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Brand Identities

This year's new museums act as calling cards for the world's leading cultural institutions.
By Paul Young and Tim McKeough

GIRLS ONLY: Designed by Margi Nothard at Glavovic Studio, the sheer facade of the Girls' Club collection in Fort Lauderdale is based on resin paintings and video works in its collection, all created by female artists



In 1943, when a confidante of Solomon Guggenheim told Frank Lloyd Wright that Mr. Guggenheim wanted a unique museum for New York City, she admonished him to build "a temple of spirit," as she put it, "a monument." That little brief led to the construction of the first truly iconic museum of the 20th century and marked a significant watershed in institutional architecture. Until then, museum buildings conveyed erudition, stability and authority; the Guggenheim sought to convey innovation, artistry, wealth and, perhaps, a little ego.

Things haven't changed much since. With the 1997 opening of another Guggenheim – Frank Gehry's \$1.27 billion Bilbao, arguably one of the most recognizable art institutions in the world – museums have been scrambling to build icons of their own. "Of the museums we surveyed," explains Rowland Hobbs, whose company DMD recently published a study on the phenomenon, "80 percent said they were raising capital, not so much to buy new works of art or mount shows, but to raise the profile of the museum."

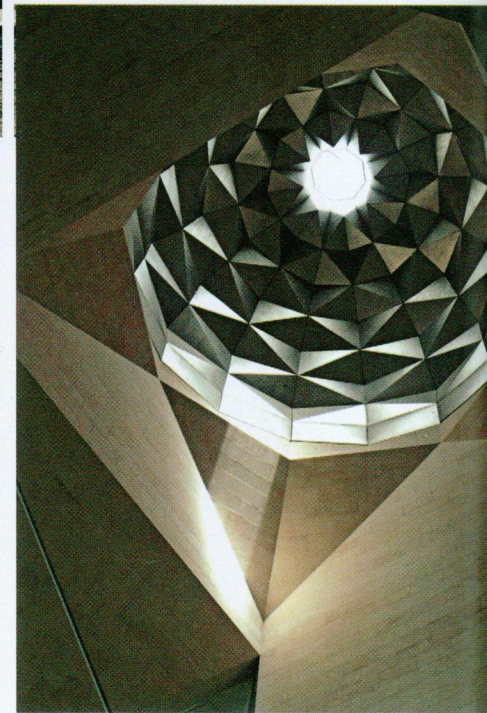
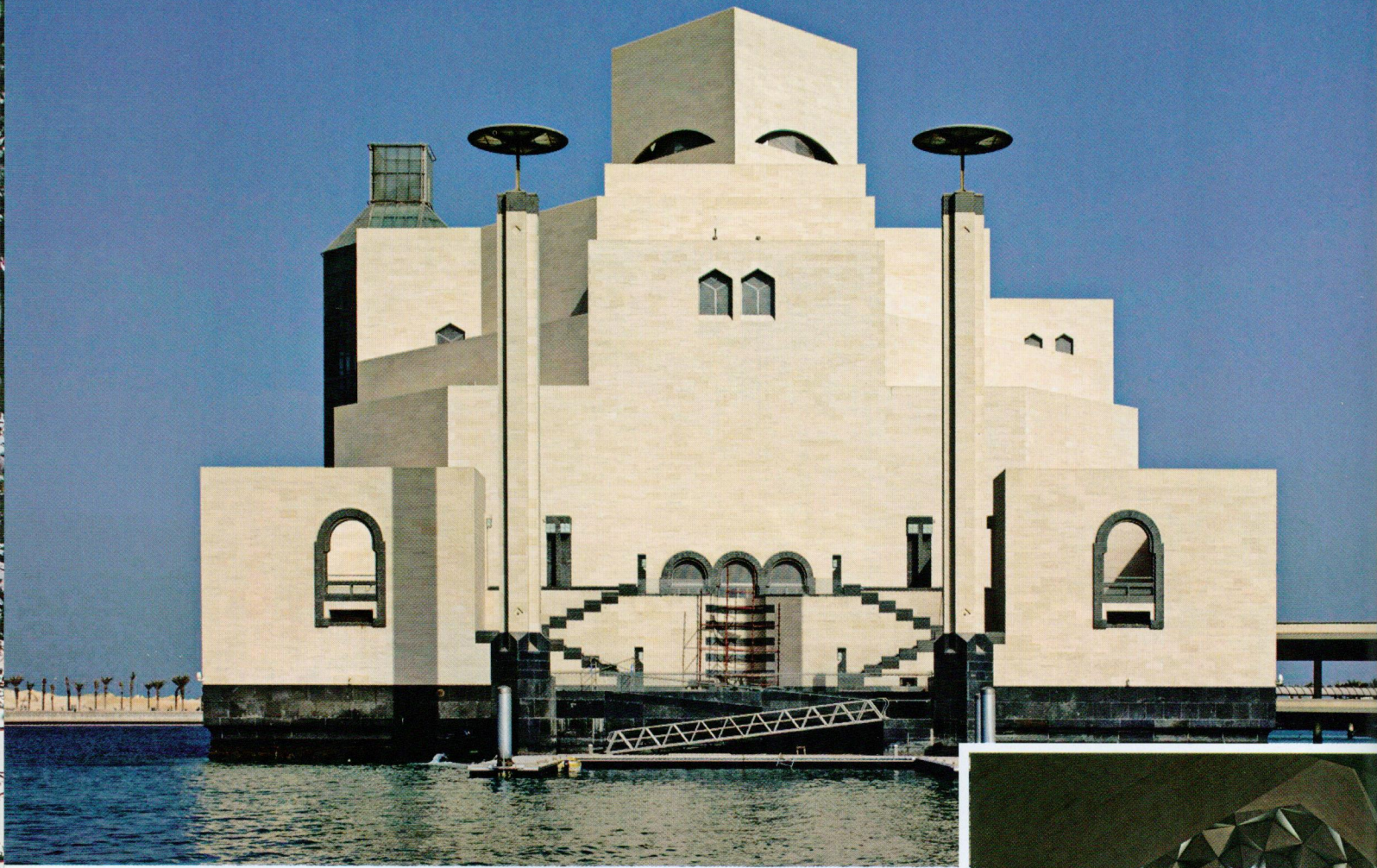
That's because iconic architecture works. As Hobbs reports, a new building and, more importantly, a new brand, carry the potential for huge monetary rewards: The Guggenheim Bilbao draws nearly a million visitors per year. Nonetheless, not everyone wants another Bilbao. Here are 10 to watch.

