

Assignment: Observation Study of the Guggenheim Museum and the Lincoln Center

Campus

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The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum (Guggenheim Museum) and the Lincoln Center of Performance Art (LPCA) are two iconic and internationally recognized art institutions that have influenced many other art organizations across the globe. Both institutions are located on the opposite side of New York's landmark the Central Park. The Guggenheim is placed on the Upper East Side and LPCA on the Upper West Side. To walk from one location to the other, it takes about 40 Minutes passing across Central Park, which is about 1,4 miles (2,3 km) away. New York has many renowned institutions, which are the world's leading presenters of various art forms, and shaped the world's art landscape. Guggenheim Museum and LPCA obviously belong to that group of leading institutions.

This observational study will describe the experience of two visits. The main focus of this study was to experience the layout of the interior architecture in conjunction with the core intention of both institutions "making art accessible to the public". I visited the institutions on two separate days in two different forms. Throughout my visit to the Guggenheim Museum, I independently walked through the space, and observed the structure of the interior architecture along with how the visitors moved and behaved in the space. At the Lincoln Center, I attended a tourist tour, which walked us through the Lincoln Center campus. Here I could mainly see how each building of the different departments are arranged to each other, and in which way the public could access the campus.

On Monday the President's Day holiday, February 18, 2019, I visited the exhibition "Hilma af Klint: Paintings of the Future", which will be on display until April 23, 2019, at the Guggenheim Museum on 1071 5th Ave in New York. I entered the building at about 4:30 pm and had one hour to experience the space of the museum. The museum was relatively

packed. I assume that on a holiday many people actually have time to do spare-time activities, such as going to a museum or gallery. When entering the building, promptly you can observe the core of the building on the right sight of the entrance, the rotunda. It grasped each person's attention immediately and guides everyone's view to the skylight. Frank Lloyd Wright designed and finished the impressive Guggenheim building, which first opened in 1959. This year, the museum is celebrating their 60's anniversary.

According to the museum's website¹, the idea was to first leave the art exhibition hidden, so that visitors would experience the spacious construction of the rotunda at first sight. The rotunda contains the spiral ramp that drifts to the domed skylight 96 feet (29,2 meters) above you. In total, the museum consists of a souvenir and book shop on the ground floor, a small reading room on the first gallery level, a café on the second gallery level, two separate gallery spaces adjusted to the rotunda on the first and second gallery level, the four-level gallery along the spiral ramp.

On the ground space, a lot of various happenings occur. People are sitting, chatting, taking pictures, walk through the main galleries that mainly are placed on the border of the ramp walkway, and also stand still to observe the airy and extensive place. While I was walking through the spiral, I have discovered a small hidden reading room. It is placed on the first level gallery. A small round entrance leads to the room, where selected art books are on display. Visitors can sit down in the room and quietly read the books. A librarian was sitting at the entrance, who was available for questions. On the second floor, another entrance guides through the café area with a view to the Central Park side. In addition, the café walls are decorated with printed wallpaper of archival photographs about the documented construction of the building. Differently, than usual quite white-wall gallery spaces, the structure of the museum felt very freely and pleasant to move around or hang out. On each gallery level, young security guides would watch over the space, but they did not interfere when people were speaking loud or taking pictures. The only time when I saw them interfere the visitor's experience was when it was time for everyone to leave the museum at 5:30 pm.

¹ Guggenheim website, SRGM, (2019, February 22, accessed), *The Guggenheim Museum on the Inside*, Retrieved from <https://www.guggenheim.org/arts-curriculum/topic/guggenheim-on-the-inside>

That is the closing time of the museum on Mondays. The museum displays circulating exhibitions throughout the year on three different in-house gallery spaces. “Hilma af Klint: Paintings of the Future”, in conjunction with “R.H. Quaytman: +x, Chapter 34” in the rotunda gallery, “Implicit Tensions, Mapplethorpe Now”, and “Guggenheim Collection: Brancusi” are currently on display.

On Tuesday, February 19, 2019, I attended a tour of the Lincoln Center campus. The campus is located on 112 West 60th Street in New York. The tour is accessible through an online ticket purchase, which happens on every workdays two times, at 11:30 am and 1:30 pm. In my tour, we were in total 10 persons. The group consists of mostly tourists, who were enthusiasts of the New York Theater, ballet or opera. The age range was about late 20s until 60s. Our tour guide was a woman named Carol, who seemed to work for the Lincoln Center of Performance Art Institutions (LCPA) for quite a while, and who had a lot of knowledge about the history of the buildings. Carol walked us through each of the Lincoln Center venue buildings, which contains of the David Geffen Hall, where the New York Philharmonic is placed, David H. Koch Theater, where the New York ballet company is housed, Metropolitan Opera House, and the Lincoln Center Theater.

The Lincoln Center of Performance Arts first opened in 1962 with their philharmonic theater building. Since then, the institution has programmed countless events in classical music, classical ballet, classic theater, Broadway Theater, contemporary theater, and opera. It annually hosts about 5 million visitors.² LCPA claims that their mission is to transmit their roles as “world’s leading presenter of superb artistic programming, national leader in arts and education, and community relations, and manager of the Lincoln Center campus³”. Today, LCPA holds 11 arts organization on one campus

While we walked through the lobby of each building, where many gifted arts to LCPA are on display, the guide informed us about the key history events of the architecture and in-house transition about events and their art companies throughout the time. From all

² Lincoln Center website, LCPA, (2019, February 22, accessed), *Transforming Lincoln Center*, Retrieved from <http://www.aboutlincolncenter.org/destination/transforming-lincoln-center/design>

³ Lincoln Center website, LCPA, (2019, February 22, accessed), *Overview*, Retrieved from <http://www.aboutlincolncenter.org/about/about-overview>

buildings, we were only allowed to see the theater stage and the philharmonic stage. We barely could have a glimpse of the ballet stage and did not have the chance to see the opera stage out of respect to the performers, who were rehearsing on the stage at that time. In the end, we did not see the Lincoln Center Film Society Theaters, the Julliard School, and the New York Public Library on the Lincoln Center campus. Outside on campus, the guide gave us quick background information about the intention of the outside design of the campus and the outside art pieces. That happened very swiftly because on that day the temperature was not warm enough to keep us outside for a long time. In total, the tour lasted for about two hours.

Both institutions, Guggenheim Museum, and LCPA, are art institutions that display art in forms of exhibitions or programs. These are institutions that are national and even international leaders in the art with the aim to foster art forms based on the idea of providing access to the public. The programs are only viewable through purchasing tickets. The prices at the Guggenheim vary due to each person's age or status, such as adult, child, students, senior and so on. The ticket prices of LCPA vary due to the seat area and depending on the show. Moreover, both institutions provide more access of their collections through LCPA's library housed on their campus or through the Guggenheim Museum's website. In comparison to their architectural design, both buildings look very impressive from the outside. The Guggenheim Museum's mark is the futuristic-looking architecture that can be observed from the outside, but also transmits that architectural spirit to the inside. Although in terms of space usage, visitors are more invited to see their collection and exhibition inside, once they purchased a ticket. The open space on Lincoln Center campus is free and open to the public. Usually, during the summertime, visitors can sit on the open and green space for hanging out and enjoy their lunch. It is a meeting point for most people, who are in the area. In addition, it is embellished with outdoor art pieces, and one café within the David Geffen Hall building is open to the public as well. In contradiction, inside each theater building, it is not open to the public throughout the day. Solely, visitors have to purchase a ticket for a tour or show. Besides, the institution does offer discount options for specific events or shows.

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