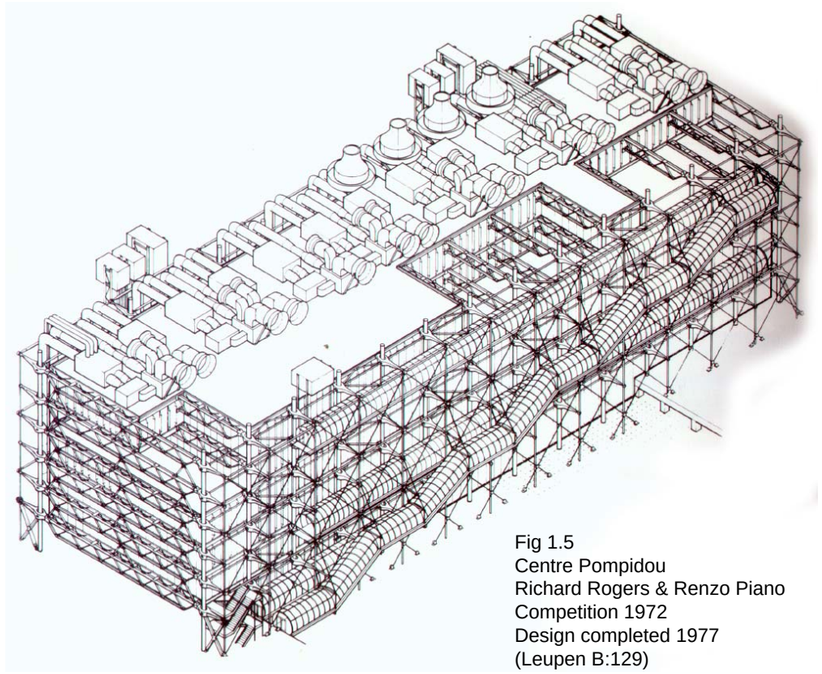

Fig 1.5
Centre Pompidou
Richard Rogers & Renzo Piano
Competition 1972
Design completed 1977
(Leupen B:129)

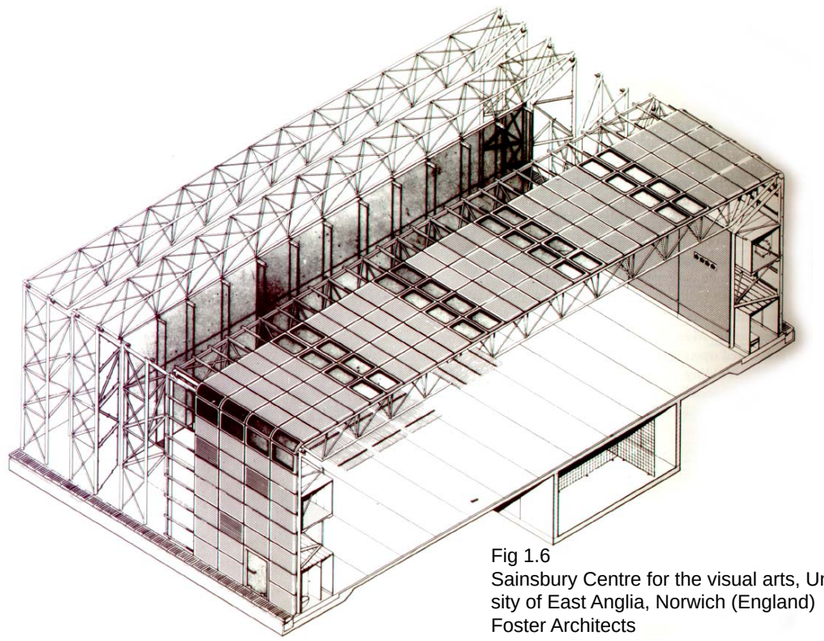

Fig 1.6
Sainsbury Centre for the visual arts, University of East Anglia, Norwich (England)
Foster Architects
Project 1974 – 1976
Construction 1976 – 1977 (Montaner:52)

2. Precedent Studies

2.1 Dynamic Containers

2.1.1 The Pompidou Centre (Fig 1.3)

All services are draped on the exterior giving visitors a glimpse of the building's function and using this function as decoration. The building is an iconoclastic and innovative alternative to the traditional serious idea of culture, thus technology and science brought about the aesthetic.
This new cultural centre adopted forms that contributed to flexibility and dynamics, thus creating a flexible interior (and exterior) that caters for developing technical systems and a shifting program.

