

From Pollination to Liquidation: The Museum as Organism



The Guggenheim Museum: A Global Franchise

- “Two or three institutions in South America (including Brazil), East Asia, South Asia, the Middle East, and Africa.”
 - Thomas Krens quoted in *Forbes* magazine (2001)
- As of March 2005 plans for satellites in Taiwan and Rio de Janeiro had been on and off, and a proposal for one in Guadalajara had been undertaken (Cash & Ebony, 2005)
- On July 9th, 2006 Carol Vogel printed an article in the *New York Times* stating that the government of Abu Dhabi, the capital of the United Arab Emirates signed a memorandum for a Middle East Guggenheim to be constructed by Frank Gehry, by 2011.



Satellites, Partnerships, and Hermitages

- Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum
- Guggenheim Museum Soho (closed 2002)
- Guggenheim Museum Bilbao
- The Deutsche Guggenheim in Berlin
- The Guggenheim Hermitage Museum in Las Vegas (Russia, New York, Las Vegas)
- The Peggy Guggenheim collection in Venice
- Guggenheim Adu Dhabi (forthcoming)
- Guggenheim Museum Brazil (Project)
- Guggenheim Museum Taiwan (Project)
- Partnership between the Hermitage in St. Petersburg Russia and Vienna's Kunsthistorisches Museum whereby the museums exhibit each other's works

Corporate Sponsors and Exhibits

- *The Art of the Motorcycle* (1998-99), Las Vegas, Bilbao, New York: BMW
- *Giorgio Armani* (2000-2001), New York and Bilbao: Giorgio Armani and *In Style* magazine; Armani gave a 15 million dollar gift to the museum; in a sense he sponsored his own show by renting the space
- Hugo Boss

The Critics:

- “The SRGM, as an entity of the Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation has been **“cloning”** its image through international branch museums, so called satellites, which grow their own local hybrids while trading on the cachet of the Guggenheim name.” (Rectanus, 2002)
- “Museum industry,” “overcapitalized,” “mergers and acquisitions,” “asset management” (Krauss, 1990)
- Leveraging the collection in the form of capital (Krauss)
- Corporate sponsors, high profile buildings, site specific tourism, the globalization of the museum’s image and market (Rectanus)

Some quotes:

- “It’s a betrayal of public trust! They (the Guggenheim management) are after the money. It’s certainly not the same thing as if they were to send their collection to the St. Louis Art Museum, where they would get zero, but they would reach a very large public also.” Philippe de Montebello, Director of the Met
- “The Guggenheim Museum has moved from being a mission-driven educational institution devoted to the display and interpretation of its collection...to an entertainment complex, a point it is quite open about.” Glenn D. Lowry, director of the MOMA

Reasons for Expansion

- **1990**- Bonds are issued by the Trust for Cultural Resources of the City of New York, a public benefit corporation (54.9 million)
Contract of Credit: The Endowment must remain above 35 million
- **1990**- Sell a Modigliani, Kandinsky, and Chagall to purchase a \$30 million collection of Minimalist and Conceptual art
- **1992**- Soho expansion, closed 2002; the budget is 17.7 million over (40.3 million)
- **1993**- the operating budget for the SRGM doubles to 23 million
- **1994**-Accumulated interest on the bonds has already reached 6.5 million
- **1995-2005**- Peter Lewis gives 77 million dollars, including 30 million in 2000 to cover yearly deficits, outstanding bills, debt service on bonds, and operating expenses

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- **1997**- They get 20 million for selling their name to Bilbao
- **2000**- The endowment steadily decreases
- **2001**- After September 11th attendance decreases 20%, lowering attendances at Deutsche and Vegas
- **2001**- 6.7 million in deficit on a 57.71 million budget; 5.6 is paid off by the Venetian Hotel and Casino where the Vegas satellite is based
- **2001**-three outside investors launch Guggenheim.com on a 20 million campaign and it fails (Private Equity, Software Venture Capital, GE Equity)
- **2002**- budget is 38.9 million. It would only have been 28.9 million but they sold 10.1 million dollars in art and designated it as an 'art endowment.' This allows them to stay above the 35 million contract of credit

