

Report on the Museu de Arte Moderna do Rio de Janeiro  
February 21, 1986

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In this report I am not going into detail with regard to the basic repairs that are needed to the structure to prevent leaking and to restore the concrete to a proper state. However, I would like to point out that a great deal of the paving around the building has cracked, some of it has formed large holes which are potentially dangerous. I hope that this will be included in the restoration of the Burl-Marx landscaping.

On approaching the Museum, it is very difficult for a visitor to orient himself as to where the entrance really is. Proper directional signs are needed, for example on both sides of the bridge. Directions to the bridge on leaving the Museum are also needed. It is very difficult for a visitor to Rio to know how to approach the Museum and then how to leave it, in terms of transportation, etc..

The special city that Rio de Janeiro is makes me ask that the hours of opening to the public be re-examined and analyzed. Perhaps, for example, weekend hours could be from two in the afternoon until nine in the evening. The cafeteria and bookstore hours could be thought of independently of the viewing hours of the Museum.

#### LOBBY

The lobby needs to be made to be more friendly and inviting. Perhaps some plants are needed. Benches are needed to provide one of the only areas where smoking is allowed.

An Information and Membership desk are needed and probably a bank of lockers so that any oversize bags, umbrellas, or other objects are not allowed in the museum since they can accidentally damage works of art.

The general vulnerability of the building in terms of security shows itself in the lobby with its large expanse of glass. At the very least, a proper alarm system should be installed.

Behind the staircase, there is a certain amount of space which can be considered with alterations as the site for the bookstore. This would have to be done with great sensitivity as the whole space's relation to the staircase is considered one of the major features of Reidy's design.

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SECOND FLOOR

At this time it would be prudent to maintain flexibility about all the exhibition spaces so that they can be accommodated to the temporary exhibition program, works from the collection, or those on extended loan.

If a collection such as the Gilberto Chateaubriand becomes available as part of the permanent collection, it will be necessary to re-evaluate the spaces of the Museum in relation to such a gift; this would make the Museum the prime repository of the history of modern Brazilian art.

Because of the general light problems, I would recommend that the window walls in the North be continually blocked. This would also give a good long wall space.

The design of temporary walls for the large exhibition area is to be examined. I have suggested that solutions such as that used by Gaea Aulenti at the Musée d'Art Moderne in Paris or that used by the Mies van der Rohe, Neue Nationalgalerie in Berlin, be examined. Other suggestions for the modular units should be explored through the American Association of Museums etc..

As we all acknowledge, the Museum has major problems in terms of light, air-conditioning, and humidity control. Ways should be sought to cut off empty spaces from the air-conditioning; for example, a set of doors would be one solution.

Because the intensity of light is so great in the South walls area, it is hoped that the glass can be treated to create a dimmer atmosphere; otherwise, a very efficient set of blinds should be installed.

All of the terraces allow easy entrance to the Museum, especially those near the old bar. Due to this easy accessibility to and from the exhibition spaces, it is recommended that special security be invoked.

The large connecting corridor which incorporates the old bar is another possible site for a bookstore, but again, there must be caution in relation to security. It is a space that can be accessible to the public in hours when the Museum is not open to the public.

It is a space that would also lend itself for the display of some of the major works of sculpture of the Museum.

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A simple installation there would allow for large events to take place there.

I strongly recommend that the upper terrace Restaurant space remain as the Museum's cafeteria.

It is a space that can have many purposes. For example, the terrace can also be used as a part of the cafeteria. No one can disagree about its fantastic view.

But more important, the terrace, like the cafeteria, can be used for private entertainment as well as for concerts, performances etc..

The chairs used in the café should be of a design so that they can also function for concerts and for other functions.

Both tables and chairs should also be able to be stored easily so that they can readily allow for an empty space. This is also one of the reasons that a simple sculpture installation would allow room for easy storage.

Another benefit of using the café space above for evening events is that it can be separated from the rest of the Museum very easily, as there is easy access from the ramp and terrace.

### THIRD FLOOR

Again the windows to the North can be blocked off. The northern spaces here lend themselves easily to the exhibition of prints and drawings, as light and temperature can be controlled more easily here.

An excellent space for the exhibition of works on paper, including photographs, is the existing room now used for the library. Again security is emphasized since this is an area for the exhibition of small objects.

To avoid direct sun and to minimize light, the ceiling windows must be organized with either a coated glass or a mechanism which can allow them to be closed off for certain shows.

