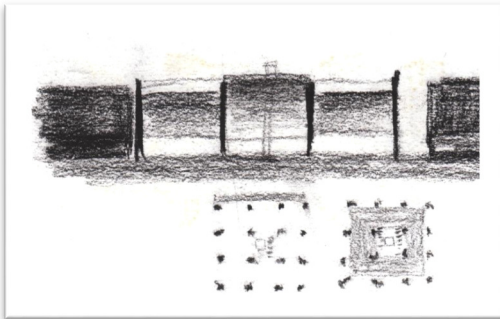
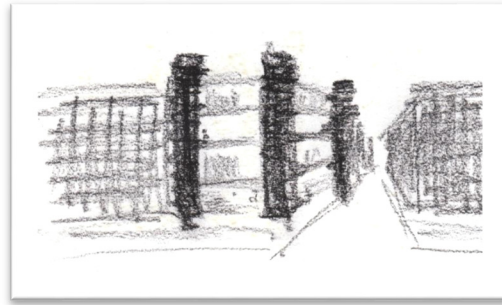
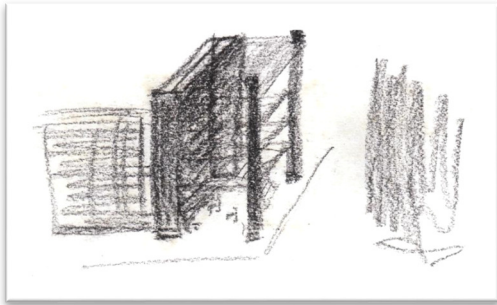


Fig 5.29 Sketches of Mass Modeling on Site

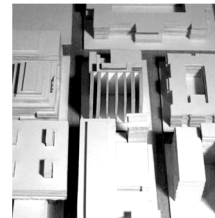
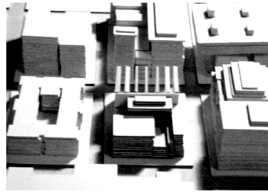
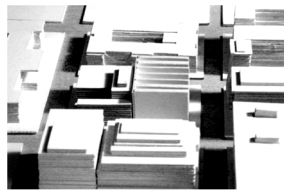


Fig 5.30 Early Site Model

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

Her conclusion after all this research, was to create a museum space that was open to many different interpretations and applications of learning techniques and displays of work. This approach would make the museum accessible to all ages, races and cultural backgrounds. By allowing for many different approaches to learning, each museum guest should optimally gain knowledge and understanding of art and the culture of DC from at least a portion of the museum displays.

This open approach, creating a museum building that acts as a canvas itself, is also the best suited to educate the up and coming artists and museum studies students that will be attending the college as well.

As Jenny first began to design her museum in her sketchbook over 10 years ago now, her initial sketches were mass models (see left) where she began to address where service areas and structural support would be located in relation to the site.

As she flipped back through these early sketches, she observed the decision to create a series of large walls or columns to represent the historical aspect of the museum portion. She also considered placing the service elements on the north wall abutting the preexisting building.

“From an aesthetic point of view, these new museum designs cover a wide range, from the wildly inventive to the coolly restrained. But the most intriguing among them are able, like the Pompidou in Metz, to move past tired arguments about how respectful a building is — or isn't — to the artwork on view. Instead they provoke a conversation broad enough to include museum identity, neighborhood character, transit networks and urban form. Instead of art versus architecture, or the white box versus the eye-catching icon, these designs make clear that the more interesting relationship is between the museum and the city — or cities, as is the case with the Pompidou, the Guggenheim, the Louvre and other museums with expanding architectural portfolios around the globe.”

Christopher Hawthorne, L.A. Times



Fig 6.1 Portico of the National Gallery West Building

THE TWO BECOME ONE

THE MARRIAGE OF HISTORY & INNOVATION

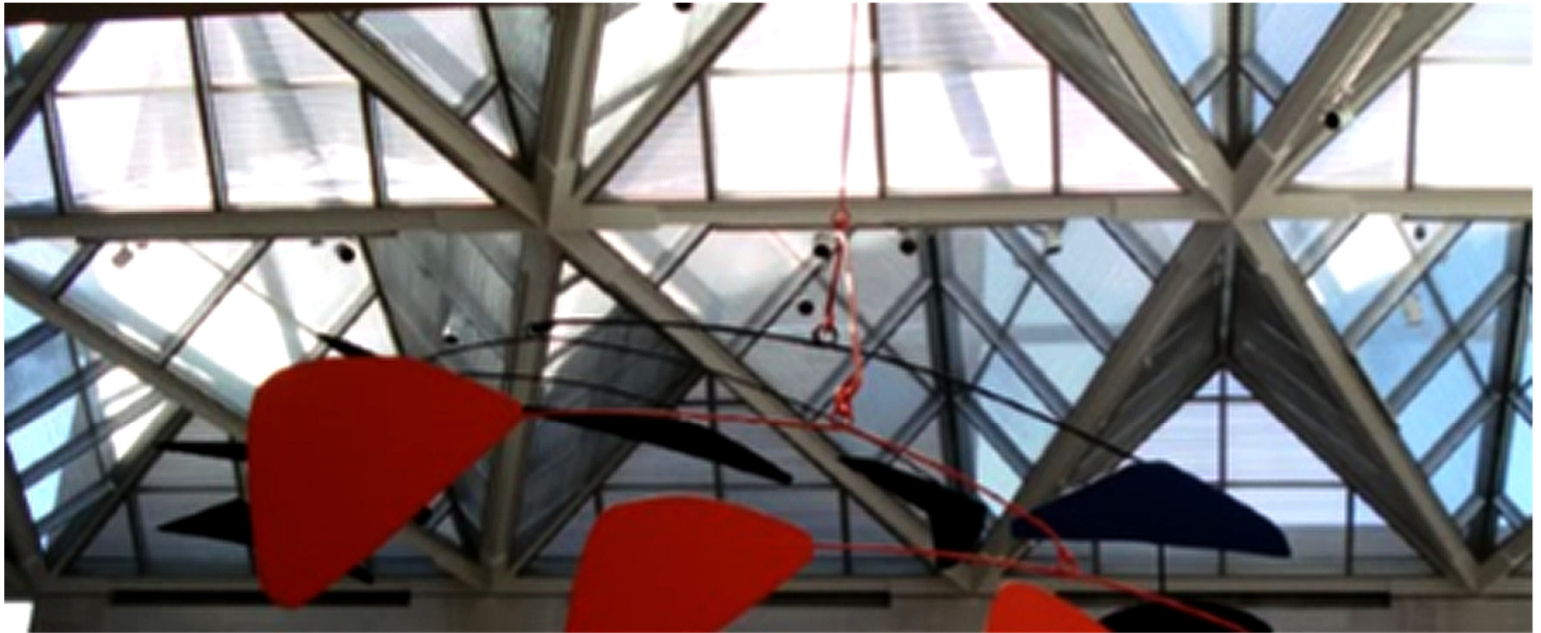


Fig 6.2 Atrium Space of the East Building

*The most beautiful thing we can experience is
the mysterious.*

Albert Einstein

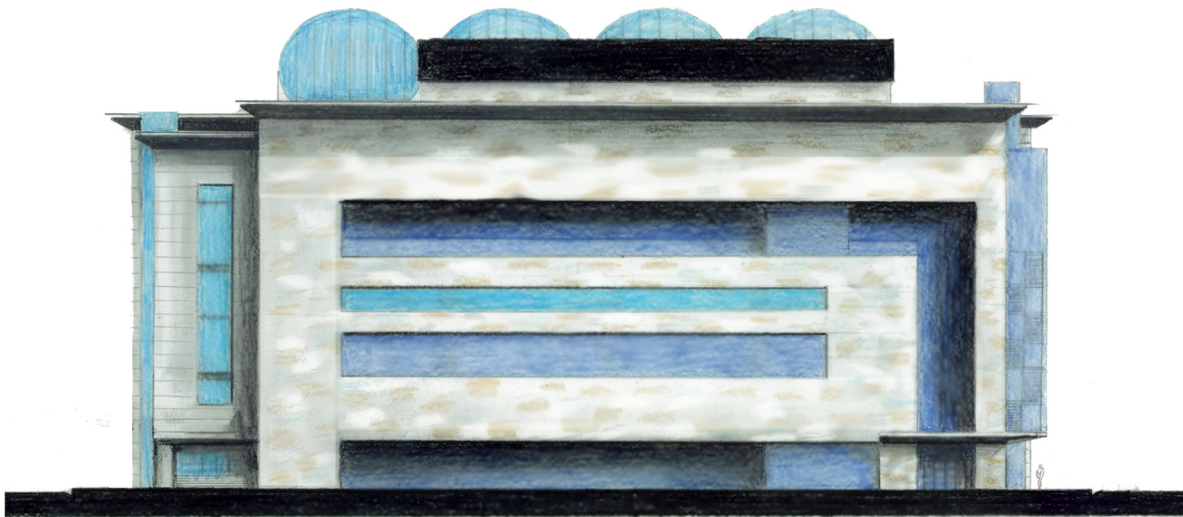


Fig 6.3 Front (South) Facade

12' 36'



Fig 6.4 West Facade

16' 48'



Fig 6.5 East Facade

16' 48'

THE TWO BECOME ONE

THE MARRIAGE OF HISTORY & INNOVATION

Jenny took the last sip of her latte and she packed her old sketchbooks back into her handbag. She couldn't wait to explore the building for herself and record her own experience of history and innovation, very personal for her, coming together in this one building.

