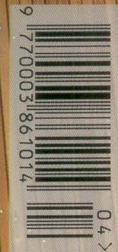


UK £5.25
USA \$15.00
APRIL 1993

An ENRAR Business Publication



THE ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW

ARCHITECTURE DESIGN LANDSCAPE URBANISM WORLDWIDE

**Architecture of interpretation
Meier museums
Mies' Tugendhat**



NORDIC BLONDE

Art museum,
Lillehammer, Norway

Architect

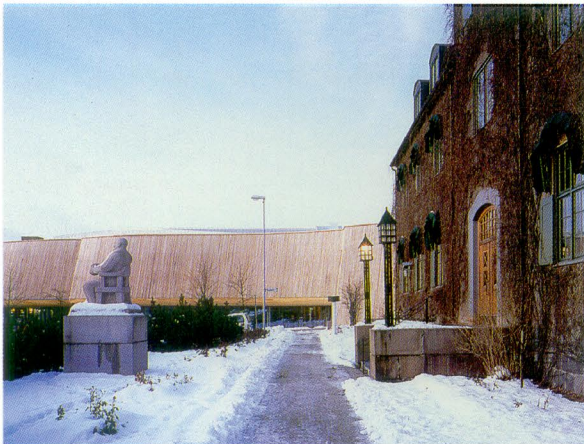
Snøhetta

Photography

Jiri Havran



As part of its cultural contribution to the 1994 Winter Olympics, Lillehammer has acquired a dramatic and distinguished new art museum. Conceived as a sinuous foil to the existing 1960s gallery, the new building combines a strong organic quality with characteristic Nordic directness.



1
The new extension to Lillehammer's Art Museum is a sinuous, timber-clad intervention.

2
The provincially grand bank in the main town square acts as a foil to the sinuate interloper.

Lillehammer sits at the end of Mjøsa – the largest lake in Norway – before the northward thrust of a great valley named Gudbrandsdalen. The town nestles in the hollow and the eastern bank of a U formed by the extruded section of the valley walls. Into this natural setting, the new Lillehammer Art Museum appears as a specimen of some unidentified but organic structure. Devoid of the windows, doors and variegated roofscape of its neighbours, the new intervention has more in common with local nature and autonomous infrastructure than with communal domesticity.

The Art Museum has been built as the main cultural contribution to the Winter Olympics. In the suburbs and outlying areas such as Hamar, many facilities are currently under construction, but the wavy escarpment of the museum registers as a particularly vivid presence in Lillehammer's centre itself. The building is a large extension to the existing museum. The latter, a brutal 1960's concrete box by Erling Viksjø, neither engages the passer-by nor suggests obvious strategies of enlargement. Matters are further complicated by only the upper floor being used

as gallery space, the lower areas functioning as the town's cinema. Snøhetta sensibly decided to disengage its new construction from the original, tethering the two buildings together by means of a simple enclosed bridge.