All windows should be completely sealed to assist in avoiding sea air which has such a damaging effect to the contents of the building. At some time in the future, it may be worth considering double glass to protect the building as much as possible. This would perhaps also save on the energy and perhaps allow for better humidity and temperature control at all times.

The existing storage area on this floor can provide space for photography or works on paper, or else the wall can be removed and a more spacious exhibition area made available on the third floor.

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The organization of the spaces there will depend on the program.

#### AUDITORIUM

The auditorium is in quite good condition. It needs slight refurbishing. It also needs a certain amount of equipment: 1) Slide Projectors for lectures 2) Film Projectors for the film program as well as for other educational purposes 3) Television Monitors for video artists and for national and international informational programs.

This space allows the Museum a great flexibility in the programming as it can be used by the art, music, cinema, and education people in conjunction with the other auditorium.

At this point there are doors between the public spaces and the administrative offices. A system must be organized so that only the staff have access to and from the public spaces. The public entrances and exits from the building must be more controlled to insure that the works of art are adequately protected.

The uses of several offices on the North side can be re-examined and the need for certain "departments", such as Architecture and Urban Design, be rethought.

#### SCHOOL BLOCK

Perhaps the art school can be moved to the IBMEC space until the future of the school is decided. It would also initiate thinking as to what the proper long term needs for that area should be. For example, whether the final phase of the Reidy plan should be fulfilled for a theater or whether it should be used for other cultural activities or eventually provide the Museum an area for expansion.

#### GROUND FLOOR

The spaces liberated from the art school can be used for small conservation laboratories (on the south side) and for the storage of prints, drawings, photographs on the pool side. Again emphasis must be placed on proper storage for works on paper to protect them not only from possible fire or water damage, but also from insects, termites etc..

There is a space here also for an Office of Education where programs of art history and art appreciation as well as music and film history can be coordinated. Ideally, near the cinematic offices a small screening room can be set up for the research purposes of the film staff and for serious film students.

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The old ground floor cafeteria space should be removed to house the Library of both art and film. It is a space that again lends itself to easy and separate access to the public without their having to go through the exhibition galleries. It can also have hours that are separate from the Museum.

In this ground floor area, there is a need to control the people who deliver foodstuffs and café supplies from extra access to the building.

For the cafeteria, there must be proper ventilation to avoid the cooking smells etc. affecting other nearby areas.

Naturally, all the correct precautions for fire must be taken since the storage of works of art is not very far from here. An attempt must be made to isolate the kitchen as much as possible with fire doors etc. to avoid any rapid spread of a fire. Absolute cleanliness is essential and can not be stressed too strongly; it is important that insects do not go from the kitchen to art storage areas or to exhibition areas.

A lot of the existing kitchen equipment can be simplified. Perhaps some of it can be sold. It may also be a good idea to get someone from, for example, one of the hotels to advise on exactly the adequate amount of equipment etc. that is needed for proper service.

There is a need for a small Staff Lounge where office staff and guards can have a meal, a coffee, or a cigarette separate from the general public and perhaps at a special discount. This needs easy access to the cafeteria kitchen to facilitate service. This is extremely important in terms of the morale of the staff and especially since the Museum is slightly far from inexpensive restaurants etc.

A small room with a cot and emergency first-aid equipment is needed for sudden illness of staff or public. I can not stress how important this is. It is almost a requirement for all museums.

I strongly urge that the major film storage be outside of the building. Film, as we all know, is extremely flammable and it exists as a great risk to the entire building. Advice on the requirements for film storage can be sought from the Film Department of the Museum of Modern Art or from the British Film Institute. Only a small vault should be on the premises for the films that are being shown or are being worked on.

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The plans for expanding the existing auditorium seems correct and I concur that the printing room is obsolete and should be abolished.

#### STORAGE FOR PAINTING AND SCULPTURE

The basic museum requirements for good storage must be instituted. Works must be protected from water damage either from leaks, or from mechanical defects in the air-conditioning allowing excessive condensation etc.. There should be monitors to detect excessive water on the floors.

Proper alarm systems should be instituted, for example smoke detectors, fire alarms etc.. Naturally, there should be easy logical access to the freight elevator.

Proper storage systems both for the paintings and for the sculpture should be instituted.

There is also need for a proper receiving area for the works that arrive for temporary exhibitions so that they can be unpacked and examined correctly.