She began to take a stroll around the building. She immediately observed the museum section of the building, and its monolithic nature, with large concrete walls of limestone that give reference to the capital's historic landmarks. The main circulation elements of the building were expressed as continuous columns on the exterior. Facing the east façade of the building, her eyes were drawn to the Grand Stair that cantilevered over the sidewalk and was encased in glass, as if it was a piece of art itself on display for passersby on the busy city streets.

She then began to notice how the building differentiated between college and museum spaces. One way was by the color of the glazing. The museum had a dark blue glazing, while the college had a lighter aqua blue color. The front façade glazing was reminiscent of the horizontal stripes of color so prevalent in the D.C. Colorists' work.

Also from the exterior, the museum's stone cladding was of varied sizes and color (and larger in scale) as opposed to the college's more uniform

stone cladding organized in distinct horizontal bands and of one color, one of the many colors included in the museum cladding. Both of these exterior treatments show that the two functions of the building were complementary yet distinct.

The entrance to the museum was on the east corner of the façade, and the college entrance was on the west. Both entrances are framed by a column at the outer corner, the museum's column of large stone and the college's of sleek steel. The college portion of the building is also recessed back from the museum portion about 16'.

As Jenny entered the lobby of the museum, her eye was drawn to the large brightly lit atrium space that spanned the east/west axis of the building, a clerestory window at roof level that allowed light in from the north, a curious orientation for a skylight. Imperceptible to most visitors, the skylight seemed to be in direct dialogue with the light cones of the school space that act as a culmination to each of the gallery bays. The cones were ever increasing in diameter as they reached the roof, and they had a glass that was facing south and tilted towards the sky. In this way, the two seemed to be in dialogue with one another... as if the museum glazing was making the statement "history can only look back," while the school's cones were saying "the future is boundless! The sky's the limit."

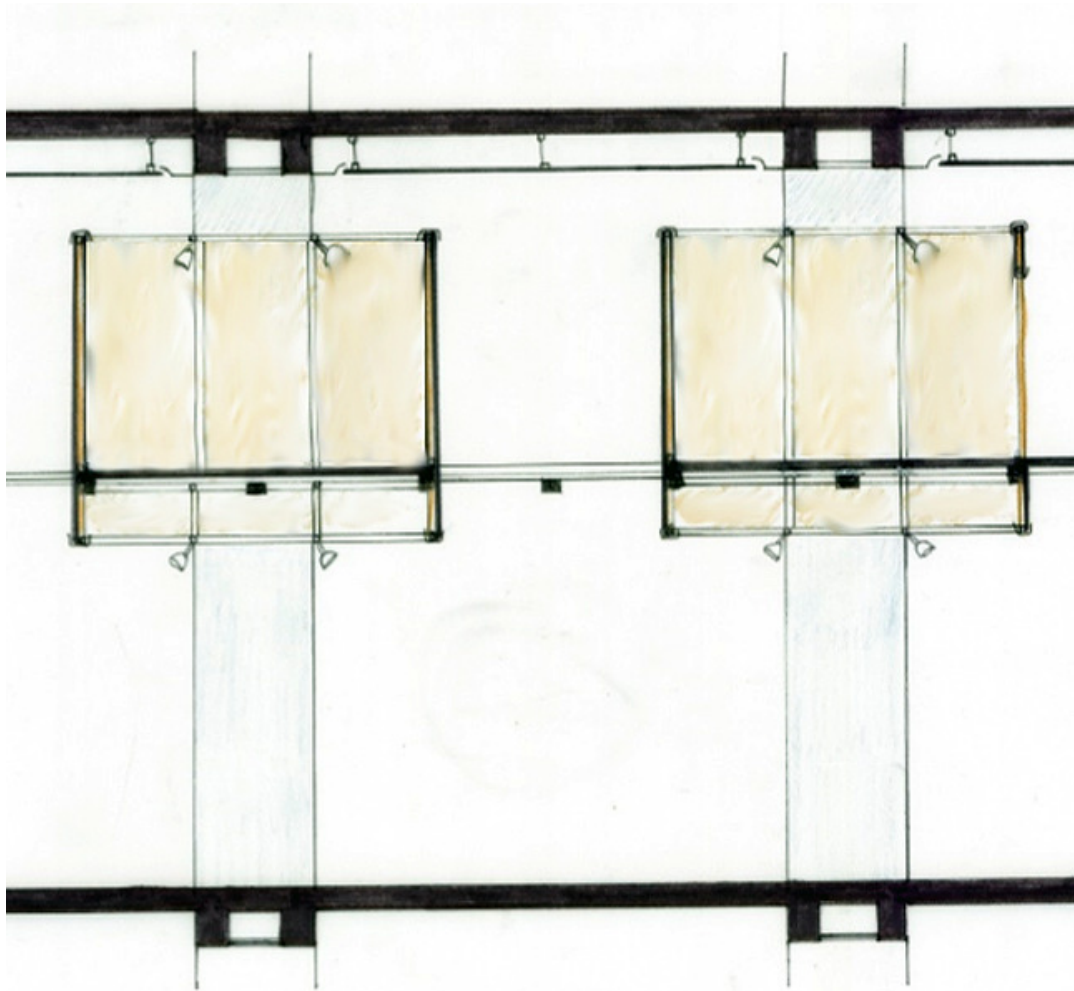


Fig 6.6 Structural System of the College, Detail of Library

18 5

THE TWO BECOME ONE

As she took in the full atrium space, she noticed a secondary structural system interwoven into the fabric of the massive stone structure of the museum. A light steel structure peeked out into the atrium via interspersed walkways that spanned the atrium space. In contrast to the monolithic massive concrete walls and columns of the museum portion of the building, which represents history and the lessons of the past, as well as the generations that have gone before, the college portion of the building represented the future and what lies ahead.

It was constructed of lightweight steel that had the appearance of hanging from and weaving in and out of the museum's massive structure. It gave the impression of soaring to new heights while still receiving support and 'lift-off' so to speak, from the museum structure. It symbolized that innovation is birthed and supported by the lessons of the past and is not separate from.

Jenny also felt this speaks of the joining of the generations, where one generation's ceiling becomes the next generation's floor. This is healthy innovation that is sustainable.

Many of the rooms on the college floors become lanterns in appearance to the museum floors below. The structure of these rooms is steel framing clad with a translucent amber material, either sandblast-

ed tinted glass or thin onyx sheets, depending upon the budget. With lighting from the inside, these "lanterns" glow amber in color and extend below the college floor level about 3 feet. The lighting elements for the galleries below can be attached to these, reinforcing the lantern effect.