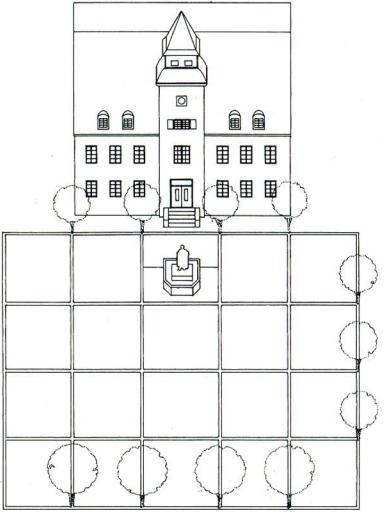
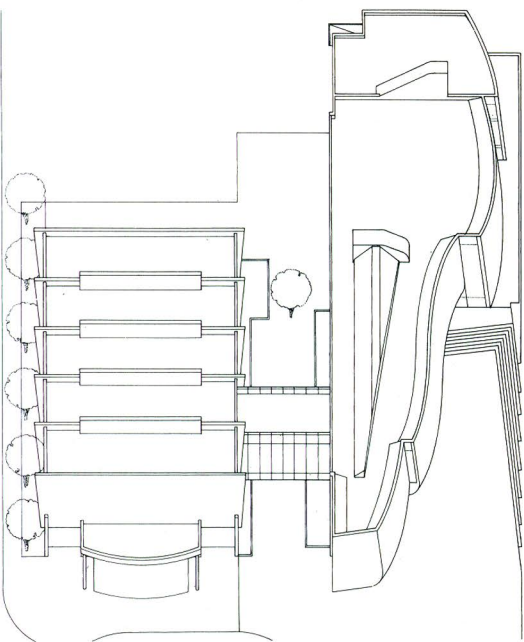
To the other side of the museum, the northern edge of Lillehammer's market square is now spectacularly colonised by Snøhetta's building. The provincially grand bank on the east side acts as a foil to the sinuous timber curtain slithering past. This wilful gesture is followed through without fuss or undue internal elaboration. As the piazza surface folds to continue through the ground floor undercroft, the hovering hulk above is flattened into a virtually sealed stratum, with sides of vertical strips of pale larch. As might be expected in Scandinavia, the nature of materials is boldly stated – no paints are used that would hamper the Nordic play of sun and snow and the encrustation of patina over time. The facade overlooking the square flows back from its cantilevered protrusion over the pavement in segments that both curve in plan and angle inwards. Recessed perpendicular slots of glass are inserted at the points

**Art museum,
Lillehammer, Norway**
Architect
Snøhetta

where these segments are prised apart. Underneath the prow, which rises as the piazza floor swells back toward the bank and shopping district behind, the sheer fenestration draws attention to the foyer with its small attendant café as a new public room. Basking in the frequent illumination of

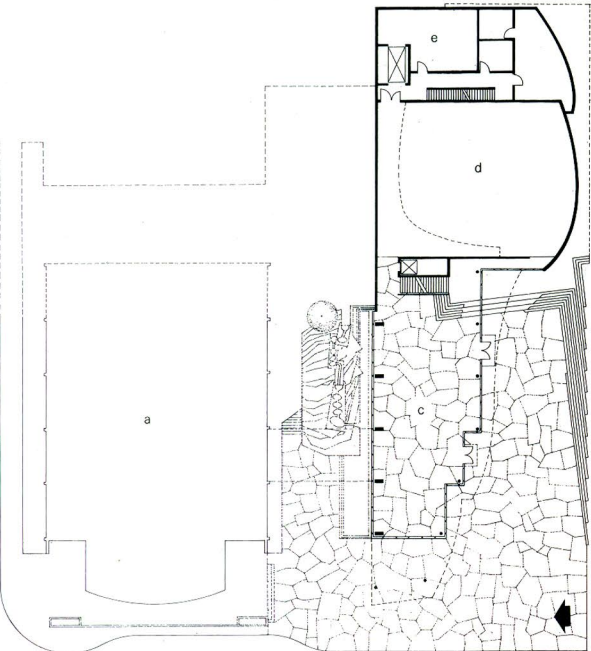
Norwegian evenings, this space is both democratic and inviting, with a rustic granite floor flowing through from the steps outside. The glazing continues from the doors facing on to the piazza round into the gap between the constituent buildings, so that views are through to the lobby out to a concocted rock garden beyond. The complete inner face

of the new construction is then revealed as a flush plane of glass with stainless steel mullions, the transparent inverse turned toward the north of the slatted carapace overlooking the square. The art itself is contained behind and above within the ark-like *piano nobile*. Granite steps from the vestibule lead directly to the upper floor where a long