MUSEUM OF ISLAMIC ART I.M. PEI

Today, the best place to witness the growth of a global brand is the Middle East. That's where Qatar's Emir has built the crown jewel of regional museums – a Persian Bilbao of sorts – off the coast of Doha. To create the stone-clad, five-story Museum of Islamic Art, 91-year-old I.M. Pei interpreted the traditional mosque by blending modernist moments – clean surfaces and graphic lines – with Middle Eastern elements like columns, minarets and towers. At the center is a 164-foot atrium topped with a faceted steel dome that funnels patterned light into the interior. Each gallery steps back from the center to create a many-pointed star and a jaw-dropping inner sanctum defined by kaleidoscopic patterns of circular, triangular and rectilinear shapes. A 39-foot chandelier echoes the circular stairs below, which in turn echo the shape of the building itself. According to Pei, who found his inspiration in a 13th-century *sabil* (an ablutions fountain) the project represents "an almost Cubist expression of geometric progression," which not only expresses the mathematical root of Islamic architecture, but a complex interplay of shadow and light. "It's a severe piece of architecture," Pei says, "that comes to life in the sun."

OHR-O'KEEFE MUSEUM FRANK GEHRY

Frank Gehry's Guggenheim Bilbao has been cited as the reason that museums worldwide are now bigger and more acrobatic than ever. But Gehry can also build far more modest affairs, as he did with the Ohr-



THE ART OF ISLAM: (Top) The Emiri boat dock at the Islamic Art Museum in Doha, Qatar; (bottom) interior detail of the faceted steel dome that crowns the museum by I.M. Pei

O'Keefe Museum in Biloxi, Mississippi. The architect took the \$30 million project in 1997 because it would be home to the experimental pottery of George Ohr, the 19th-century American modernist, with whose work Gehry has said he feels an affinity. Unfortunately, Hurricane Katrina destroyed much of the museum, but it will be rebuilt in two phases, with the first deadline set for 2010.

Disparate pavilions have appeared before in Gehry's buildings, especially in the 1980s, and he even seems to be quoting his own unbuilt 1995 Lewis Residence with the museum's four windowless stainless steel "pods," which house Ohr's permanent collection. But there's no doubt that the museum's design responds entirely to the site. Each of the five buildings borrows from local vernacular, from the metal rooftops found on nearby homes to red brick stairways and "shoo-fly" gazebos. (An actual home, built by a former slave in 1887, was refurbished and placed near the entrance.) He also built around existing oak-trees on the four-acre lot. "The trees are as interesting as any building," he explains. "So we'll try to waltz around them a bit."

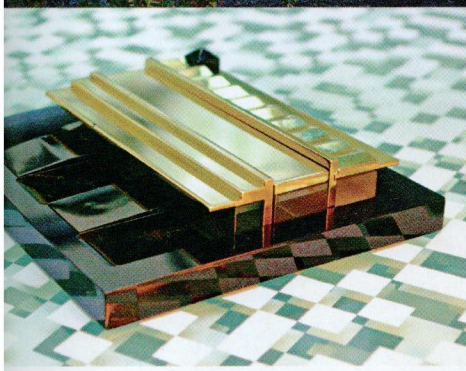
MIAMI ART MUSEUM HERZOG & DE MEURON
Talk about green. For years, Swiss architecture firm Herzog & de Meuron have made quietly exquisite buildings, from the majestic Tate Modern in London to the expres-

sionist de Young Museum in San Francisco. But with the \$220 million Miami Art Museum (MAM), the building's structure will take center stage, drawing the surrounding park into its facade.

Partly influenced by community input, the design resembles a series of boxes stacked haphazardly between two open-ended horizontal planes, which will also provide ample outdoor surface for video art. The upper plane will act as a giant canopy and is punctured in such a way as to allow vegetation to drop from above to fill the shade beneath with vines, trees and flowers of every stripe. This "hanging garden" will surround – and sometimes penetrate – the boxy facade beneath, so much so that the division between inside and out will remain permanently blurred. "The new MAM will be deeply integrated with its green surroundings and waterfront location," explains director Terence Riley. "It's designed to extend the park into itself, so it's not just a case to store art. It's an open, breathing experience."

STIEREN CENTER AT THE MCNAY ART MUSEUM JEAN-PAUL VIGUIER

Like much of San Antonio, the city's most prominent modern art museum, the McNay, was built with a conspicuous nod to Spanish Colonial architecture. But when the museum raised \$50 million to add 45,000 feet of



exhibition space, it also wanted to brand the McNay as a hub of modern art. "We began with 30 architects," explains the McNay's director, William Chiego, "but Jean-Paul Viguier's buildings are extraordinary in the way they almost disappear."

And that's just what Viguier did with the McNay's Stieren Center. He sunk a cantilevered steel structure into a hillside lot to eliminate the need for interior supports. Then he fashioned a classically modernist, low-slung, glass-walled building à la Mies Van Der Rohe and gave it a demure pallet of soft green slate, bronze-colored aluminum and red merbau hardwood that blends seamlessly with the museum's garden.

But it was the Texas light that struck Viguier most. So he designed a complex natural lighting system using a glass roof, louvers and motorized shades to capture, channel, and diffuse light so that the interior enjoys even levels of illumination and shadows are eliminated altogether. "I don't want anyone to see or think about the technology when someone walks into one of my buildings," he says. "I want people to think they're very simple and easy."