The author considers the Pompidou Centre to be the museum that had the biggest influence on the future of museum design, because it broke all the rules followed be its predecessors. It was undiscriminatingly centered on humanity. The focus of the building was on dynamics instead of artefact preservation, and its aesthetics was based on functionality and structure rather than monumentality. To this day parts of the Pompidou Centre are still evolving constantly and exist not only as landmarks for museum design, but also for design philosophy.

2.1.2 Sainsbury Centre (Fig 1.4)

All functions of the Sainsbury Centre are located under one environmentally-controlled structure, formed by a series of tri-dimensional frames that ultimately creates the best example of the museum building-container. As with the Pompidou Centre, the Sainsbury Centre contains a completely flexible exhibition space. Though completely flexible it does not expose services as at the Pompidou Centre, but rather 'sandwiches' functional elements within external aluminium panels. The building incorporates a modular proportion system and a minimalist idea of built form. All services encased within the 'shed' allows for a freely sub-divisible internal expanse, thus maximizing the dynamic internal layout.

As with the Pompidou Centre the Sainsbury Centre breaks away from monumental design with its minimalist tectonics. Both these buildings are famous for their ability to change and adapt to future conditions. This quality, though now an old concept, should be incorporated into the design of the proposed Global Museum due to its effectiveness. The dynamics should however be innovative and taken one step further than the examples discussed.

Fig 2.1 Above: The Blur Building - exterior view

Fig 2.2 Right: The Blur Building - exterior View Concept Render

Fig 2.3 Below: The Blur Building - Angel deck

(http://www.arcspace.com/architects/DillerScofidio/aberrant_archite 25-04-2006)

2.2 People Containers

2.2.1 The Blur Building 2002 - Lake Neuchatel in Yverdon-les-Bains, Switzerland (Fig 2.1)

This building focused mainly on artifacts, computer drawings and video. The building looked like a massive white cloud floating on a lake and was constructed of a steel frame housing 13 000 fog nozzles. (Kiser K.2002,http://www.archspace.com)
“It was an exhibition pavilion with nothing on display, except for our cultural dependency on vision,” - Elizabeth Diller. (http://www.archspace.com)
Ramps and walkways wove through a system of diagonal rod cantilevers together providing counterweights to the structure. The cloud created through the structure was controlled by a built-in weather station that responded to changing weather conditions. (Ibid)

The Blur Building thus gets rid of the object and places all its focus on the human experience. The structure, hidden in a cloud, becomes invisible, which is the exact opposite of the Pompidou Centre. A cloud also symbolises an ever changing object not bound by material rules or gravity.

Visitors were given braincoats (smart raincoats) (Fig 2.4) to protect them from the harsh weather and provide communication with the computer network. Each visitor’s location could be identified and their character profiles could be compared with each other. The coats changed color (Fig2.6) when visitors moved close to each other to indicate the attraction or repulsion of their profiles.
An inner six-sided glass box offered visitors a sense of total suspension as if they were floating on a cloud. The building summit housed the angel bar (Fig 2.3), which resembled a sense of flight as it sat on top of the cloud. (Ibid)

At the angel bar a range of municipal waters, bottled waters and glacial waters were available.
At night the fog functioned as a giant video screen. (Ibid)

This is an excellent example of the way the visitor has become the main focus of the museum as was identified in the first section of this document (sketch1.6). In this example the visitor becomes so important that the artefacts disappear and the visitor becomes the display. It is no longer a question of how the visitor interacts with the display, but rather how the visitor interacts with the visitor...