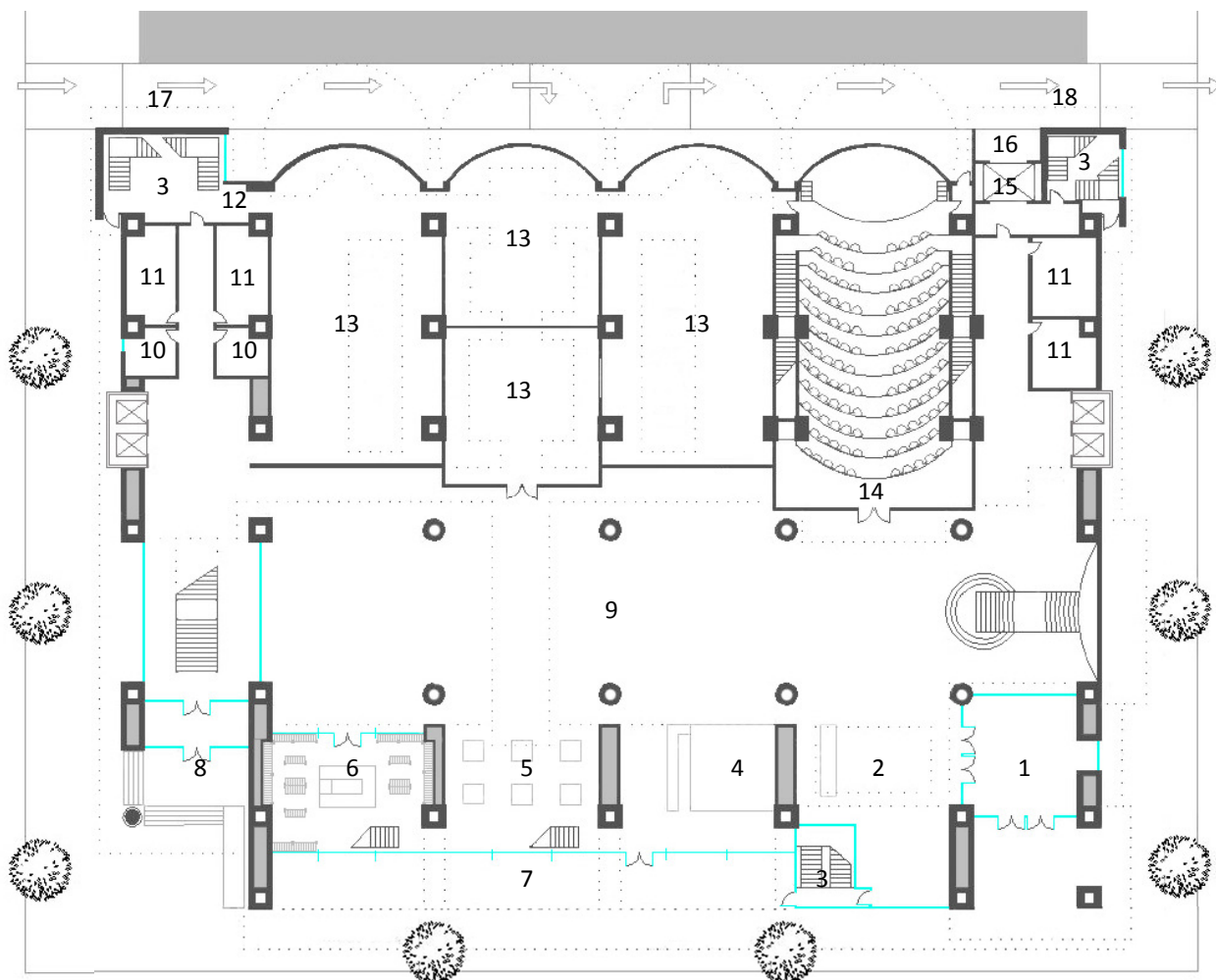


Fig 6.7 First Floor Plan

- | | | | |
|-------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|--------------------|
| 1 Museum Entrance | 6 Museum Shop | 11 WC | 16 Loading Dock |
| 2 Lobby | 7 Outdoor Café | 12 Storage | 17 Garage Entrance |
| 3 Fire Stair | 8 College Entrance | 13 Permanent Collection | 18 Garage Exit |
| 4 Kitchen | 9 Atrium | 14 Auditorium | |
| 5 Café | 10 Staff | 15 Service Elevator | |

THE TWO BECOME ONE

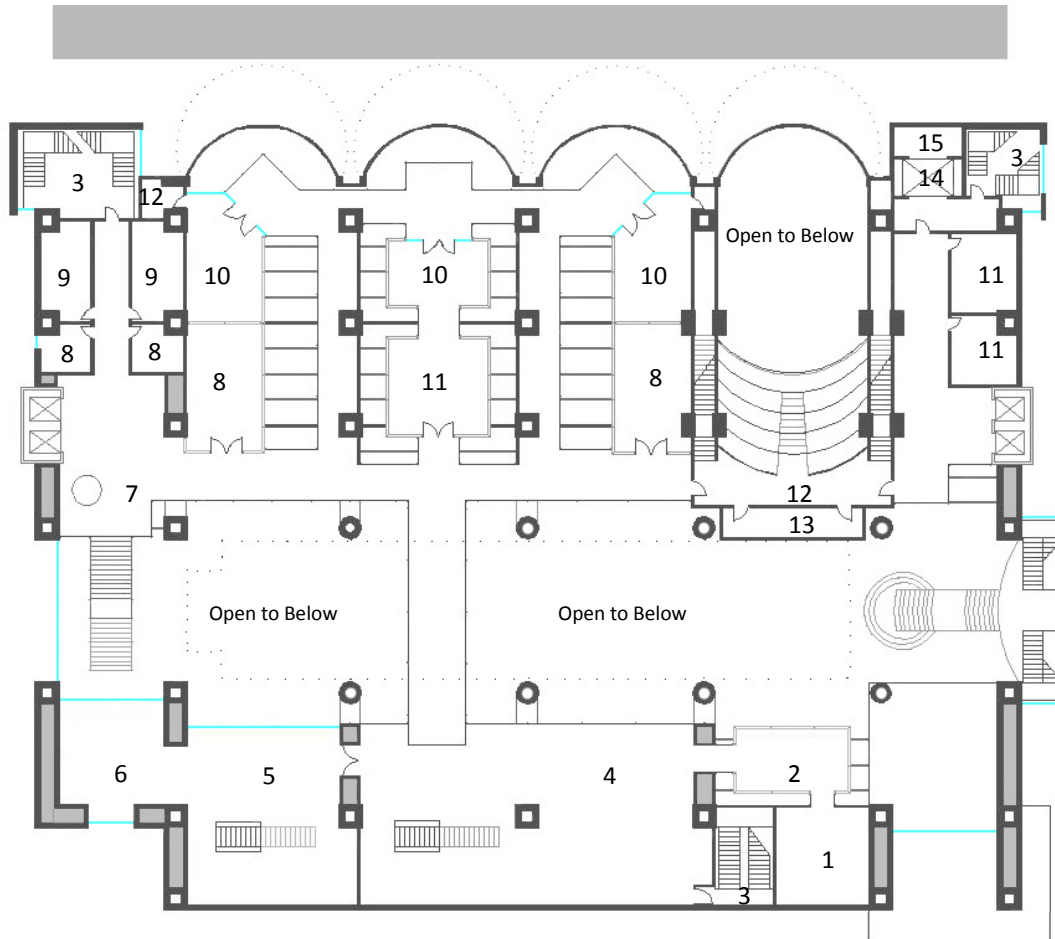


Fig 6.8 Second Floor Plan

- | | | |
|---------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|
| 1 Computer Lab | 6 Reading Room | 11 Lecture Classroom |
| 2 Copy/Print Lab | 7 College Lobby | 12 Auditorium Balcony |
| 3 Fire Stair | 8 Faculty | 13 A/V Room |
| 4 Student Lounge | 9 WC | 14 Service Elevator |
| 5 College Bookstore | 10 Studio Classroom | 15 Storage |

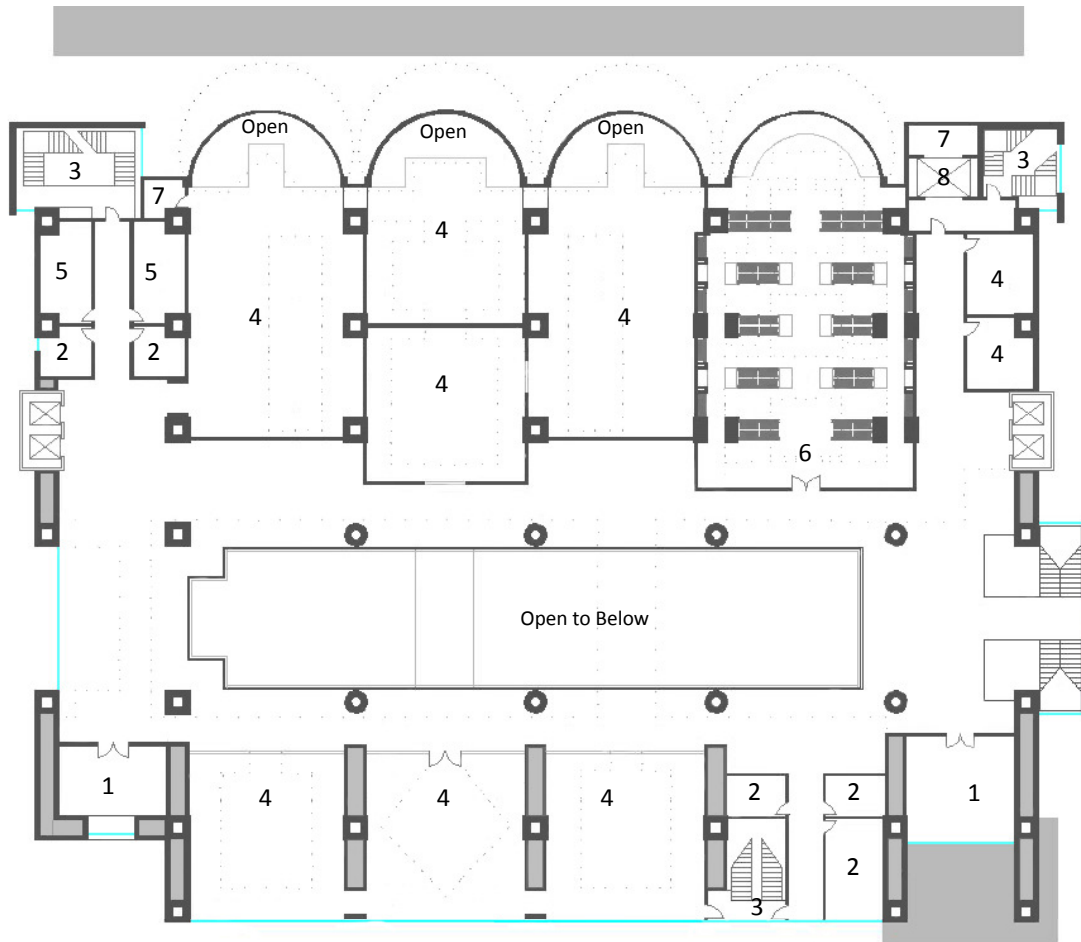
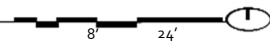


Fig 6.9 Third Floor Plan

- | | | | |
|---|--------------------|---|------------------|
| 1 | Conference Room | 6 | Library |
| 2 | Staff | 7 | Storage |
| 3 | Fire Stair | 8 | Service Elevator |
| 4 | Changing Galleries | | |
| 5 | WC | | |



