

10 Friedrich Schlegel, "Dialogue on Poetry," aphorism no. 24 from the *Athenaeum* (1798). In A. Leslie Wilson, ed., *Novatis, etc., German Romantic Criticism* (New York: Continuum, 1982), 121.

11 Jean-Louis Déotte, *Le Muir, l'origine de l'écriture* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1993), 93.

12 Daniel Payot, *Archéologie de l'œuvre d'art* (Paris: Galilée, 1990), 16.

Thus Quatremère saw such scattered pieces as existing merely to be classed and catalogued. In the society of his day, marked as it was by the excess of scientific knowledge and by a lack of artistic passion, the works of art underwent a process of derealization. To say the least, Quatremère was neither a romantic nor a modern. Friedrich Schlegel's famous aphorism comes to mind: "Many works of the ancients have become fragments. Many works of the moderns are fragments at the time of their origin" (1798).<sup>10</sup> According to the German romantics, fragments were neither without form, nor unformed. They were not to be taken as "picturesque" ruins or even as "romantic" ones (in the banal sense of the term). In the same way that, for the romantics of the Athenaeum, the fragment constituted a literary form, the museum had nothing "romantic" about it (again, in the banal sense) since it came from a complex (and modern) technology with the goal (the apparent finality) of conserving works. Probably for this reason architects and conservators favor a "clinical" aspect in the 20th-century museum: it is the "sanitorium" of objects in need of restoration.

Recently philosophers such as Jean-Louis Déotte have shown the importance of Quatremère, who "because he is the most distanced, is the best theorist of the museum," a theorist in reverse.<sup>11</sup> What Quatremère announced in the *Considérations* was nothing less than the end of art, and what signaled the "death of art" was the museum.

With the advent of the museum, the possibility of a natural and unpremeditated, immediate sympathy between the viewer and the work of art evaporates: the theory of "empathy" (*Einfühlung*) invented by the fin de siècle art theorists of Vienna, Munich, and Berlin (Friedrich-Theodor and Robert Vischer, Wilhelm Worringer) vainly attempted to reestablish the direct connection between the observer and the object. Empathy is the symbolic sympathy that associates the sensible with the spiritual by animating the real: as such, it is the opposite of the abstraction of the museum and of (modern) art. From that moment on, the "abstract" work enters the museum, detached from any religious, political, ritual, or cultural purpose. Whether the exhibited item be displayed on a pedestal or a socle, arranged in a window, or even framed and hung on the neutral surface of a wall, it is always the object of a suspension of all finality. Whence "modern" art: it has no end other than itself. It is "auto-teleological" and autonomous since "it doesn't follow the essential prescription of anything preceding and authorizing it."<sup>12</sup> Whence the 20th-century museum of (modern) art: its enormous, allegedly neutral, and ever more vast surfaces of inscription. On the one hand, Mies van der Rohe's universal

13.28

# DAVID CHIPPER

**SEROTA** The jury's second level of inquiry the first time around was a realization that there is no single way to approach this particular building. As Ricky has said, there is a balance to be struck between dealing with the interior and dealing with the urban questions. So we were looking for people who had, if not a track record as such – although in some instances there was a track record – at least a willingness to grapple with those two issues. Their statements had to reflect a recognition of those issues. A third element was that we wanted to include a number of British architects. I don't mean by name or even by number of places, but if at all possible this would be an opportunity for some younger British architects to put their ideas forward and have those ideas discussed in an international arena. There is a generation of British architects that has gained international celebrity, and we knew that very few of them, for a number of reasons, were going to take part in this competition. But there was a younger generation – and indeed some people like Michael Hopkins who are of an older generation but have not built abroad – that, as a result of this competition, might be given a chance to make their ideas better known internationally. This is big! It is the equivalent of the Museum of Modern Art, the Pompidou Center, or the Guggenheim Museum deciding to have a new building. That in itself is likely to generate international interest.

