

4

“It is the fact of space that creates the special relation between function; and social meaning in buildings. The ordering of space in buildings is really about the ordering of relations between people.”

[HILLIER\_1984:96]

# precedent studies

## 4.1 STOREFRONT FOR ART AND ARCHITECTURE

**4.1.1 NO WALL; NO BOUNDARIES:** Storefront for Art and Architecture is located in a unique triangular ground-level space on Kenmare Street in the Chinatown/Little Italy/Soho area of New York City. Situated on a major downtown thoroughfare between three radically different cultural sectors, Storefront attracts a **diverse audience**. Storefront for Art and Architecture is a non-profit organization committed to the advancement of innovative positions in architecture, art and design

"...intended to generate dialogue and collaboration across geographic, ideological and disciplinary boundaries. As a public forum for emerging voices..." [HOLL\_2000]

In 1992, Steven Holl and artist Vito Acconci were commissioned as a collaborative team to renovate the aging facade of the Storefront for Art and Architecture. The gallery itself is a limited, narrow wedge with a triangulated exhibition interior, such that the most dominant structure for the Storefront is the building's long facade. The project replaced the existing facade with a series of twelve irregularly shaped panels that **pivot vertically or horizontally** to open the entire length of the gallery

directly onto the street. The hinged panels are constructed of **fibre reinforced concrete** arranged in a puzzle-like configuration; rotating on both axes, which allows some to become tables and benches.

The project **blurs the boundary between interior and exterior**, and by placing the panels in different configurations, creates a multitude of different possible facades. It is focused on creating space through detailing, proportion, and the manipulation of light. The different configurations of panels, coupled with the ever-changing exterior weather conditions create **unique vignettes of the city** from the inside, while changing the framed glimpses into the gallery. The dynamic interactive façade reflects the behaviour of the city. Acconci and Holl challenged the static border underlined when the facade is closed, it takes the typological form of a Manhattan triangular shop front and when open, the **facade dissolves** and the interior space of the gallery expands out on to the sidewalk.

"The three dimensional volume can be disposed towards the four dimensional with changes in time. With this facade, the Storefront realized a new type of dynamic, urban interactive space..." [Holl\_2000]