THE TWO BECOME ONE

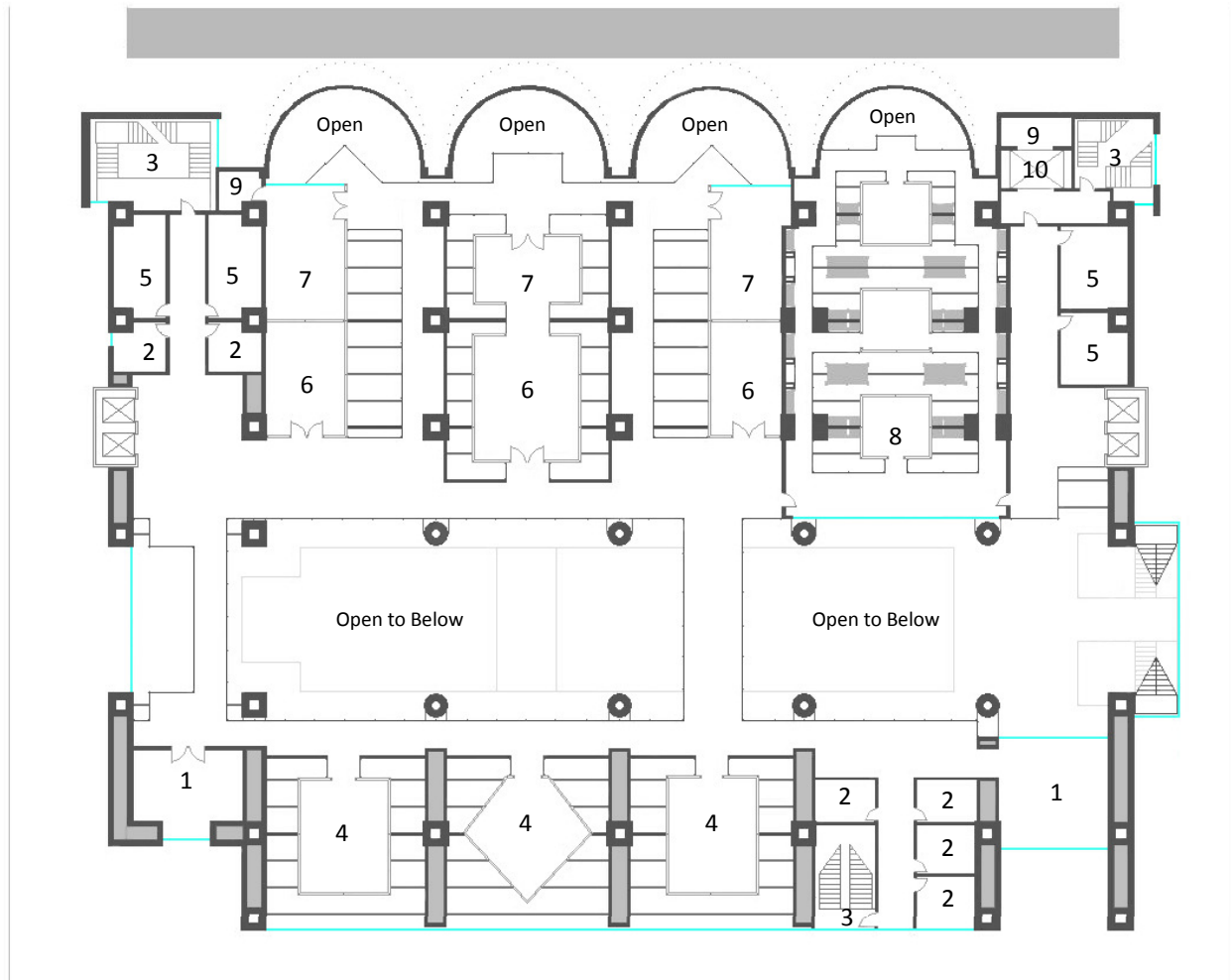


Fig 6.10 Fourth Floor Plan

- | | |
|-------------------|---------------------|
| 1 Conference Room | 6 Lecture Classroom |
| 2 Faculty | 7 Studio Classroom |
| 3 Fire Stair | 8 Library Balcony |
| 4 Student Studios | 9 Storage |
| 5 WC | 10 Service Elevator |

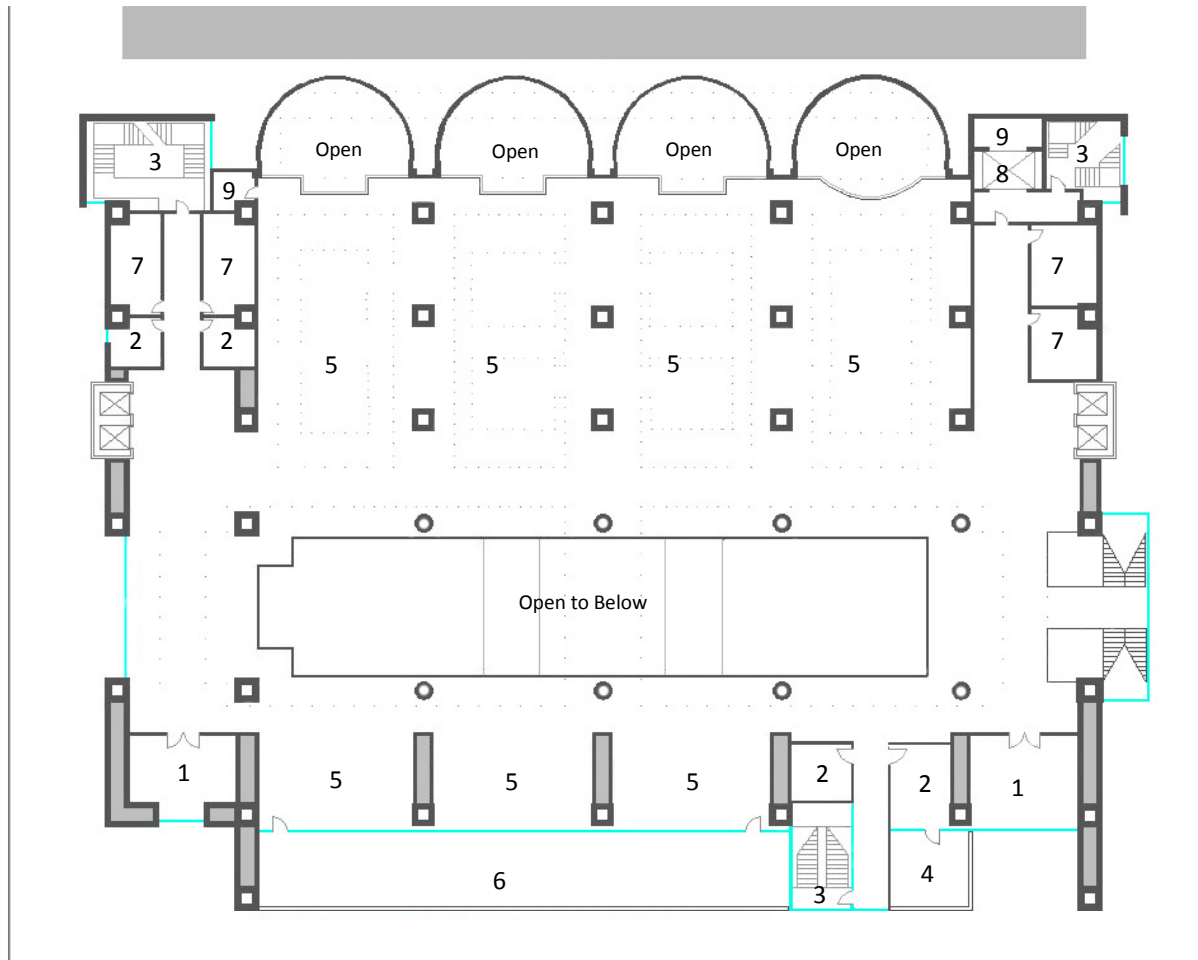


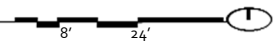
Fig 6.11 Fifth Floor Plan

- | | | | |
|---|--------------------|---|-------------------------|
| 1 | Conference Room | 6 | Outdoor Sculpture Patio |
| 2 | Staff | 7 | WC |
| 3 | Fire Stair | 8 | Service Elevator |
| 4 | Staff Patio | 9 | Storage |
| 5 | Open Gallery Space | | |

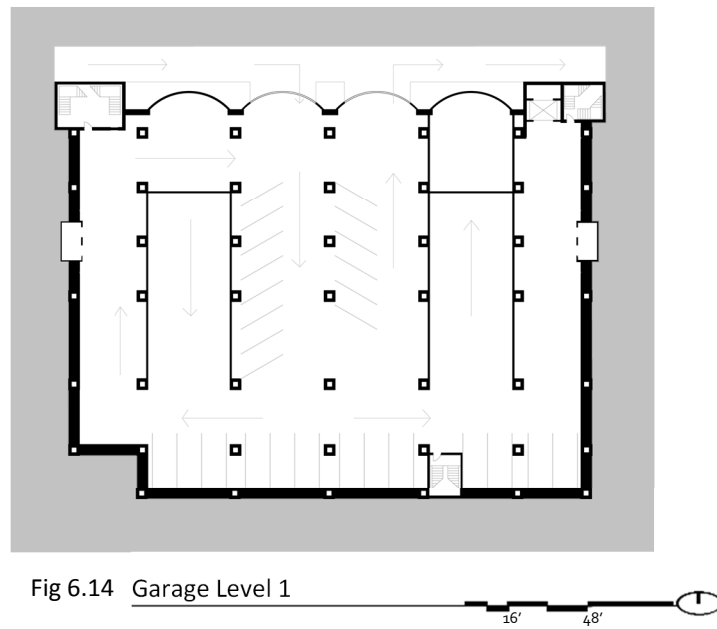
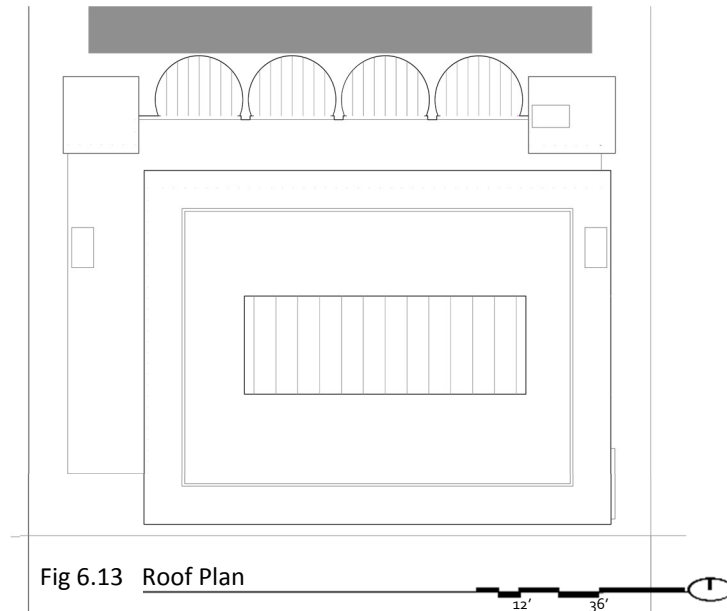
THE TWO BECOME ONE