**BURDETT** The success rate of British architects and particularly high-tech British architects abroad is extraordinarily high. Of course it was also true with Jim Stirling and is now with Michael Wilford. But there is a gap, actually, a lost generation of people – I'd say in their forties and fifties – who are extremely talented but have had hardly any opportunities to build in this country over the last 15 years. Because of the political situation, England has seen very little building of quality and very little public building.

**SEROTA** Very, very little public building. The Waterloo International Terminal is one of the small number of examples of public buildings erected in this country since the late 1970s. There have been no big public arts buildings erected since the 1970s, no new museums, no new major libraries other than the British Library, which was conceived in the 1970s. There has not been any public building for more than a decade. And there also has been a complete cutback on public housing and schools, so some of the traditional routes by which British architects made their names in this country, and then sometimes abroad, have been closed.

**DAVIDSON** So you were mindful of this competition as an opportunity for British architects?

**SEROTA** Yes.

**BURDETT** I think that one of our goals was for someone to use this opportunity to bring architecture forward in this country in whatever way was appropriate.

**DAVIDSON** Of the 13 firms on the short list, seven were British.

**BURDETT** Seven of the 13 were British, but there was only one British architect among the six finalists.

space (partially realized in Berlin), designed under the heading “constructed mathesis;” and on the other hand, the spiral, an organic metaphor for the unfolding of time conceived first by Patrick Geddes, then by Paul Otlet and Le Corbusier, and constructed by Frank Lloyd Wright in the Guggenheim Museum.

Walter Benjamin took the commemorative values that Alois Riegl associated with the modern cult of monuments – objective historical value and subjective “age value” – and put them in dialectical tension.<sup>13</sup> What unites the work of Riegl and Benjamin is a common interest in eras of “decadence,” exemplified by baroque art and late Roman artistic industry, eras in which the “artistic will” (*Kunstwollen*) pushes aside the (absolute) truth, be it either canonical or cultural: if the museum is not a receptacle for canonical examples of art, a cultural treasure to imitate, it is subject to the grip of “exhibition value,” as opposed to the persistence of

<sup>13</sup> Alois Riegl, “The Modern Cult of Monuments: Its Character and Its Origin,” [1903] translated in *Oppositions* 25 (Fall 1982): 21–51. For the relations between Riegl and Benjamin, see Déotte, *Le Musée*, 282–85.

**APPROACHING BANKSIDE: A NEW CONTEXT** Reintegrating the Bankside Power Station and its surrounding spaces into both the local community and the larger city requires reorganizing the building’s central element. This establishes a clear relationship between the museum and the open spaces on the north side, the river, and the City of London. The Thames side is thus the main facade and approach, and there is also an entrance from the south. Both lead into a central lobby. The entrance datum is raised three and a half meters above the existing ground floor, and a series of ramps and steps forms a bridge between the isolated building and the surrounding area.

All surrounding low-level buildings are to be demolished so that the building will be distinctly situated as an object, accessible from all sides. Most people will arrive from the west through a sequence of urban spaces that form the museum’s approach sequence and drop-off location. The east end of the building is well suited to ser-

vice access, facilitated by a new road. Ramps and terraces on the riverside not only confirm the building entrance and form a series of spaces in front of the museum but also anticipate the possible pedestrian bridge link with St. Paul’s.