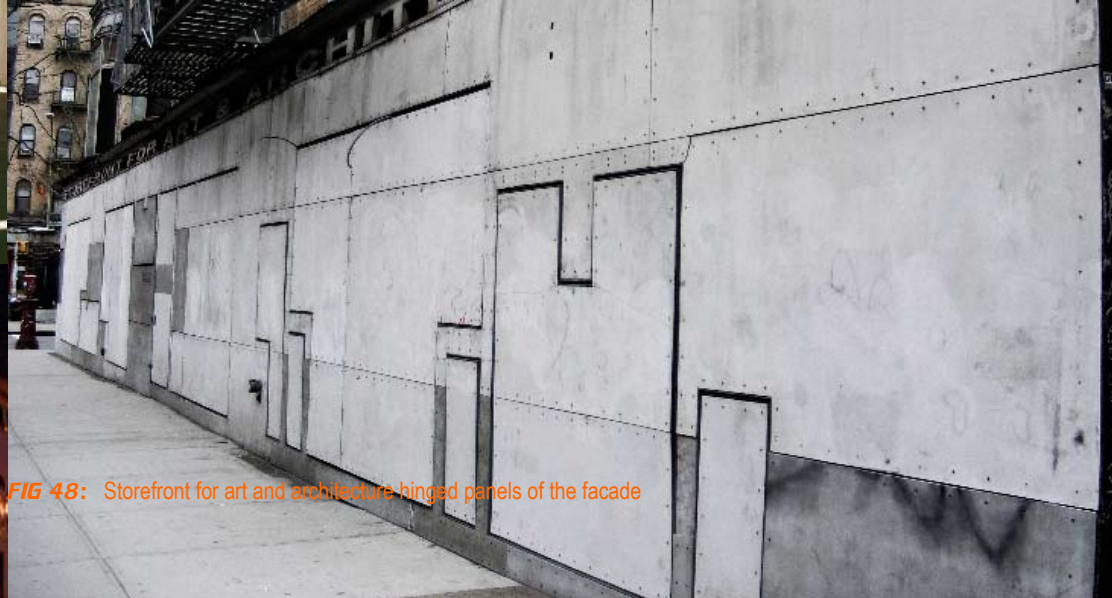


FIG 48: Storefront for art and architecture hinged panels of the facade





## 4.2 MCCORMICK TRIBUNE CAMPUS CENTRE

**4.2.1 FUNCTIONAL BOUNDARIES:** The McCormick Tribune Campus Centre is located at the historic campus of the Illinois Institute of Technology (IIT) at 33rd and State Street, Chicago. The IIT campus, designed by Mies van der Rohe is bordered by an expressway and effectively bisected by the **elevated commuter rail** ("L") tracks which rumble along the north-south axis of the site, separating physically and psychologically the dormitories to the east from the main campus to the west. As students walk to and from class, they routinely cut beneath the tracks. Rather than disguising the elevated railway Koolhaas encircles it as

it crosses the top of the building. Thereby effectively constructing one of the primary components of the new campus: a stainless steel tube that sits directly above the building's roof, significantly muffling the noise and vibration generated by passing trains. The other main federating element is the roof, a **continuous concrete slab** that shields the centre from the noise of the elevated railway while **unifying the heterogeneity below**.

...the conundrum implies a building that is able to (re)urbanize the largest possible area with the least amount of (built) substance. Illinois Institute of Technology's situation is exacerbated by the no-man's-land either side of the elevated railway."

[KOOLHAAS\_2003:WWW.LYNNBECKER.COM]

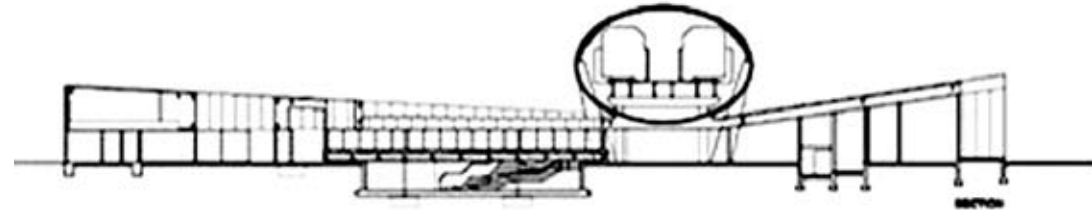


FIG 49: Section of the McCormick Tribune Campus Centre



FIG 50: Elevated "L" tracks segregating the site.

#### 4.2.2 SPACES THAT EVOLVE FROM BOUNDARIES:

Student flows are captured as a web of lines that connect the eastern and western campus destinations. The migration patterns are organized through the campus centre to **differentiate activities** into streets, plazas and urban islands. Without fragmenting the overall building, each part is articulated according to its specific needs and positioned to create neighbourhoods (24-hour, commercial, entertainment, academic, utilitarian), parks and other urban elements in miniature.

The interior layout was inspired by **pre-existing footpaths** that criss-crossed under the train tracks, formed by students walking back and forth between residence halls and classroom buildings on the IIT Main Campus over the past 70 years. The **diagonal walkways** were incorporated into the building's design and criss-crossed with shiny aluminium tiles paved in the interior floor plan. The walls are layers of transparent and translucent panels. Activities are not stacked but by positioning each programmatic particle as part of a dense mosaic, the building **contains the urban condition itself**. The interior is full of sleek and angular vistas, accented by bright colours as highlights throughout.

