

Individual Statement

The illusion of simplicity in the interior space of the modern museum is representative of the complex economical, social and cultural dynamics that exist beneath the surface of spaces for art. As Bryan O'Doherty points out, these spaces are merely devoted to the technology of aesthetics (1976). However, inevitable questions about race, community, social outreach, public space, and diversity find their way into the allegedly impartial white cube. The premise of inclusion by neutrality, that conceptualised the modern museum as an institution, is challenged by the contemporary gallery when explorations of the anti museum emerged in the second half of the twentieth century. The debate of what art can be, explained by Greyson Perry, is then parallel to the discussion of what the museum could be, and perhaps even more importantly what it could do when testing its hermetic quality.

The activism of the 1960's and the common desire for change and the simultaneous growth of avant garde movement were complimented by the appearance of concepts such as the anti museum and anarchitecture. Correspondingly, the timeline and history of M HKA showcase a desire to challenge the modern idea of the gallery. The direct relation to Gordon Matta Clark and the intended construction of the *Musée à croissance illimitée*, demonstrate the institution's desire to break away from the modern white box approach. Accordingly, the social agency of the museum becomes intrinsic to the DNA of the institution.

The hermetic quality of the white box takes form as a physical object through the in-material quality and minimalistic character of its interior. As a response to the technical requirements of art display and conservation it can not be dismissed, but as a generic white wall it can definitely be challenged. In the process of creating a gallery space for Marlene Dumas, the project becomes an exploration of how an architecture with clear identity can be articulated within the principles of flexibility and subtleness of the modern gallery. Inspired by her artistic process and technique, the space explores how the placement of the art is able to confront the viewer and create an experience that is clear but not overpowering through the use of rhythm, scale, placement and textures. (Fig.1)

The primary challenge for M HKA lies within the articulation of a multiplicity of socio-cultural layers and how they could materialise in physical spaces of the institution. Thus, the new building investigates an approach that challenges the common formality and rigidity of art institutions without neglecting the required technical specifications. As a result, it questions how social, cultural and economical dynamics can create an architectural language with a clear identity that is representative of the institution's social agency while simultaneously hosting and preserving art in an adequate manner. Interlace the principles of the white cube that cater to the handling of art, within a permeable structure that simultaneously fosters public spaces for interaction.

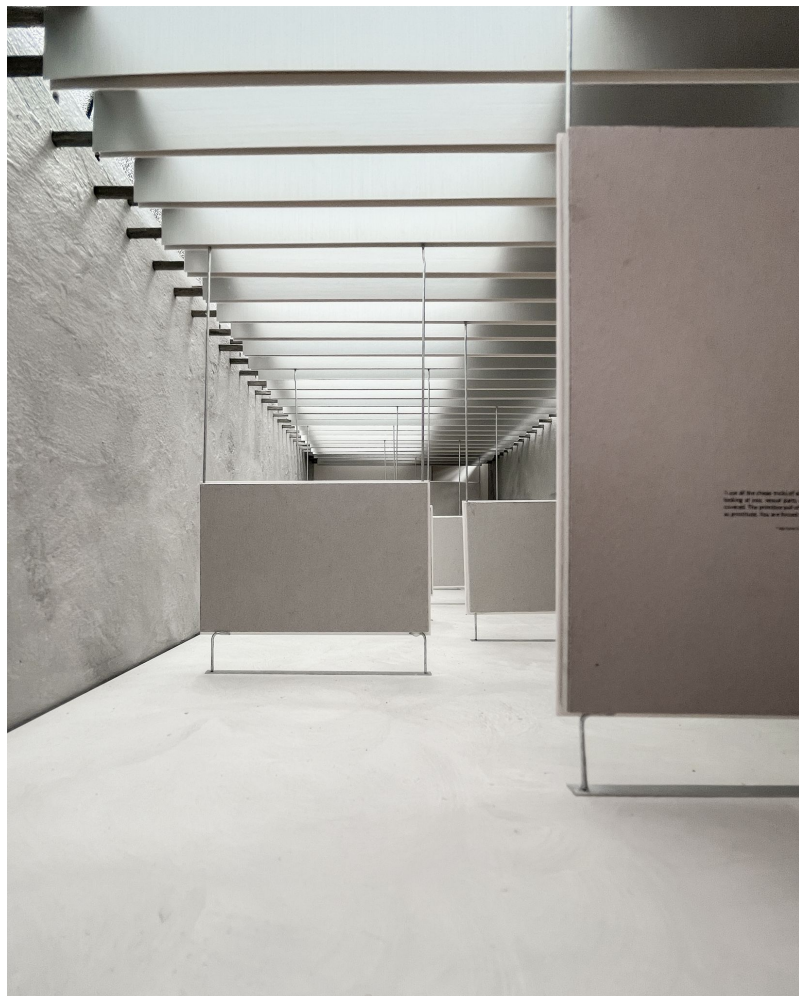


Fig.1. Photography of model. Space for Marlene Dumas. Photographed by author

Bibliography

O'Doherty, B. (1976). *Inside the White Cube*. Berkeley, University of California Press.

Perry, G. (2013) *Beating the Bounds*. BBC Reith Lecture Series Podcast.