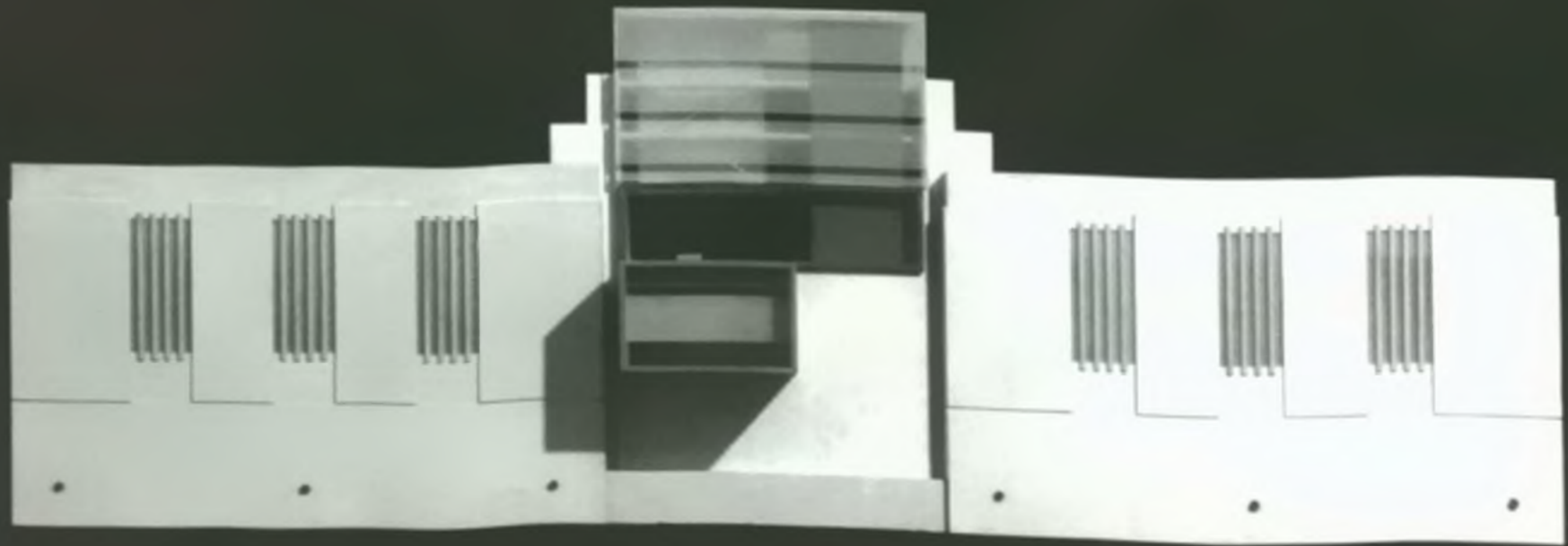
A series of buildings containing the galleries and other spaces are inserted within the existing building envelope. These objects will orient the visitor and clarify the relationships among the existing building, the gallery blocks, and the large organizing spaces. The new concrete buildings will stand out from the existing fabric of brickwork and steel; a new tower at the center will contrast the exterior bricks in color and texture.

Architectonic and structural analysis of the building led us to reconsider the existing chimney and the implied space behind the chimney, currently occupied by the gas washing plant. The building is a shed with a chimney. While the shed provides a 3,000-cubic-meter volume, the chimney’s importance is less clear. The project acknowledges the physical presence of the chimney but challenges its role as a marker. Removing the chimney reveals new relationships between the inside and outside of the building, between the building and the river, and offers a window to St. Paul’s Cathedral across the river. The

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Chippe

# FIELD architects



**DAVIDSON** That is a pretty dramatic cut, from one half to one sixth. How did you get from the 13 to the six?

**SEROTA** That can partly be explained by what we’ve just been talking about: British architects of that generation have not had opportunities to build on a grand scale. If one had to generalize, what separated those who got onto the list of six was an ability to persuade the jury that what they were proposing was realizable, fit broadly within the competition brief, and was dramatic and exciting in its own terms.

**BURDETT** There was another

14 Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," in *Illuminations*, ed. Hannah Arendt (New York: Schocken, 1968), 224.

15 Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe, *Typoglyphy: Mimesis, Philosophy, Politics* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989), 43-138. See Jean-Louis Déotte, *Oublier! Les ruines, L'Europe, Le musée* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1994), 170.