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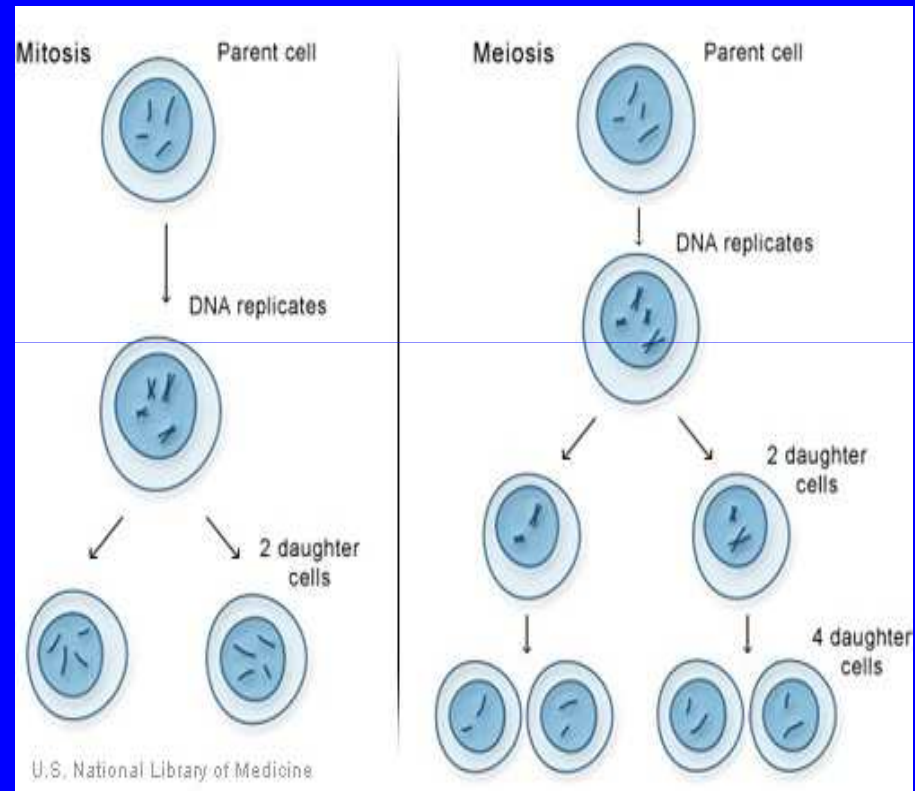
- **2002**- Downsizing the staff- 391 to 181

Other things to consider:

- **1999, 2000, 2001**-Krens uses 9.7 million, 13.6 million, and 13 million from the endowment to cover operating expenses
- **2002**- Matthew Barney exhibit postponed due to lack of funds. Instead they show *Brazil: Body and Soul* supported by the banker Edemar Cid Ferrera, who initially gave 200 million for a feasibility study for Brazil satellite
- 950 million Gehry designed Guggenheim in lower Manhattan
- Tax deductibility

Metaphor: The Museum as Organism

- *Grow or Die: The Economic Principles of Transformation*, George T. Lockland, 1973
- All human beings at all stages of life whether psychological, artistic, economic, or political follow the basic patterns of human growth, like cell division (Extend boundaries, reproduce likenesses, and reciprocally interact)