Fig 2.4 Above: The Blur Building - exterior view and Braincoats

Fig 2.5 Right: The Blur Building - Braincoats changing color to suit compatibility

Fig 2.6 Below: ICA Waterfront Museum 2006

(http://www.arcspace.com/architects/DillerScofidio/aberrant_archite 25-04-2006)

2.2.2 ICA Waterfront Museum 2006 (Fig 2.6)

"The design of the ICA negotiates between two competing objectives: to perform as a dynamic civic building filled with public and social activities, and as a contemplative space providing individual visitors with intimate experiences with contemporary art. The "public" building is built from the ground up; the "intimate" building, from the sky down."
- Elizabeth Diller
(Kiser K.2002,http://www.arcspace.com/architects/DillerScofidio/ICA/)

The function of the ICA Waterfront Museum is to triple the current available exhibition space of the waterfront and serve as a centre for performance arts and education, and to provide waterfront. access. The building blurs the distinction between its floors, walls, doors and ceiling. (Kiser K.2002)

The galleries are column-free and contain glass planking featuring moveable walls and an adjustable skylight system. The entire north-facing façade of the main exhibition space consists of glass that, when viewed from an angle, blocks vision but allows vision when viewed from a perpendicular direction (Fig 2.7). In the theatre, the translucency of the glas can be changed to meet performance needs (Fig2.8 & Fig2.9). (Ibid)

"A vertically stepped-out space suspended from the underside of a cantilevered fourth floor serves as a digital media center. Equipped with computer stations for accessing digital artworks, digital education and interpretative materials and the Internet".
- (http://www.arcspace.com/architects/DillerScofidio/ICA/, 25-04-2006)

The building facilities include a lobby, workshops and classrooms, spaces for creating digital works of art as well as traditional media, a bookstore, a two-story education centre, a stage and a backstage, dressing rooms, carpentry shops and wardrobe, restrooms, administration offices and a restaurant. (Ibid)

Fig 2.7 Above: ICA Interior

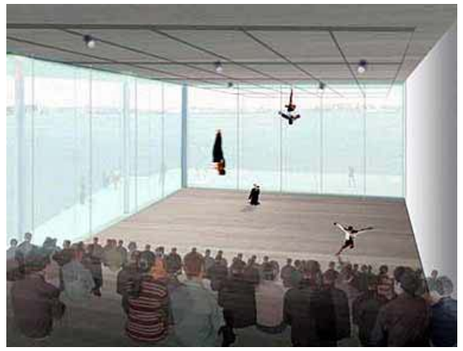

Fig 2.8 Right: ICA Conference hall/ theatre with opaque glazing

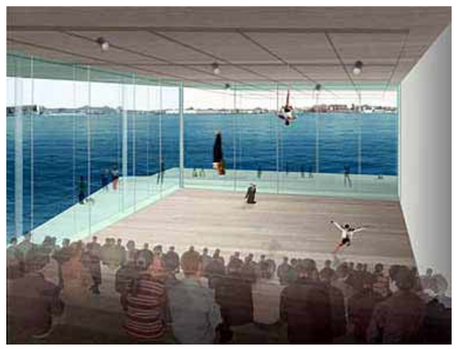

Fig 2.9 Below: ICA Conference hall/ theatre with translucent glazing

(http://www.arcspace.com/architects/DillerScofidio/aberrant_archite 25-04-2006)

Firstly what fascinates me about the ICA Waterfront Museum is like the Blur Building it plays with glazing and with human vision placing the focus on human experience. It plays with the contrast between what is transparent and what is not, fusing the two opposing ideas by crating a glazing facade that both is and is not transparent. Because this transparency changes with the location of the viewer, it allows the viewer some control about what he can and cannot see.

Secondly in the design of the ICA building and its construction computer aided design becomes apparent. The building has massive cantilevers and the top part of the museum was claimed to be designed from the sky down. Computer aided design allows for intricate and complex structures to be constructed with great accuracy.

Thirdly, the ICA Waterfront Museum embraces digital technology, making it the primary function of the museum. This is where the dynamic power of the ICA originates, because the digital provides a dynamic way of acquiring information.

By examining digital culture, the next section of this document will look at the possibilities the digital provides in terms of the human experience. This section will be important when taking into consideration the growth of digital technologies in museum facilities.