"cult value." Benjamin writes: "Works of art are received and valued on different planes. Two polar types stand out: with one, the accent is on the cult value; with the other, on the exhibition value of the work."<sup>14</sup>

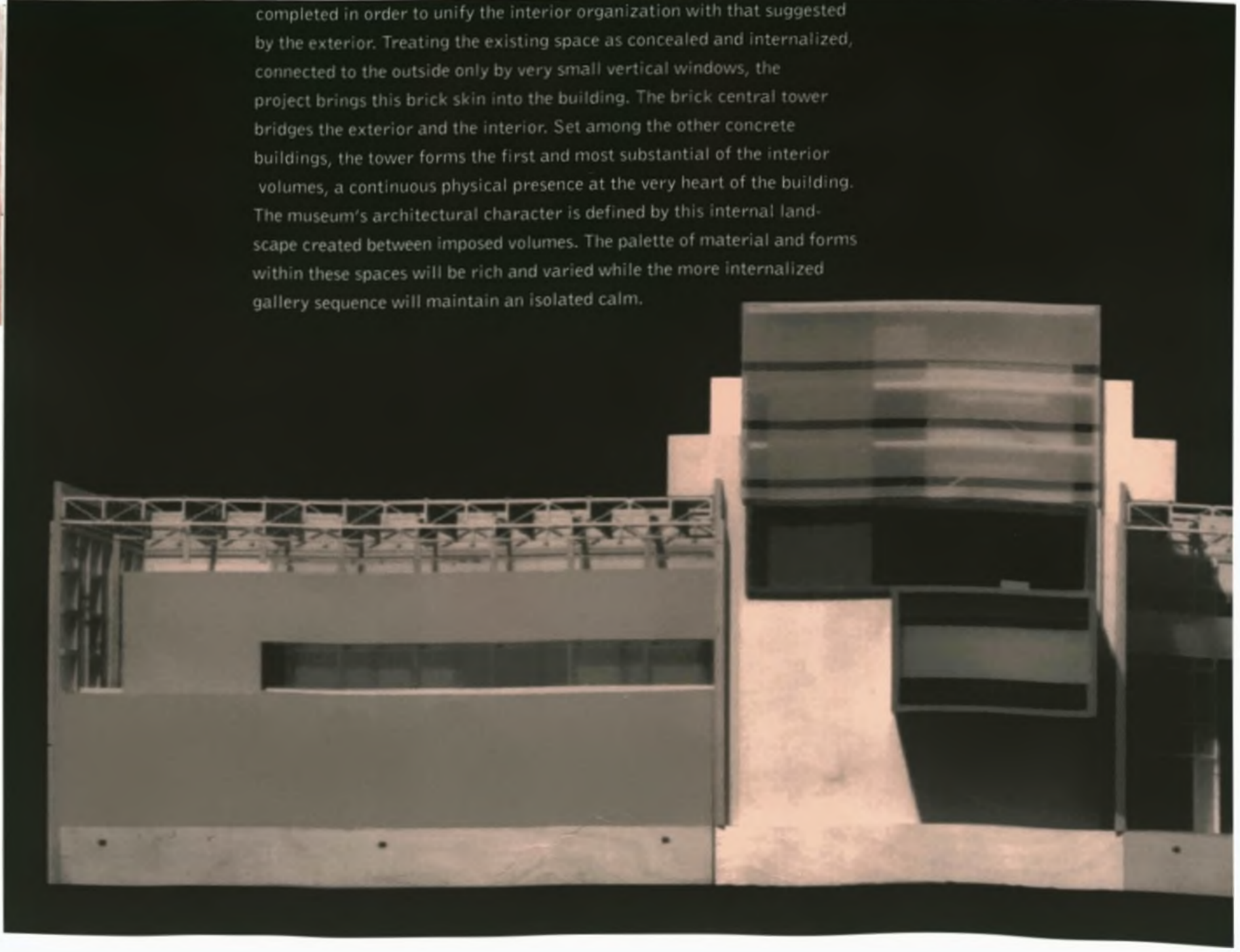
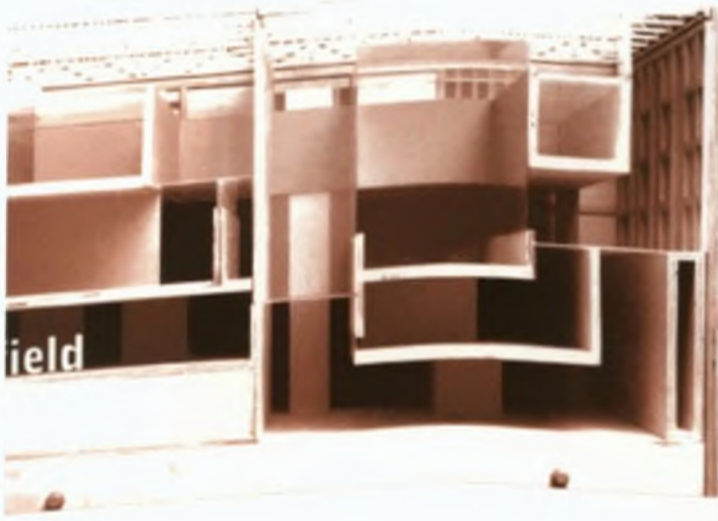
In response to the onto-typo-graphy proposed by the French philosopher Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe,<sup>15</sup> Déotte seems to propose a sort of onto-museo-graphy or at least an onto-aesthetic, laminated onto the numerous surfaces of inscription and description, which includes the mirror of Marcel Duchamp's *Large Glass* and Man Ray's *Dust Rising*. A mechanism born of forgetfulness (of cults, of purpose, of canonic truths), the museum is the technical reincarnation of Mnemosyne, in which exposed and suspended objects actively participate in their own ruin by becoming allegories (after Benjamin's reading of Baudelaire) or allegorical vestiges.

