

# COMING AND GOING

ENTRY, EXIT AND TRANSITION PATHS AT THE MUSEUM ARE CENTRAL TO ITS FORM AND TO THE MUSEUM EXPERIENCE. ITS BEGINNING AND ENDING DO NOT HAPPEN AT THE DOORWAY NOR DO THEY HAVE THE SAME QUALITIES.

## ISSUES:

The experience of exiting is not the same as that of entering because the context is different. Time has passed; new ideas and museum fatigue have changed the visitor's point of view; logistical requirements are different.

Setting the Mood: Entering requirements include finding the museum, understanding the parking, and finding the front door. Aggravation at this stage probably works counter to the image the museum wants to create. On the other hand, a graceful arrival, thrilling procession to the door, or the sneer impact of the entry sets the mood.

Before proceeding upon the path, coats and extraneous bags, restrooms, a preview of what lies ahead and general information about the internal organization aid in getting ready, planning the visit, and choosing the right path.

Path Resolution: The organization of the main path within the museum determines how the entry and exit interact and provide a theme for their treatment. One-way paths and informal browsing suggest different approaches.

Good Memories: A poor exit experience establishes a postview that can taint an otherwise great time. Fighting the energetic surge of visitors coming in the door, being dumped abruptly on the street -- especially in a different place than where one entered -- can be disorienting and overwhelming, certainly interfering with the immediate past which is the primary museum experience. Postviews are important too.

Waiting: The place of exit is the natural gathering place for people waiting for others. A place to watch other people come and go is a form of retreat that can support a sense of community -- a place to meet casually and to be part of the action.

The mode of arrival and departure and the size of the groups affect the specified arrangements. Busloads of children require a large volume of space for unboarding and boarding and for orientation and waiting. Their activities can clog the entry and the beginning pathways in the museum. The support spaces for them may require a separate entry and exit area.

Controlled access: Security and admission fee collection require most museums to have a primary and single entry and exit location. The control function can be intimidating; however incorporated with other service functions it can present a friendly face.

#### QUALITIES AND CHARACTERISTICS:

The entering experience is an opportunity for setting the mood and previewing; the exiting experience is an opportunity for summations and conclusions, reflections, and for unexpected views back into the museum.

For both, the protracted transition can be a processional -- elegant, with grand stairs and ramps, a sequence of portals, and gurgling water, near and far, long and short views; or mysterious -- perhaps tunnel-like, dark and compressing with little hint of what lies beyond. It can be a series of spaces as in the traditional and classical design of entry/transition proceeding from the portal through the small space through the graduated large. These depend upon movement through space over time.

In contrast, a transition can be a space that has a strong impact, creates a particular ambience, or a contrast between coming and going. A decompression chamber, the choice of a restaurant by the door, a sculpture garden stroll are alternative entries and exits.

Both can begin long before the door that separates the inside from the outside.

#### APPROACHES TO DESIGN:

##### 1. THE DREAM BUBBLE:

If the entry and the exit are the same door visitors are backtracking when they leave. Shouldn't the museum experience be reflected in the termination of the path? An

abrupt entry is not as shocking as an abrupt exit. A strategically placed restaurant, store, reading room, waiting area provide an opportunity for lengthening the decompression from museum to street.

## 2. ALTERNATIVE PATHS:

The Indianapolis Children's Museum processes busloads of children through a special lower level area. The entry and exit gathering areas are divided by a wall that contains numbered coat racks. Each one holds a whole busload of coats and hats. They slide both ways. Besides convenience, the storage strategy is one last meaningful, fun exhibit.

## 3. WISER BUT TIREDER:

The dramatic difference between entry and exit is not always efficient or desirable. Maintaining the same general location symbolically provides summation and a reorientation to the outside. A slight difference reinforces the changed perspective.

Logistically, it separates the flow of human traffic and provides a spatial opportunity for storage, retreat, and vertical display.

## 4. THE GLORIFIED EXIT:

Many Disneyworld exhibits have totally separate entry and exit points. This sets up an opportunity for another perspective on the larger context and additional new input. It can be intriguing or stressful, unfolding and challenging.