Fig 6.12 Sixth Floor Plan



- | | | |
|--------------------|---------------------|------------|
| 1 Conference Room | 6 Light Studio | 11 Storage |
| 2 Faculty | 7 WC | |
| 3 Fire Stair | 8 Classroom | |
| 4 Photography Lab | 9 Student Studios | |
| 5 Recording Studio | 10 Service Elevator | |



THE TWO BECOME ONE

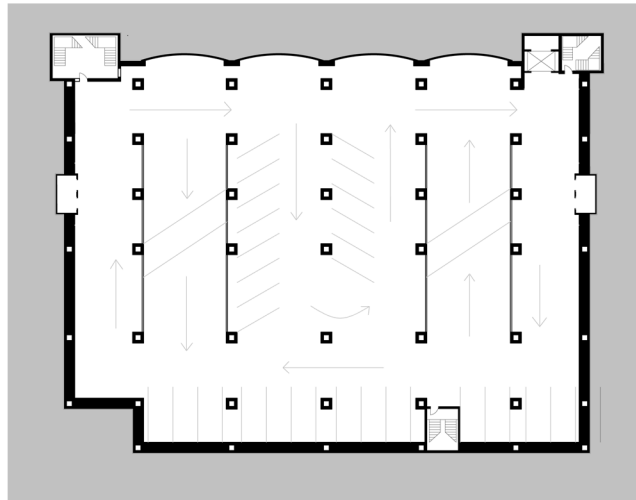


Fig 6.15 Garage Level 2

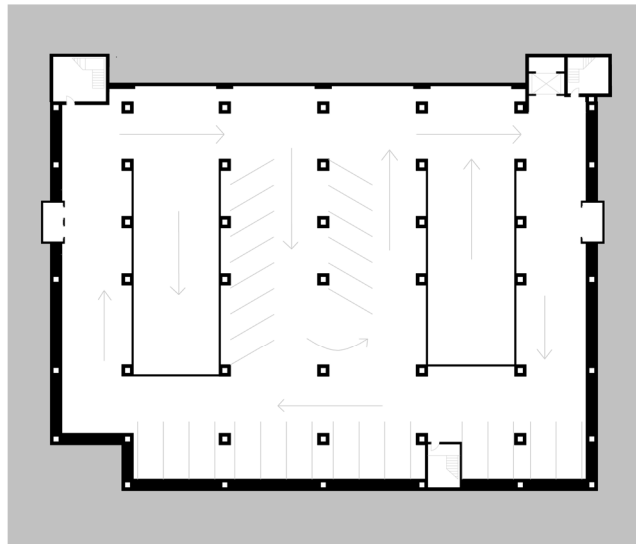
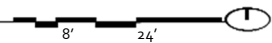


Fig 6.16 Garage Level 3



Fig 6.17 Section through E/W axis looking North



THE TWO BECOME ONE

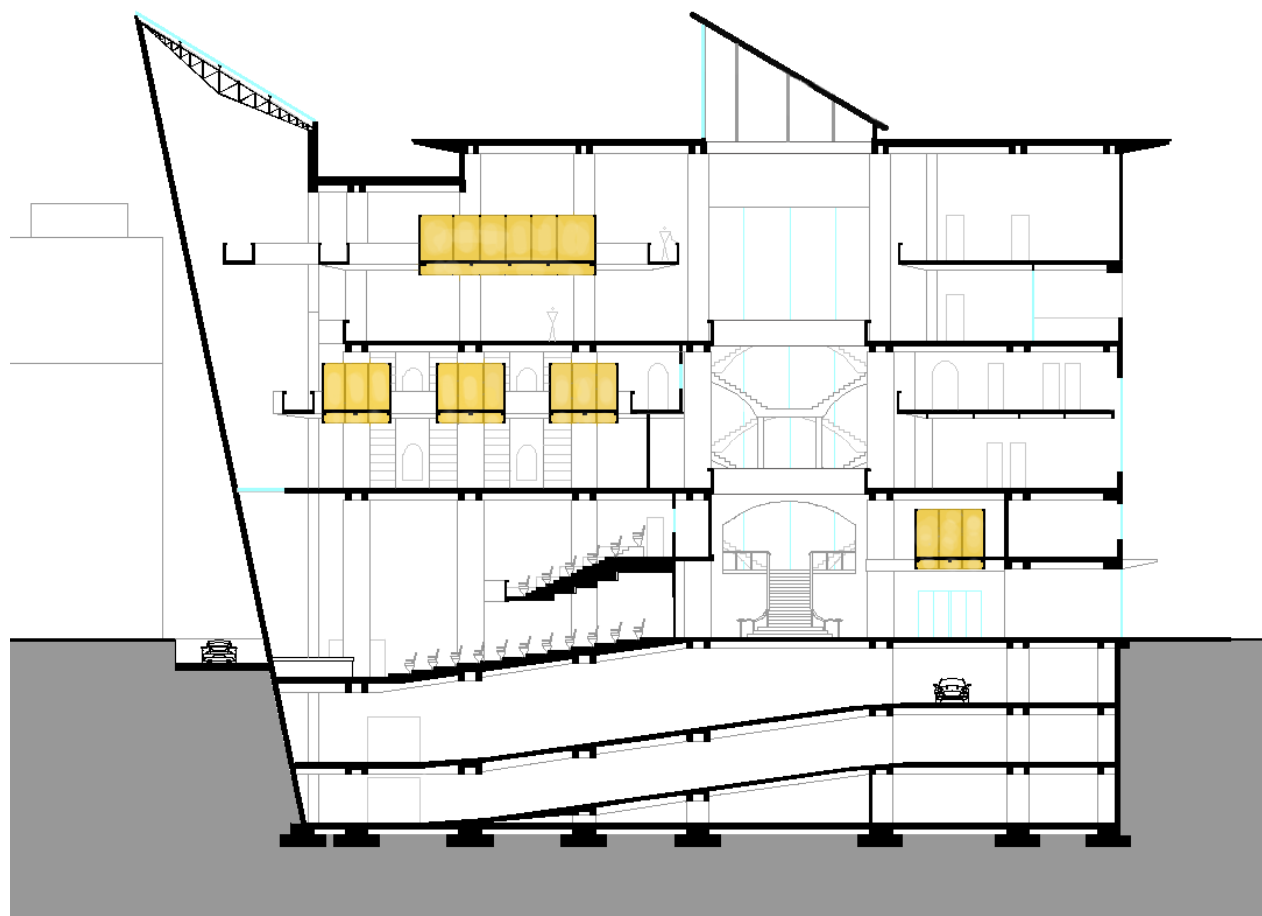
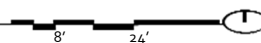


Fig 6.18 Section through N/S axis looking East



*The purpose of art is not a rarified, intellectual
distillate– it is life, intensified, brilliant life .*