The museum's material is matter fragmented by the "suspension of purpose." This material (form) cannot be conceived of as independent of active forgetfulness, of the absence of the world. Maurice Blanchot poses this question: "Is art, then, for us a thing of the past? But why this question? It seems that art was once the language of gods; it seems, the gods having disappeared, that art

building's new core is to occupy the location of the existing gas washing plant, which clearly divides the building into three spaces: the existing turbine hall and the two boiler halls. The latter will serve as eastern and western courtyards to the museum. Approaching from north or south, the visitor arrives in the central lobby and may approach the galleries via either court. One can also enter the galleries at upper or lower levels via the main vertical circulation. Set as buildings within the existing building, these "public" spaces provide orientation at alltimes. The museum is thus like a small city with streets, squares, and buildings. While the eastern court is left mostly open and is occupied by a large twisted box containing galleries and the black box, the western court is enclosed by an internal glass skin and constitutes part of the public circulation.

The logic of the existing building is most confused at the location of the gas washing plant. The volume implied from the exterior needs to be completed in order to unify the interior organization with that suggested by the exterior. Treating the existing space as concealed and internalized, connected to the outside only by very small vertical windows, the project brings this brick skin into the building. The brick central tower bridges the exterior and the interior. Set among the other concrete buildings, the tower forms the first and most substantial of the interior volumes, a continuous physical presence at the very heart of the building. The museum's architectural character is defined by this internal landscape created between imposed volumes. The palette of material and forms within these spaces will be rich and varied while the more internalized gallery sequence will maintain an isolated calm.

important point cutting through the whole process: it was a process to select an architect, not a scheme. This is where the issue of personality, vision, and just in intellectual competence came through strongly in narrowing down the list. There was a dialogue when they came back with their early proposals. The first phase of the competition asked three specific questions, which were addressed on an A1 board. It provided a very clear answer to certain things. It was also the basis for an excellent dialogue in which some people demonstrated an ability to be flexible but to stick to their guns at the same time, and others less so. That points to another issue, which could certainly explain why 90 percent of the British contingent couldn't make it through to the end: the lack of a theoretical position in British architects trained in the last 20 or 30 years.



view

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remains the language in which their absence speaks – their lack, the hesitancy which has not yet decided their fate. It seems, as this absence grows deeper – becomes its own absence and forgetfulness of itself – that art seeks to become the presence of art.”<sup>16</sup> Finally, there remains the question of the museum and of the ambiguity of this architecture’s role. As Déotte writes, the museum “is not truly an architecture of purpose but rather an architecture that, in response to the works hanging [within it], poses the question of art’s purpose. The question of art.”<sup>17</sup> In other words, if art labors toward its own ruin, and if that ruin is a mode of appearance (as Riegl, Benjamin, and Blanchot indicated), must not the museum’s architecture – in order to remain coherent – also work toward its own ruin, toward certain forms of autodissolution?