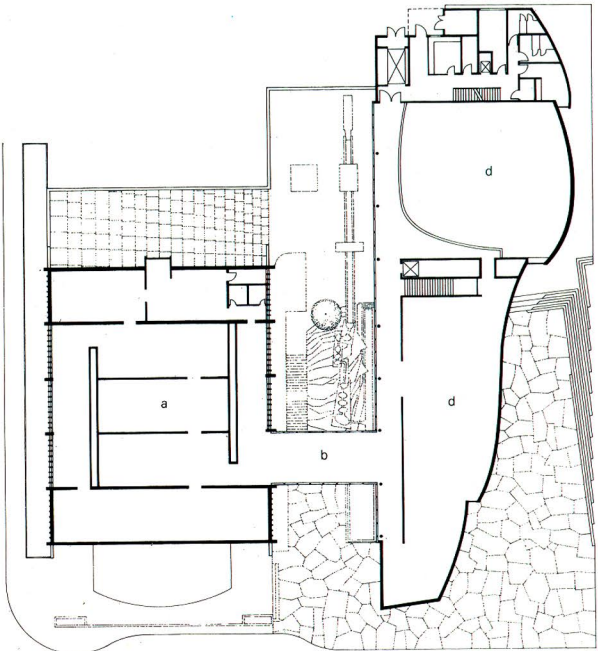


The new extension, centre, flanked by the existing '60s gallery, left

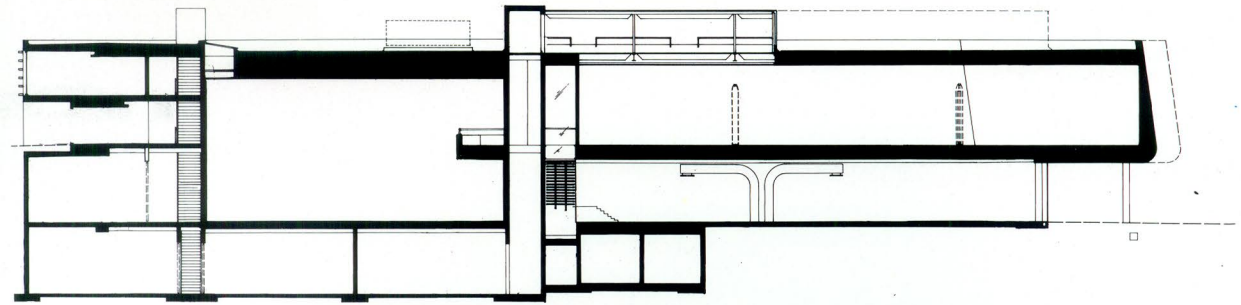
- Key
 a existing gallery
 b bridge link
 c foyer
 d galleries
 e administration



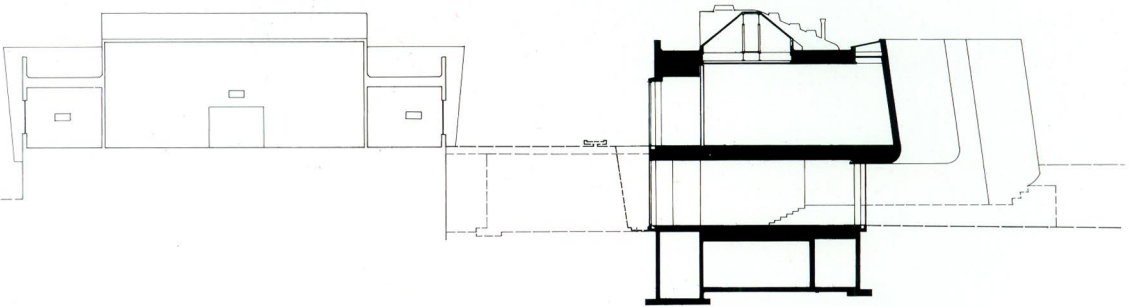
ground floor plan (1:250)