Alain Arias-Messon

A DAY IN THE LIFE

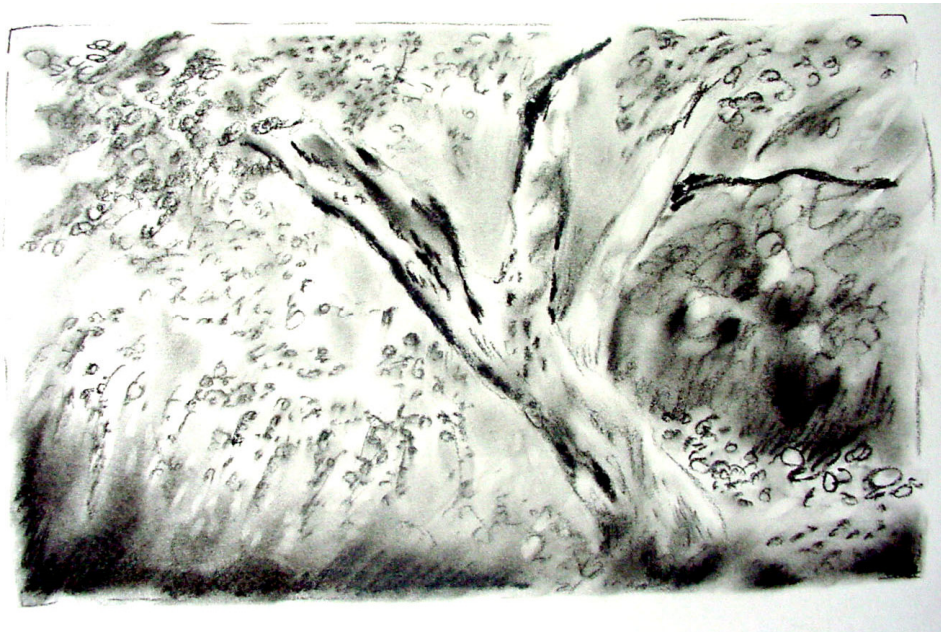


Fig 7.1 *The Tree of Life*, by Author

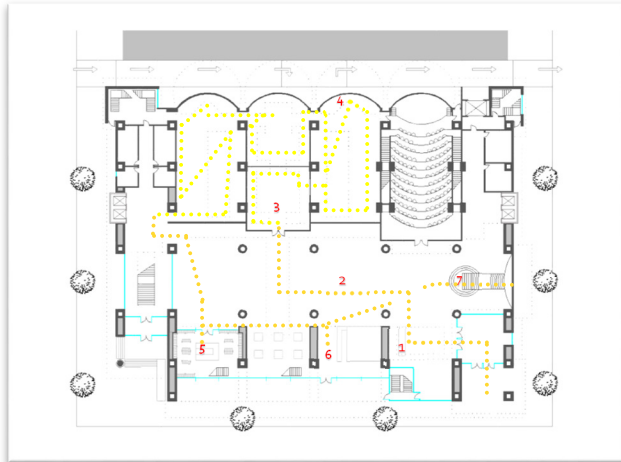


Fig 7.2 Diagram of Tour through Floor 1



Fig 7.3 Diagram of Tour through Floor 3

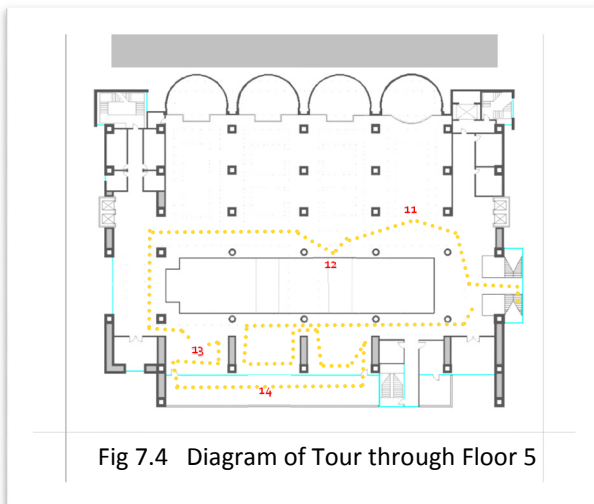


Fig 7.4 Diagram of Tour through Floor 5

...OF A MUSEUM VISITOR

Jenny decided to first tour the building as a regular museum visitor. She first stopped at the reception desk in the lobby (1) to pick up her museum map. Then she proceeded to the permanent collection, the D.C. Colorists to enjoy the work of her father.

She traveled through the open atrium space (2) toward the permanent collection (3). It was housed in 4 rooms. The second room ended at the back in a cone with natural light streaming down from above (4). She stood at the bottom and looked up to see the cone increasing in size as it soared up to its glass pinnacle. She could see all the other floors above as they cantilevered out into the cone space.

The permanent collection was displayed in the classical approach, large white walls and hardwood floors, no trim or frills to mirror the works themselves.

Upon exiting the permanent collection, she decided to visit the museum store (5) and the café (6) to pick up a gelato before venturing up the grand staircase (7) to the other galleries on floors 3 and 5.

On floor 3, Jenny proceeded to the galleries that house the changing exhibits (8). These galleries are similar to the permanent collection on the 1st floor, however the wall treatments can be changed to accommodate the current exhibit.

Upon exiting the changing exhibit galleries, Jenny made her way to the small gallery spaces on the south side of the building (9). These spaces had floor to ceiling windows that looked out upon E street.

From there, Jenny took the Grand Stair (10) again up to the 5th floor. These galleries (11) were reserved for student work, and they were currently under construction for the next student exhibit. Before moving on, she took a moment to look down over the atrium space (12) and enjoyed some people-watching as the students went to and fro across the walkways that traversed the atrium space.

She then headed over to the smaller galleries on the south end (13) of the building that opened up to an outdoor balcony that housed large sculptures (14). From here, she took the grand staircase back down to the first floor to begin her next adventure.

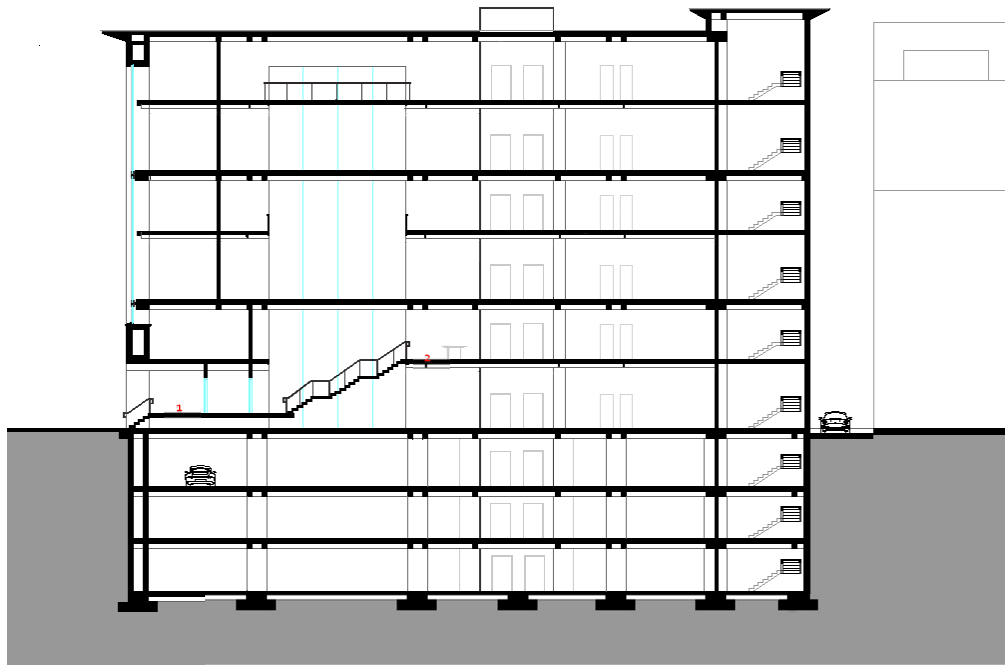


Fig 7.5 Section through College Entrance Stair and Service Bay

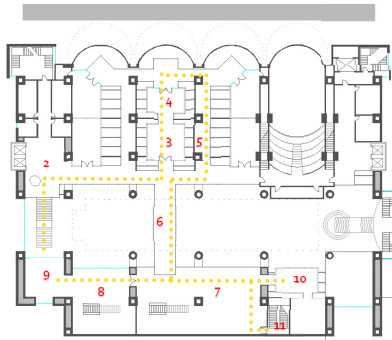
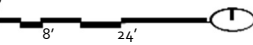


Fig 7.6 Diagram of Tour through Floor 2

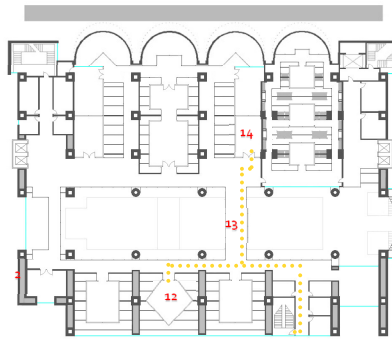


Fig 7.7 Diagram of Tour through Floor 4

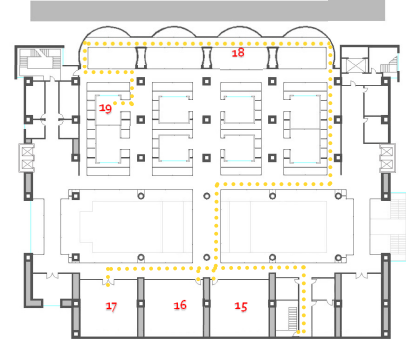


Fig 7.8 Diagram of Tour through Floor 6

...OF AN ART STUDENT

Jenny then meandered over to the college entrance (1) and asked a student entering if she had time to give her a tour of the school. Her name was Naomi and she cheerfully obliged. They entered the glass double doors and proceeded up the steel staircase that seemed suspended in the air, though upon closer look, it was supported by steel beams that tied in to the massive stone columns of the museum. The staircase led directly to the second floor, and to the reception desk and small lobby of the college (2).

From there, Naomi pointed out the classrooms (3) and studio spaces (4) and showed Jenny the unique walkways along the edges of the gallery spaces of the museum below (5). From here students could observe museum guests as they interacted with the artwork below.

From there, Naomi escorted Jenny across the walkway that transverses the atrium (6) to one of the students favorite spots, the student lounge (7) located over the museum café. This was connected to the college bookstore (8) that contained a quite reading room (9). Also located next to student lounge is the Computer and Copy/Print Labs (10).