If possible, a fumigation chamber should be thought of so that wood from stretchers, frames, wooden sculpture etc. can be fumigated to avoid the proliferation of termites. This should be explored with conservators. Perhaps such a facility can be shared with some other organizations such as the library, the archives, the National Museum etc..

#### GROUNDS

The underneath passage between the Museum entrance and the office entrance should be kept clean, neat, and inviting so that the public is not intimidated by the space.

Many of the paving stones are cracked and there are many holes. The paths are in such disrepair that the public can damage themselves. The Museum could be in a very vulnerable position. This is a very dangerous situation and needs immediate attention.

There is a traffic of cars including the Museum's own van as well as the police through the under passage. This is dangerous to the public and it damages the structure, the courtyard and the garden space.

A solution of large concrete blocks which might bar the traffic as well as provide seating areas might be feasible as long as it seems to go along with the architecture of Reidy and the landscape of Burle-Marx.

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#### SUBISOL

The carpenter's shop directly under the pool leaks because of the pool above; therefore, it should remain where it is. However, the size of it can be reduced.

There is enough room there to provide male and female changing rooms for the guards, cleaning staff, and cafeteria staff.

There is a major potential fire hazard in the large amount of unnecessary supplies, materials, and trash stored there now. It should be gotten rid of immediately.

Not only in terms of health hazards but also in relation to fire, termites, etc.: garbage and trash should leave the building every day. This is essential.

There should be a small fireproof area for the storage of paint and other flammable materials.

Again, the question of security arises and these areas should be made safer to avoid unnecessary theft of supplies etc..

Perhaps there is a need for a very good building superintendent who will be in charge of the maintenance of the building and to its security.

I would also suggest that one senior guard come from either the fire department or least have been trained there.

Consultations with people involved in fire prevention and in security should perhaps be done before certain major alterations are done.

To help the public not be too intimidated, it must be stressed that all guards be friendly (easy in Brazil).

#### ILLUMINATION

While the Museum has a lot of natural light, given the winter and evening hours there is need for a flexible and excellent lighting system.

The experiences and methods of some other museums should be researched before a final decision is made.

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#### BOOKSTORE

A policy should be established as to what the bookstore shall carry in merchandise, for example, wheter it will only be books, whether it will also carry design objects etc. This should be discussed in terms of the possibility of the store becoming a major revenue producer.

#### COMPUTERS

The application of computer technology to the operation of a museum is now almost common practice. The computer can, for example, keep records of a collection; it can be used for the financial and personnel records and it can assist in the preparation of a catalog and can be used to store research information.

I strongly recommend the application of computers to the Museum as it will eventually keep the workload down and even save on staff.

#### CONSERVATION

I strongly recommend that the Arp, Brancusi, and the Giacometti be sent to New York for conservation at the Museum of Modern Art. Perhaps the Museum of Modern Art or its International Council could be asked if they would assist in the cost of the preservation of these masterpieces.

I would also suggest that the Robert Motherwell painting be sent for examination at the Museum of Modern Art in New York.

It would be important to know that every effort had been made to try to restore this painting and the three sculptures.

#### ARCHITECT

Since this building is such an important one in the history of contemporary architecture and especially in relation to Brazil, I hope that any architect who is assigned to this project is sensitive to the architecture of Reidy and is extremely attentive to the specifically detailed and complex needs that the Museum has in relation to its renewal and eventually sucessful functioning.



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PROGRAM

It is perhaps a cliché to say that a Museum is as good as its program. It is very necessary that some discussions and decisions as to the future program begin immediately. This is important in terms of a decision as to what the exhibition and collections policy is to Brazilian art and artists on one hand, and to the international scene of art and artists on the other; naturally, these must also be considered in relation to the budget.

International sources of funding of exhibitions should be explored, for example, the British Council, the Japan Foundation, the Federal German government etc..

With some thought and imagination, a larger public must be introduced to the Museum. The grounds and the building lend themselves to popular events. Ways of incorporating Brazilian life, art, and music must be encouraged. There must be great enthusiasm for the Museum as a major center of artistic activity in Rio de Janeiro.

CONCLUSION

This report has been both broad and detailed. I do believe that it conveys a great deal that is possible; it certainly is not intended to be idealistic.

I do strongly feel that, given the enthusiasm and goodwill of those currently serving and the potential of those whom you should recruit to assist, a great Museu de Arte Moderna do Rio de Janeiro is attainable within a very short space of time.

Kynaston L. Shine  
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