## 5. INTEGRATING THE PATH:

Considering the arrival and departure sequence as extending beyond the confines of the museum proper provides opportunities for longer transitional spaces and integration of the surrounding outdoor context into the museum experience.

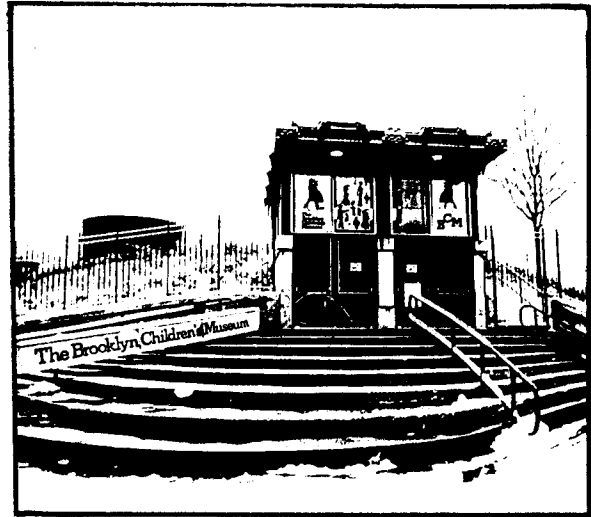
## 6. INTERNAL PATH

The appropriate beginning and ending strategy depends upon the nature of the internal path. Internal streets, indoor towns, concentric rings, one-way paths, romantic meanders, rational classics, informal yet majestic, and the rabbit warrens all have special qualities and demand particular treatment for the coming and going.

EXAMPLES:

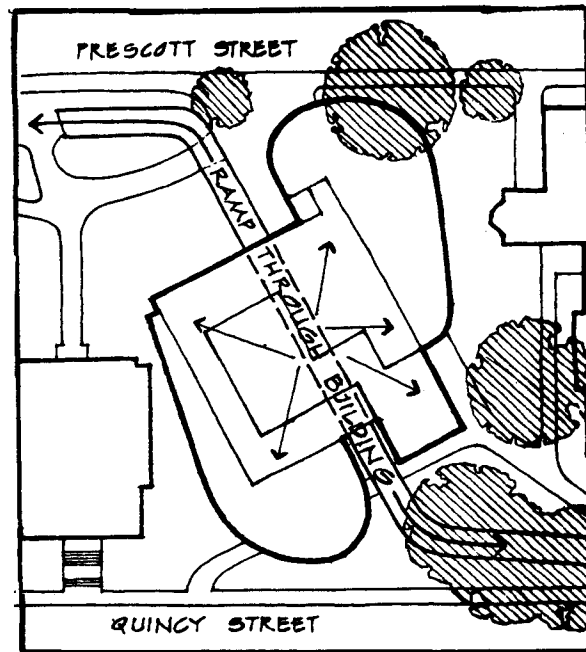
Entrance  
Brooklyn Children's Museum  
Hardy Holtzman Pfeiffer 1975

The recycled entry to an old New York subway station is used as the most dominant element of the museum, facing the street. This entry doubles as a preview and a display in its own right.



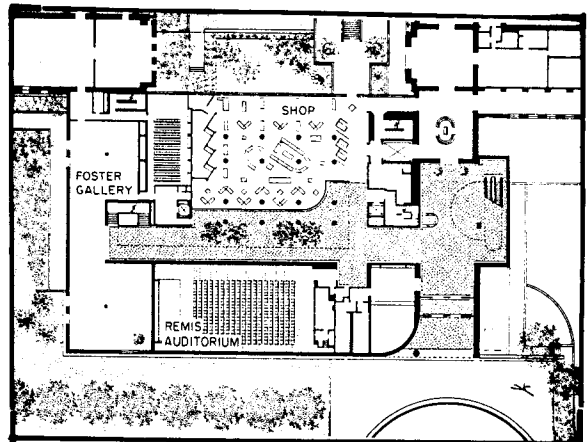
Carpenter Center for the  
Visual Arts  
Le Corbusier

A pedestrian path is elevated to become a ramp which passes through the building.