From here, they took the stairs (11) up to the fourth floor where her personal studio space (12) was located. This is where Naomi spent most of her time,

being a senior working on her thesis project. Her studio space was shared with 5 others, in one of the "lantern" type rooms. They then traversed another walkway (13) across the atrium space to Naomi's next lecture class (14) on Art History.

After her class, Naomi showed Jenny around the 6th floor, the "attic" as the students nicknamed it. This level functions as a laboratory in some ways, where limited light is beneficial for labs spaces used for photography (15), sound and video recording (16), as well as a light studio (17).

Then Naomi showed Jenny her favorite part of the building, a pathway accessible only to the students that traversed all 4 cones (18), creating a unique backdrop for still lifes and models posing for student art classes. It was breathtaking to be inside the space of this massive cone of light, looking down to the ground floor. The handrails of this pathway also acted as steel beams to support the weight of the path.

Jenny joined Naomi for one of her painting studio classes (19) before she made her way back downstairs to see if she might be able to get the perspective of a Museum Studies student as well.

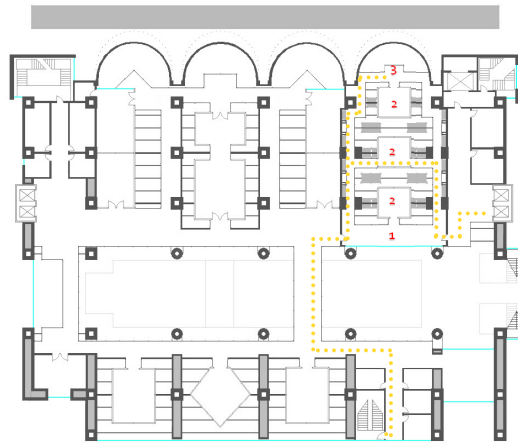


Fig 7.9 Diagram of Tour through Floor 4

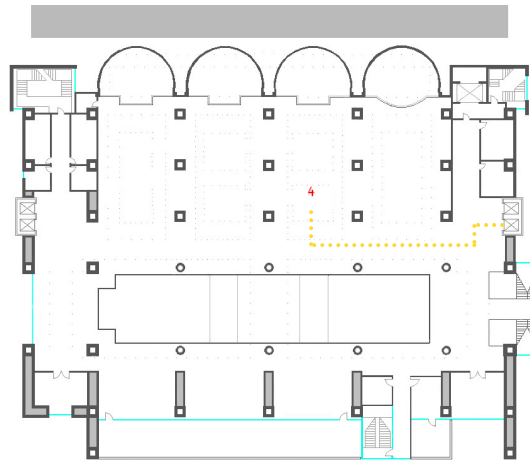


Fig 7.10 Diagram of Tour through Floor 5

...OF A MUSEUM STUDIES STUDENT

Jenny traveled back down to the student lounge to see if she could find herself a Museum Studies student to ask if she might be able to get a tour. She spotted a young man named Robert who was studying a stack of books on hermeneutics and epistemology. She could tell she had found her man. When asked, Robert graciously complied to give her a tour as he packed up his books and finished off the last bit of his mocha and bagel.

To begin, he asked if she had yet seen the library as he needed to return the books he had borrowed. Since she hadn't, he seemed genuinely excited to be the first to show her his favorite spot in the building.

"I adore the library!" he gushed as he led her across the walkway, "it's like the architect had me in mind when it was designed." That was quite a compliment, she thought. She just might like this young man, at least for his impeccable good taste, she joked to herself.

As they entered the library (1) from the fourth floor, her breath was almost taken away as she took in the whimsical 'lantern' study rooms and winding pathways that hung over the lower level. He was right. This had always been her favorite spot in the museum too, at least in her imaginings. Now here it was in the flesh. And it was stunning.

She loved how each study room (2) had a different access point and arrangement inside, and how the pathway wound itself around the perimeter of the walls lined with bookshelves. She also loved the overhang (3) at the north end that gave yet another incredible view of the light cones. She looked down on the bottom floor of the library to see that the floor towards the edge of the cone was made of glass to allow natural light but no sound to breach the ceiling of the auditorium below. (see next page)

She also loved the construction of the bookshelves. They seemed to represent the steel structure of the college on a smaller scale. They too were supported by the massive concrete columns of the museum structure.

After they spent time taking in the ethereal atmosphere, Robert led her up to the 5th floor of the museum to show her his current project. The 5th floor was dedicated to student work, and he was currently designing the displays for a student's final art show (4). The unique aspect of the 5th floor is that it acts as a canvas for the Museum Studies students. It contains no fixed walls, only columns for support of any structure and configuration they decide to build within it.

She could have spent all day with her new confidant, but it was time to get the faculty's point of view.