When asked about the future extension to the Tate Gallery in London, the Tate Gallery of Modern Art that will hopefully take up residence in the abandoned power station on the South Bank of the Thames, the director Nicholas Serota said that he hopes to see the construction of “a building that will work on a matrix of galleries.”<sup>18</sup> Today, now that the autoteleology (the autonomy and self-referentiality) of (modern and contemporary) art has once again been questioned, it remains to be seen whether the museum will have to emerge from its technical neutrality. Traditionally, the spaces forming a museum are arranged in a series of “interiors.” Henceforth, the question of the museum of art will be how to open it out: to know how to practice unedited forms of “exteriority” – thanks eventually to new telecommunication technologies – without, however, transforming it into duty-free boutiques and flea markets.

Translated from the French by Miranda Robbins

<sup>16</sup> Maurice Blanchot, *L'Épave littéraire* (Paris: Gallimard, 1955). English edition: *The Space of Literature* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1982), 217–18.

<sup>17</sup> Déotte, *Oublier! Les ruines, L'Europe, Le musée*, 73.

<sup>18</sup> Richard Flood, Nicholas Serota, “Dream Tate,” *Artforum* 34, No. 2 (October 1995): 2, 123.

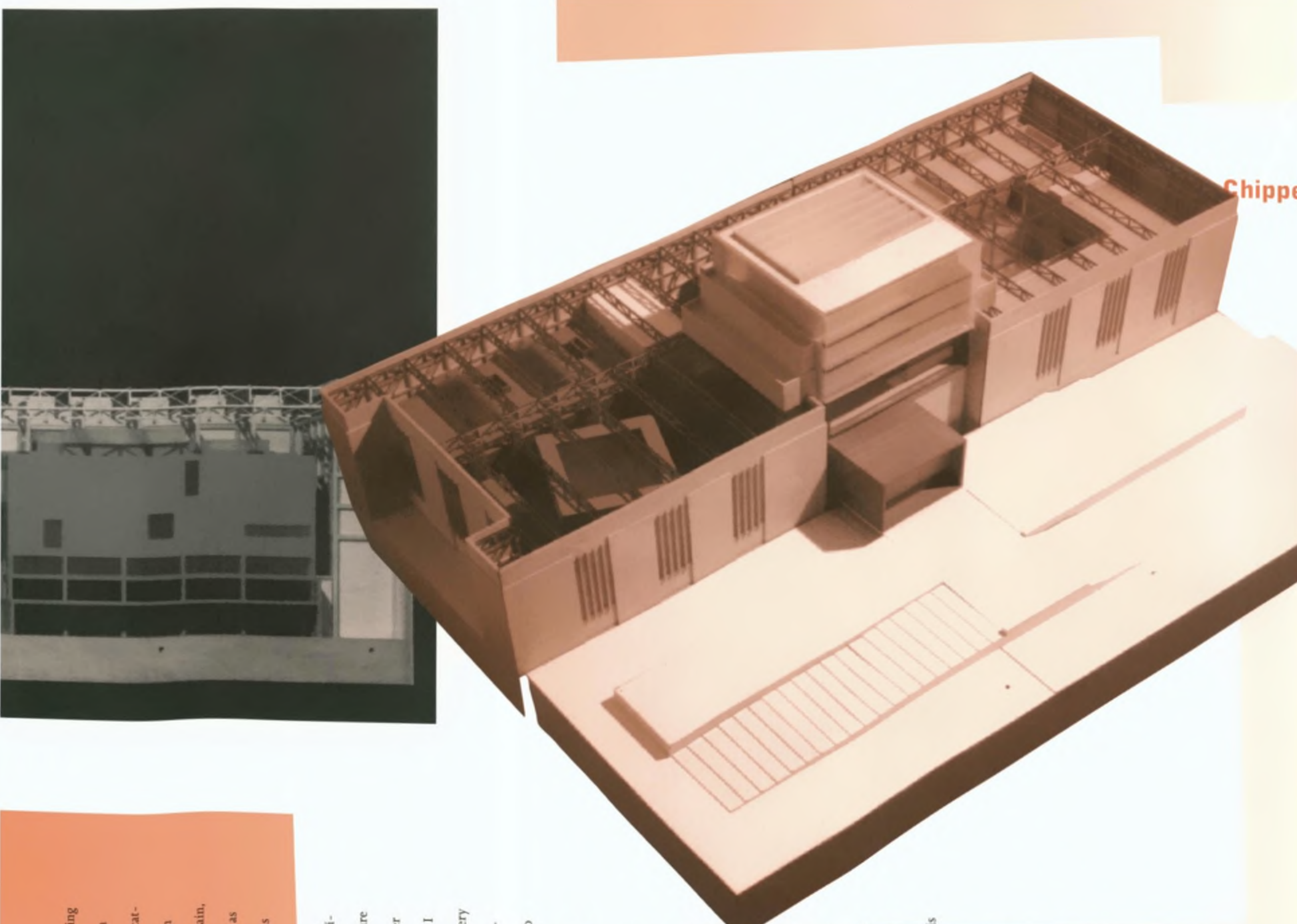
GEORGES TEYSSOT IS PROFESSOR of architecture (history and theory) at Princeton University's School of Architecture. He is co-editor of *The Architecture of Western Gardens*. His recent essay “Mutant Body of Architecture” appears in *Flesh: Architectural Probs* (Princeton Architectural Press, 1995), by Elizabeth Diller and Ricardo Scofidio.