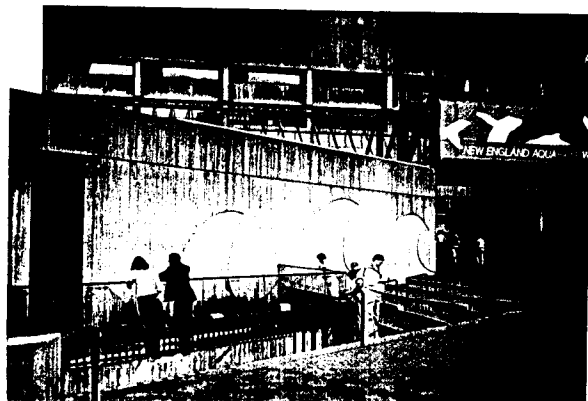
Internal Street  
Boston Museum of Fine Arts Boston  
I. M. Pei & Partners 1981

The vaulted street ties the entrance to the main exhibit and activity areas. Services are in proximity but not obtrusive. The path is also a place of retreat -- waiting, orienting and an "outdoor" cafe; it serves also as a lobby for the auditorium, which might be opened -- and controlled -- when the museum is closed.



The New England Aquarium Boston  
Cambridge Seven Associates 1965

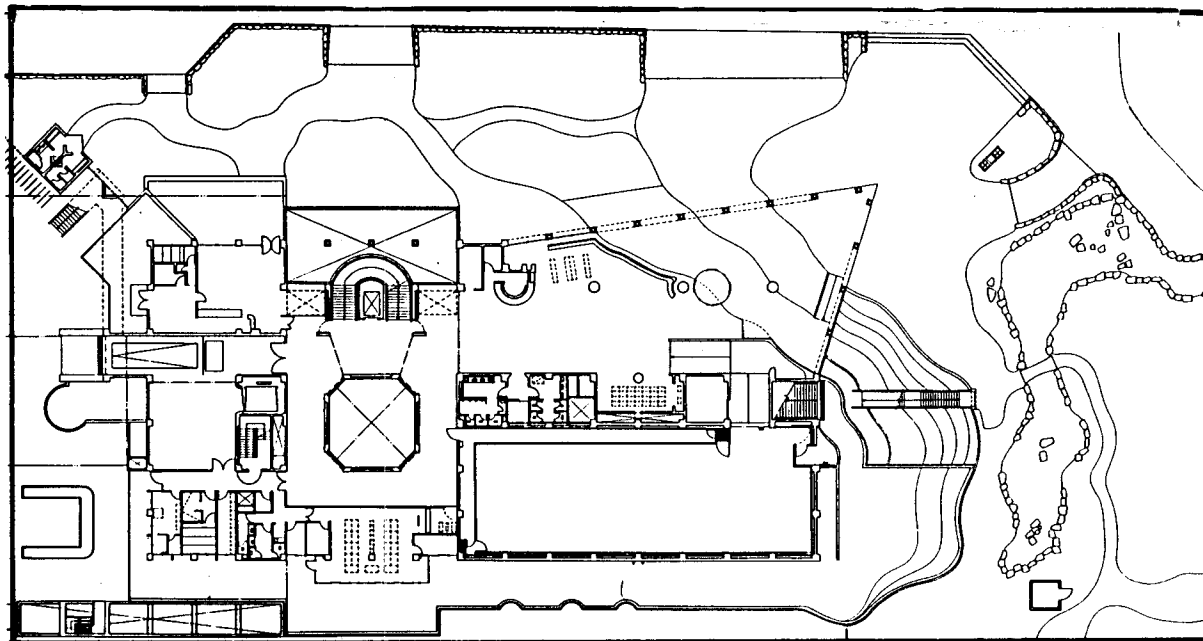
A small outdoor pool with seals serves as a preview for the Aquarium's contents. The same entry-sequence in reverse is also a summation and a post-view.



Museum of Modern Art  
Saitawa  
Kisho Kurokawa

Japan  
1982

The entry and exit experience are enhanced by the dramatic connection between indoors and outdoors, achieved by the park's penetration into the building at the entry zone.



RELATED PRINCIPLES:

- \* CLEAR CIRCULATION WHICH OVERLOOKS
- \* PREVIEW
- \* OUTDOOR EXTENSION
- \* FOCAL POINT