GIRLS' CLUB MARGI NOTHARD

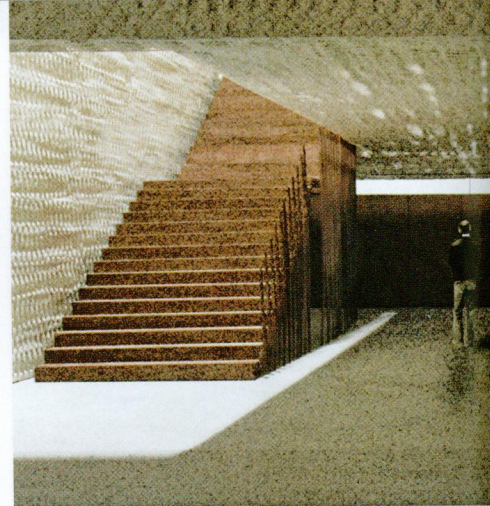
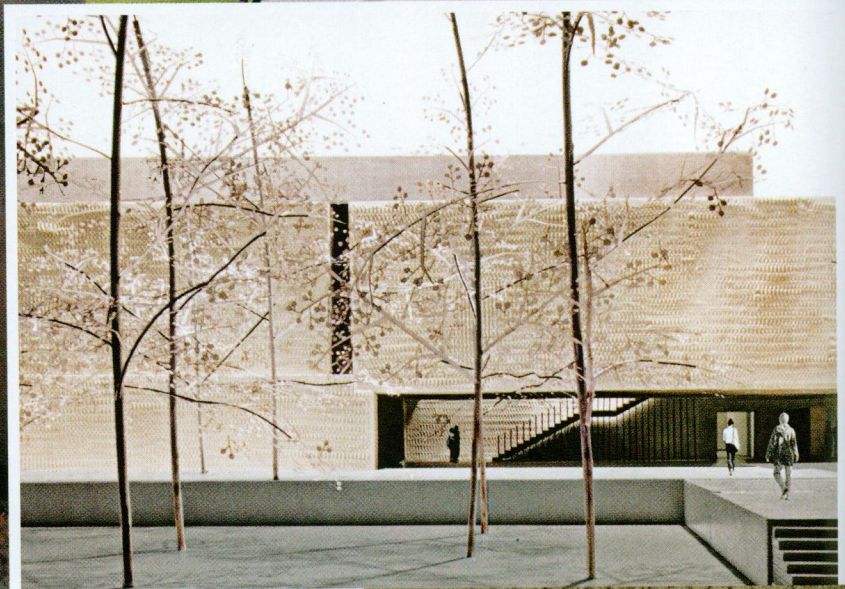
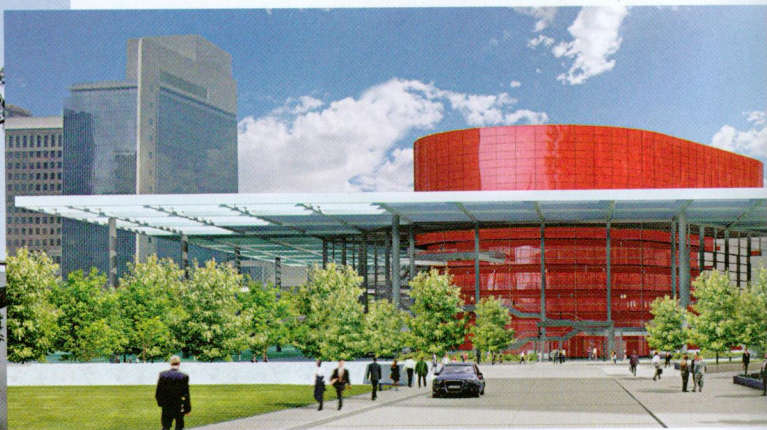
Because the Girls' Club in Fort Lauderdale collects work by female artists exclusively, it's fitting that they chose fe-

male (and Floridian) architect Margi Nothard of Glavovic Studio, who had recently completed the ArtsPark in Hollywood, Florida. Given a small budget and an existing 2,000-square-foot structure, Nothard was limited. Nonetheless, she managed to design something extraordinary out of something ordinary. To do that, she borrowed themes from the collection's resin paintings and video works to create a semi-transparent, steel-framed fiberglass skin. The purpose, she says, was to toy dynamically with notions of visibility and invisibility. During the day, the building has a crystalline appearance, amplified by the heavily rusted entryway. But as the sun sinks, it becomes a lantern. "It also works well as a projection screen," says Nothard. "So it becomes a bit of a drive-in." The notion of morphing carries through to the interior, which was designed to be as flexible as possible and features a pivoting wall in the main gallery that can be used to alter the dimensions of the exhibition space.