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Chippe

Having been educated in Britain, and as far as my architecture career goes, I am very sensitive to that and have suffered from it, as many other people have. There is this insistence on a functional

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response to the brief, which gets you so far but not further, because everyone is good at answering particular questions. Anyone can take Nick's brief (I was possibly exaggerating that), take a large space and put in x thousand square meters of galleries and all that. What was needed was an intellectual thread that would allow you to do the things we just discussed to the building and to hang on to them – and hang on to them while the client hammered away at all of the architectural ideas. Nick, you



Liberated from the performance requirements of the main galleries, which will assume an abstract calm, the museum's internalized public spaces are free to be more figurative. Similarly, while daylight must be carefully controlled in the gallery spaces, the "public" spaces can receive changing levels and qualities of daylight, even sunlight. There will almost be an indoor/outdoor relationship between these public rooms and the galleries. While under the main roof, the eastern court and some other "outdoor" spaces are not heated. Others, like the western court, are climate controlled.

The galleries comprise a sequence of white rooms that contain opportunities for orientation in relation to the public spaces. Daylight is the primary material of these spaces. We have investigated various methods of introducing natural light into the galleries, and the upper galleries offer ample opportunity. We have also organized the section through the galleries to introduce various qualities of light into the lower spaces. Light to the public spaces will itself be modified, creating a "softer," "external" light, reducing possible glare within the galleries from window openings. The gallery suites are made up of a series of contained rooms rather than free-flowing space with partition divisions. The layouts in the plan represent a diagrammatic order, and we anticipate a constructional and servicing system around a number of well-placed fixed elements, facilitating flexibility through the design development and modification to the building.

As the millennium approaches, Bankside offers an extraordinary opportunity to establish a new London landmark. The power station can be appreciated in its ghostly abandonment, but its very potential is limited by its completeness. Not only to assume its new function but to encourage its new life, the building must be reinterpreted, its form given new significance. Such a vision, raised from the framework of pragmatic postwar planning, will enhance the Tate Gallery of Modern Art's unique contribution to contemporary European culture.

have worked  
with archi-  
tects, I haven't.  
I've been  
with them on  
the other side  
of the fence.

But there is no  
doubt that  
there are two  
generations of  
postwar  
architects who  
noticeably do  
not have a  
strong theo-  
retical back-  
bone.

**DAVIDSON**

Do you think  
that is  
particular to  
Britain or  
much  
broader?

**BURDETT**

Compared  
with Italy,  
France,  
or Spain yes,  
absolutely  
it is particular  
to Britain.