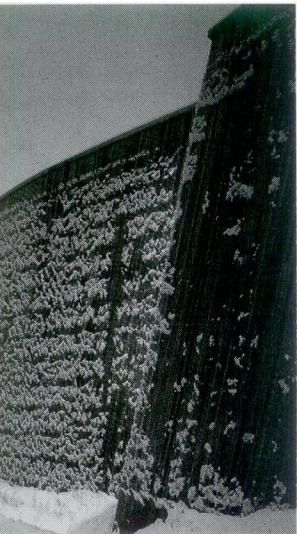
first floor plan



long section



cross section



corridor against the glass gives access to a series of modestly scaled galleries and the glazed link to the permanent collection housed within the 1960s building. Back behind the stairwell in the Snøhetta addition, the corridor mutates into a curving balcony overlooking a voluminous, discreet, double-height space that projects plumply on to the square. The architects have said that 'the new building assumes an irrational quality which is suggestive of its eclectic contents' so it is perhaps appropriate that this large temporary space should suggest some voided engine room. The balcony wraps around from one modest opening in the upper western wall, past expanses of north-facing glass, to lead through double doors into executive areas to the east. This contiguous plane separates from the floating soffit above, to allow itself to be washed by natural light.

The ribbon of skylight runs the full length of the new building,

along the horizontal silhouette so sharply visible from the square and into the prow with its galleries of diminishing girth. There, where the palate of simple white or polished wooden surfaces carries through, there is another centrally placed rooflight with integrated fixtures so that the ceiling is clear and suspended between curved and rectilinear slicings. These openings and the sloping outer surface undoubtedly challenge traditional curatorial sensibilities, but the potential of hanging work at angles less than 90° should be eagerly explored by installationists.

From the glazed link between the two volumes, stratified granite and stairs cascade from an upper sculpture garden down to the public pavement at the front of the building. This is in vibrant contrast to the severely flat and industrial quality of the transparent north-facing elevation and infested further with a series of channels and spouts developed

in conjunction with the artist Bård Brevik. The raised yard to the rear is more usable and more formal but the intermediate terracing is, according to Snøhetta, a metaphorical avalanche that will freeze during the winter months.

In the small town, the raised plateau of the gallery has a fluid monumentality. Back-of-house are various administrative and storage areas, with walls of glass continuing from the sculpture patio into a zone of loading and adjacent back gardens. A stairwell leads to the roof surface. From as this yet unusable deck, the prospect shoots directly to the mountain face in either direction, finding a kind of affinity between the edge of the museum's flank and the folds of the hillside that form the valley. RAYMUND RYAN



3
The bulbous larch-clad galleries
overhang the glazed foyer.



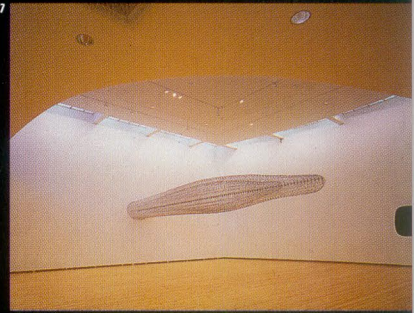
6

**Art museum,
Lillehammer, Norway**
Architect
Snohetta

- 4 Sensuously snow-faced cladding.
- 5 The balcony overlooking the main double-height gallery space.
- 6, 7 Upper level galleries. The sloping external walls challenge conventional curatorial sensibilities.



7



Client
Lillehammer 1994 Winter
Olympics, project department
Architect
Snohetta Architecture
Landscape a.s.
Project team
Craig Dykers, Elaine Molinar
Dykers, Per Morten Josefson,
Christoph Kapeller, Øyvind Mo,
Martin Roubik, Kjetil Trædal
Thorsen
Landscape architect
Snohetta Architecture
Landscape a.s.
Project team
Alf Haukeland, Jan Lovdal
Artistic Co-operation
Bård Breivik
Structural engineers
Norman Oslo a.s.
Mechanical engineers
Erichsen & Hørgen a.s.
Electrical engineers
Lassen & Bjørvig
Acoustic engineers
Brekke & Strand
General contractor
Selmer Indre Østland