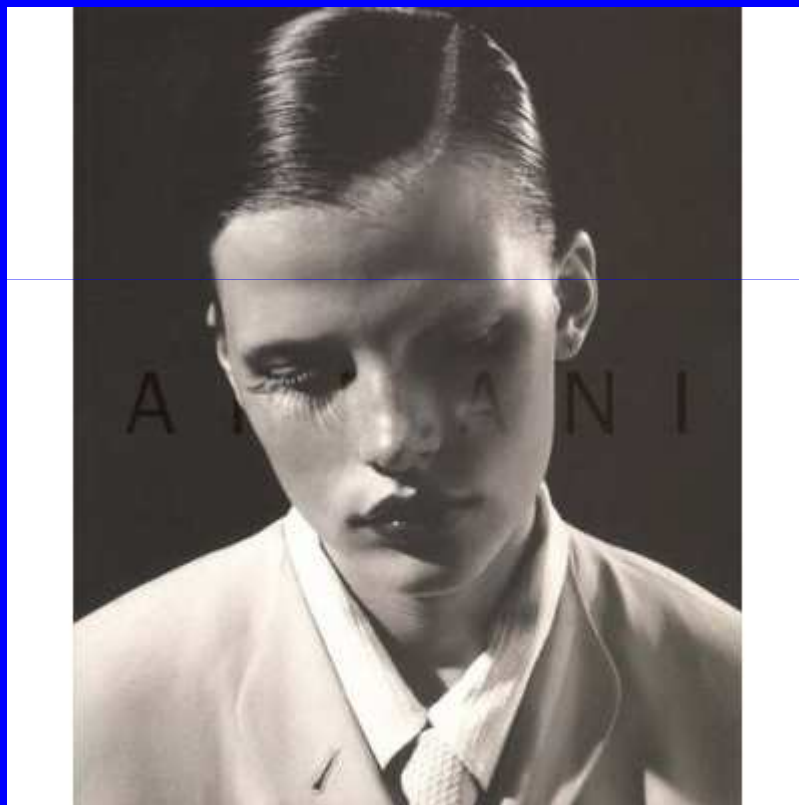
“My argument is that you consider the Guggenheim as an organism; these other parts to it lead strength to the overall operation.” – Thomas Krens (Bradley, 1997)

- Audio Guides
- Atrium=the heart
- Texture and scale=astronomical
- Stairways=the arteries
- Largest gallery the Fish Gallery, Nervion River
- Gehry based his designs on fish, flowers, and ships
- Urban renewal and growth

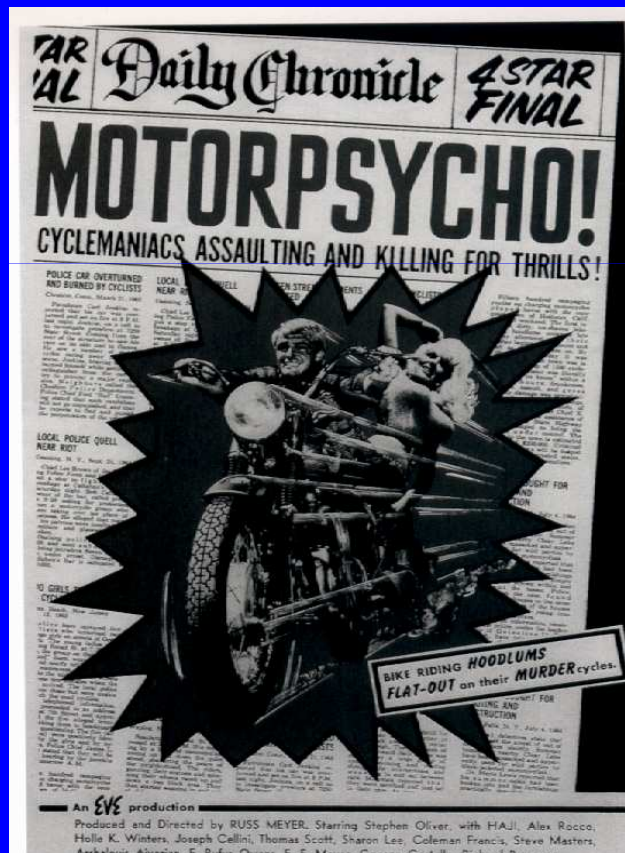




Liquidation: 1. Metaphor or 2. The buying and trading of assets and capital



Popular Culture Studies, Corporate Growth, or Both



Conclusions: Organism or Parasite

- Diversity: Whose cultures are being represented in these global spaces?
- Class specific consumption and tourism: Abu Dhabi will include a Classical Arts Museum (The Louvre outpost), a performing arts center, a maritime museum, 29 hotels, three marinas, golf courses, civic and leisure facilities, apartments, and villas.
- Global communities
- Popular culture studies vs. corporate spider web
- William Mack: Who benefits?