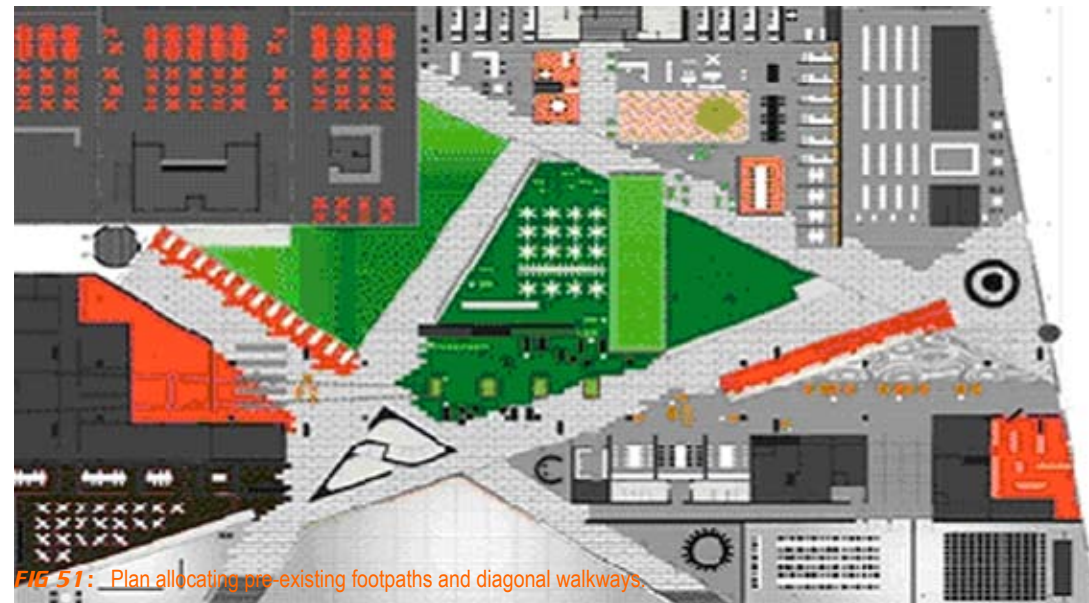


FIG 51: Plan allocating pre-existing footpaths and diagonal walkways.

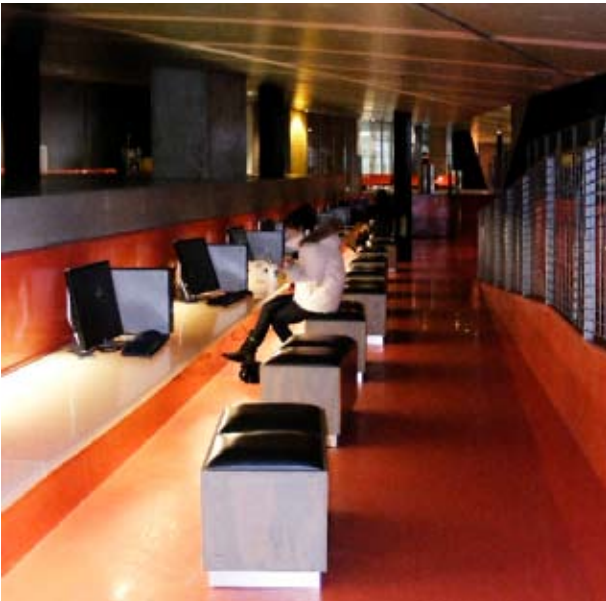


**FIG 52:** Furniture of interior public spaces.



**FIG 53:** Interactive interiors accentuated in bright colours.





**4.2.3 UNIVERSAL LANGUAGE:** Koolhaas also posted universal icons of male figures in action of various sizes throughout the space; he sees the **iconography** as a response to **globalization**. The current generation enters a building like the IIT experience a weird absence of information, therefore it is evident to try and develop a **language of fundamental information** that is effective in these circumstances of cultural diversity.



FIG 54: Iconography used as a universal language system.



## 4.3

### DAIRY MALL TAXI RANK

**4.3.1 SHARED PUBLIC SPACE:** The Dairy Mall Taxi Rank located west of Pretoria Station consists of old industrial stores and factories (previously an ice-cream factory) and a few later additions. In 1988 renovations of the historical buildings and construction of the new buildings was undertaken by the firm Meiring Van der Lecq Thomas and Rhonga [Le Roux 1993:25]. The buildings spill out in a central open space that stretches all the way to Bosman Street with the main activity that of which is commercial. On Bosman Street provision is made for an informal street market, bordering the elongated Dairy Mall Taxi Rank. What is fascinating about this public space is the way that the sidewalk exists by juxtaposing movement and programme; the urban fabric accommodates seating and shading elements that have been successfully integrated with the informal commercial activities resulting in a dynamic interactive sidewalk façade.

“When architects describe how they create their buildings, they talk about logic and objectivity, but the more subjective element of personality plays a stronger role than many would care to admit. How architects see the world and how they respond to the values of their time can mark their buildings as distinctively as fingerprints.” [KOOLHAAS\_2003: WWW.IIT.EDU.COM]



FIG 55: Diversity at Dairy Mall Taxi Rank on Bosman Street



**FIG 56:** Public street furniture integrated with activities of sidewalk.



**FIG 57:** Fluid integration of urban spatial activities and transport systems