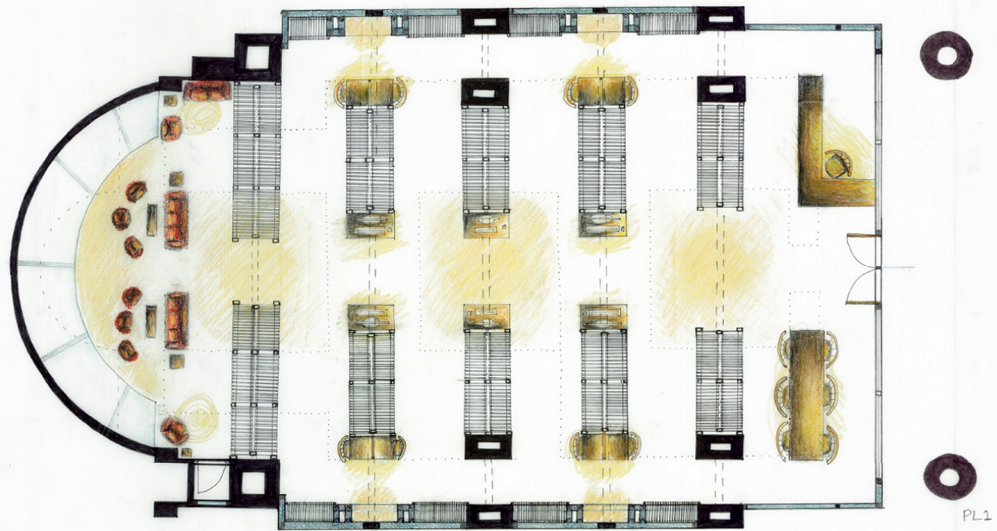


Fig 7.11 Library Floor Plan

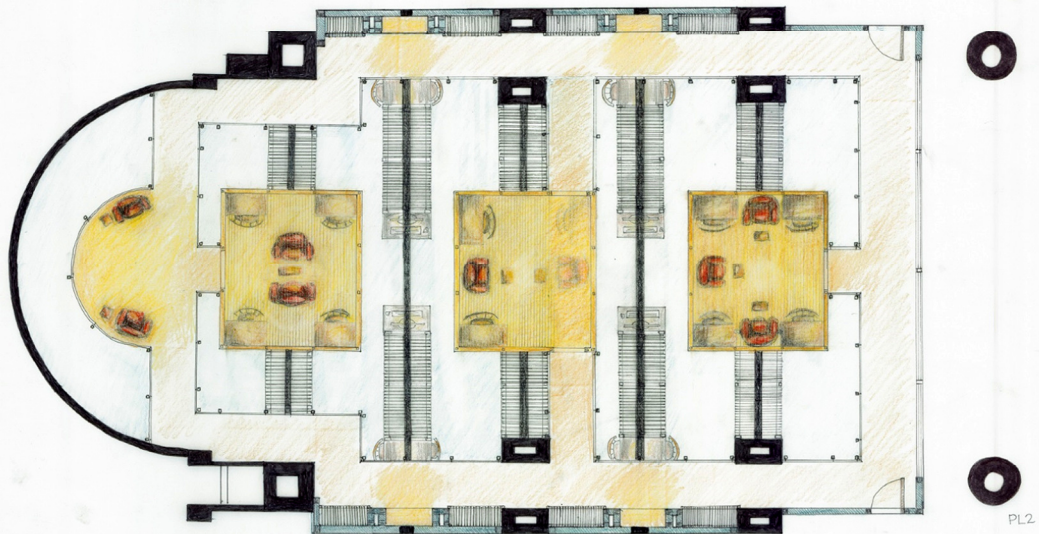


Fig 7.12 Library Balcony Floor Plan

A DAY IN THE LIFE

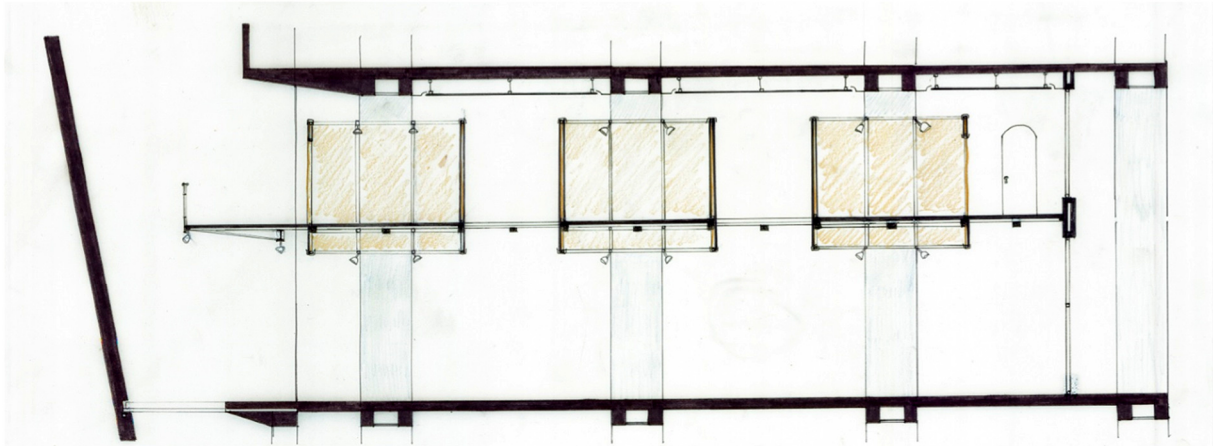


Fig 7.13 Library Section



Fig 7.14 Library Elevation

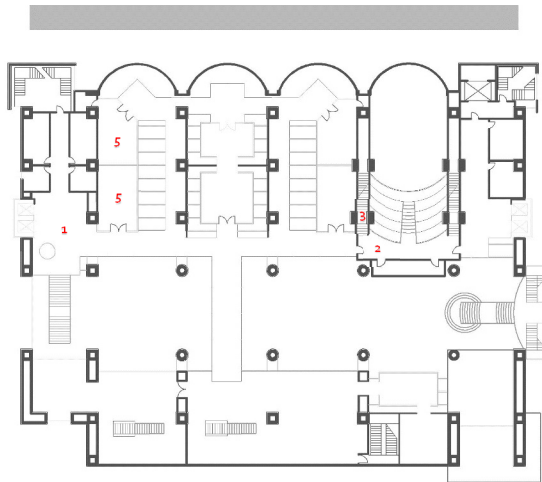


Fig 7.15 Diagram of Tour through Floor 2

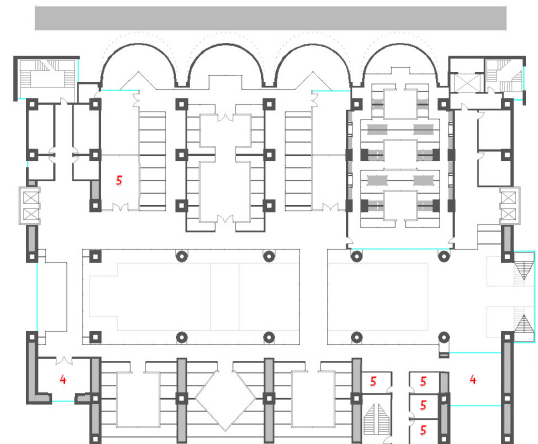


Fig 7.16 Diagram of Tour through Floor 4

...OF A FACULTY MEMBER

Jenny ventured down to the reception desk (1) for the college to see if any faculty members were available to share their view of the building. To her great joy, she came across four very friendly faculty members who were making their way to the auditorium (2) for the weekly Tuesday all-school meeting. They invited her along and they shared their experiences of the building along the way.

Marco gushed about the light cones and how they created a magical atmosphere for passion and the creative spirit. They seemed to reach up and capture heaven, bringing its light down into the world of the school and museum.

Susan shared how much she enjoyed the mysterious elements of the building, where the students had secret passages not accessible to the museum visitors by which they could observe the public's interaction with the art. This also created a sense of intrigue and another layer of experience for the visitors, she explained.

Paul shared his appreciation for the thought put in to the treatment of the fire stairs and other service elements that created beautiful moments in the building. He also complimented the exterior facades and how they begin to reveal something of the heart and character of the artists and artwork it contains and facilitates.

As we entered the auditorium from the balcony, Jaan shared his love for the little architectural moments that suddenly reveal themselves throughout the building, like the splitting of the column (3) that he pointed out to me as we walked through it to access the staircase going down to the first floor of the auditorium. (see next page)

The stairs were lit from below and also mirrored the college's steel structure on a smaller scale. The auditorium itself seats 172; 116 on the main floor and 56 in the balcony. It was used by the school during the day for large lecture classes and all-school meetings. At night it was often utilized by the public for guest speakers, musical concerts, foreign film showings and other cultural events.

The backdrop of the stage was one of the light cones which was lit by subtle natural light during the day, and could be illuminated by various colors of light from above at night.

Once the meeting was over, Susan was kind enough to show Jenny the special conference rooms (4) and faculty offices (5) dispersed throughout the 2nd, 4th and 6th floors. After this, it was getting late into the evening, and Jenny decided to ponder all she had experienced today over a bowl of soup and a glass of wine back down where she started, at the sidewalk café.

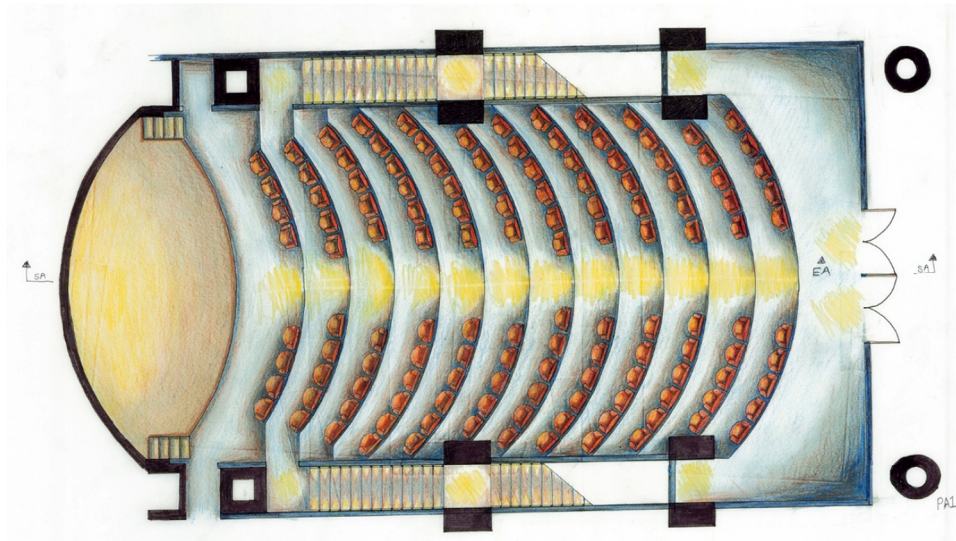


Fig 7.17 Auditorium Floor Plan

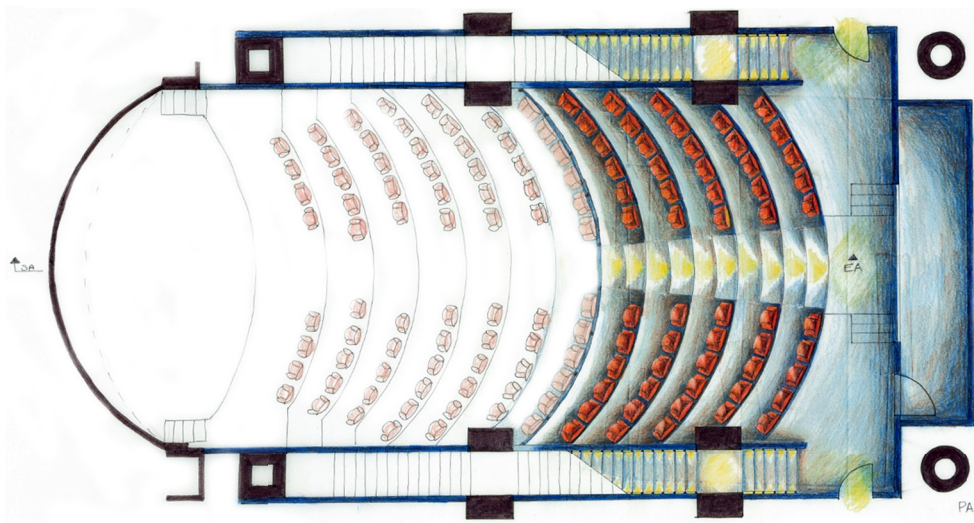
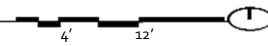
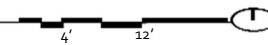


Fig 7.18 Auditorium Balcony Floor Plan



A DAY IN THE LIFE



Fig 7.19 Auditorium Elevation

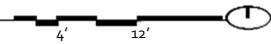
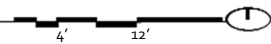


Fig 7.20 Auditorium Section



*The job of the artist is always to
deepen the mystery.*

Francis Bacon



Fig 8.1 *Ascending*, by Author

CONCLUSION

As Jenny sipped her glass of wine and considered all she had experienced today in this building that was the manifestation of so many years of training, dreaming and love for her father, she was truly amazed how everything had come full circle; what had been lost now was found; what had only been a dream had now become a reality.

This college and museum truly had become a place where D.C. residents could experience and learn about their unique history as a people and be able to participate in the innovation of the next generation of artists. Teachers and students were given a museum that would act as a canvas for new ideas, while always keeping a strong and sure foundation on the history that had gotten them thus far. Young artists were given a plethora of unique spaces and laboratories to create the dreams that only they could bring to life while observing how others experience the work of their hands and entered into their dream world with them. Jenny could relate.

It seemed that what they all had in common was that they were all living in Jenny's very own dream world, the work of her hands and the imaginations of her deepest heart and desire, come to life as well.

Jenny called her father and thanked him for making this dream become a reality, for believing in her when she didn't believe she could see it through, and for being so very patient with her. She knew her building wasn't perfect, far from it. But the path that was trodden to arrive at this place in her journey had given her the greatest treasure, the abundant life experienced all along the way.

I came that they may have life and have abundantly.

John 10:10

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