DALLAS CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

This is an ensemble performance. When it opens in the fall of 2009, the Dallas Center for the Performing Arts will be a creative playground with a list of contributors seemingly pulled straight from an architectural textbook. REX/OMA designed the theatre, a tall transparent box with the ability to rapidly adopt different stage configurations, while

CURATED SPACES: (From top) The entrance to the Nerman Museum for Contemporary Art by Kyu Sung Woo; architect Jean-Paul Viguier's miniature glass, resin and bronze model of the McNay Museum expansion; a rendering of the veranda, interior and foliage of the Herzog & de Meuron-designed Miami Art Museum, set to open in 2011



Foster + Partners designed the opera house. Skidmore Owings & Merrill designed the City Performance Hall, a venue for smaller performing arts organizations, and last but not least, landscape architect Michel Desvigne will tie it all together with a 10-acre Performance Park.

CLYFFORD STILL MUSEUM ALLIED WORKS ARCHITECTURE Nestled next door to Daniel Libeskind's addition to the Denver Art Museum, the Still Museum, designed by Brad Cloepfil of Allied Works, is set to cut a very different profile. The serene, two-story, 31,500-square-foot building is composed of stacked and cantilevered rectangular volumes made from heavily textured concrete. Set to open in 2010, the collection will include more than 2,400 works by the abstract expressionist for whom it is named. In naturally lit galleries, visitors will be able to watch the inner workings of the conservation studio behind glass walls on the first floor.

MUSEUM OF ARTS & DESIGN ALLIED WORKS ARCHITECTURE Most people have an opinion about Brad Cloepfil's transformation of the building at Two Columbus Circle into New York's new Museum of Arts & Design. Originally designed by Edward Durell Stone in 1964, the 54,000-square-foot structure was known for decades as "the lollipop building" for its distinctive Venetian detailing. Cloepfil's renovation dresses the facade with glazed terracotta tiles and channels that slice deep-

ly into the building to pull in natural light. Some say the new building will remedy an eyesore; others that it will destroy a landmark of late modernism. Judge for yourself: the new museum opens this September.

NERMAN MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART KYU SUNG WOO Opened last October, the Nerman in Overland Park, Kansas serves as a gateway to a community college campus. Woo's 38,000 square feet of architecture welcomes visitors with a sparkling LED installation by artist Leo Villareal that's installed on the underside of a 22-foot-long cantilevered mass that hovers over the main entrance. The museum's glass atrium turns into the school's technology center – where the art show continues, thanks to a program that installs pieces across the campus.

MUSEUM OF THE MOVING IMAGE LEESER ARCHITECTS Visitors to New York's newly expanded Museum of the Moving Image will know they've arrived when the institution opens its doors in late 2009: the entry will be clad in 242 video monitors. Inside, the view will go from micro to macro thanks to an eight-foot-high, 50-foot-long screen in the lobby. A grand staircase will double as a video-screening amphitheatre, and a new pod-like cinema will be wrapped in triangular panels of dark blue felt that mimic the addition's exterior skin of pale blue aluminum. ▶

LOGO LOGIC: (Clockwise from left) Steel pavilions at Frank Gehry's Ohr-O'Keefe Museum of Art in Biloxi; a rendering of the Winspear Opera House designed by Foster + Partners for the Dallas Center of the Performing Arts; an exterior rendering of Allied Works' Clyfford Still Museum, opening in 2010; interior of the Still; (opposite) the Museum of Arts & Design's new home in New York at Columbus Circle, designed by Allied Works Architecture