

# The Museum of Modern Art

For Immediate Release  
December 8, 1997

## THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART NAMES ARCHITECT FOR EXPANSION AND RENOVATION PROJECT

### Decision Follows an 18-Month-Long Search Process

Sid R. Bass, Chairman of the Architect Selection Committee of The Museum of Modern Art announced today that Japanese architect Yoshio Taniguchi has been chosen to design MoMA's expansion and renovation. The decision follows an extensive planning process in which the Museum projected its programming goals for the coming decades and defined its facilities needs. Construction is expected to begin in two to three years.

The project is the most ambitious in the Museum's 68-year history, and will accommodate the growing demand for the display of its unique permanent collection, as well as for special exhibitions, public programming, and educational and scholarly resources. At present, only about ten percent of the collection can be displayed at any one time, and a number of large contemporary works cannot be displayed at all.

"The excellence of all three candidates and the quality of their submissions made this a difficult decision," said Museum Chairman Ronald S. Lauder. "However, in the unanimous opinion of the Architect Selection Committee, Mr. Taniguchi demonstrated exceptional creative vision as well as a sensitivity to the Museum, its 68-year history, and its myriad, complex needs. Anyone who has seen his buildings in Japan will understand what a truly brilliant architect he is."

"Today's announcement is the culmination of a long and thorough search process as befits a project which will set the trajectory for the Museum far into the next century," remarked Museum President Agnes Gund. "The Museum is committed to an international approach to modern art and architecture. This process has reflected that commitment throughout."

-more-

Born in 1937, Yoshio Taniguchi is well known in his native Japan for his uniquely beautiful museums of modern art. These include: Nagano Prefectural Museum (1990); Marugame Genichiro-Inokuma Museum of Contemporary Art (1988–91); Toyota Municipal Museum of Art (1991–1995); and the Tokyo National Museum, The Gallery of the Horyuji Treasures, now under construction. Mr. Taniguchi is a graduate of Keio University (1960) and Harvard University (1964), and worked for architect Kenzo Tange between 1964–1972. This is his first design competition, and his first international commission.

Mr. Taniguchi's beautiful and bold design for The Museum of Modern Art reflects the unique vitality of midtown Manhattan and sensitively draws upon and transforms the language of modernism. Highlights include larger, more flexible, sky-lit galleries for contemporary art; architecturally distinctive galleries for masterpieces of modern art; and prominent and more comprehensive areas for study, research, and educational endeavors.

Mr. Taniguchi's spacious, light-filled, and lucid public spaces clearly articulate dramatic changes in the Museum's program. His design also restores and enhances a number of the Museum's noteworthy architectural features, among them: The Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Sculpture Garden, which is expanded to its pre-1984 configuration; the existing Goodwin & Stone façade, which is restored as the new entrance to the film and video center; the "Bauhaus" staircase, which becomes a connection between departmental galleries; and the 1984 Cesar Pelli Museum Tower, which is integrated more fully into the urban ensemble.

Mr. Taniguchi has stated that his goal is "to create an ideal environment for art and people through the imaginative and disciplined use of light, materials, and space." He is confident that "it is possible to transform MoMA into a bold new museum while maintaining its historical, cultural, and social context."

In addition to Mr. Bass, Mr. Lauder, and Ms. Gund, the Museum's Architect Selection Committee is composed of Museum Trustees David Rockefeller, Sr., Marshall S. Cogan, and Jerry I. Speyer, as well as Museum Director Glenn D. Lowry. Several members of the Museum's Board of Trustees and the Committee on Architecture and Design served as advisors: Edward Larrabee Barnes, Barbara Jakobson, and Philip Johnson. The committee was assisted by several staff members including Terence Riley, Chief Curator of the Department of Architecture and Design, and John Elderfield, Deputy Director for Curatorial Affairs and Chief Curator at Large.

The Committee began the search process by undertaking a comprehensive survey of contemporary architecture, which included visits to sites in more than 30 cities worldwide, as well as in-depth research and extensive consultations. In October 1996, leading artists, critics, architects, and museum directors from around the world participated in a conference to discuss the future of museums of modern art. The Museum also hosted a series of public lectures and symposia. At the same time, the Museum, working with Cooper, Robertson & Partners, undertook an extensive analysis of its space and facilities and programmatic needs. The 18-month-long project was coordinated by Karen Davidson of MoMA. All of these initiatives helped the Architect Selection Committee to set the parameters for the project, and to identify a group of architects capable of meeting the challenges and the opportunities offered by the Museum's complicated urban site, which has already been expanded several times.

Initially, ten international architects were invited to participate in a design exercise, or charrette, the purpose of which was to explore basic urban and conceptual issues pertinent to the Museum's site. The three finalists were among these participants, and they were then invited to develop designs for the new museum. In addition to Mr. Taniguchi, the other finalists were the Swiss architectural firm Herzog & de Meuron, and American architect Bernard Tschumi. An exhibition of the three competition entries

will open at the Museum in early March. Over the next several months, the design submitted by Yoshio Taniguchi will be further developed and refined.

"This is an extraordinarily exciting juncture in the Museum's history. At no time since its founding has there been a better opportunity for The Museum of Modern Art to undertake such a bold and innovative redefinition of itself," said Museum Director Glenn D. Lowry. "The expansion and renovation is key to this process, and will help ensure that MoMA continues to be the foremost museum of modern art in the world throughout the next century."

The Museum's current expansion and renovation project began in February 1996 with the acquisition of the Dorset Hotel and adjacent properties and is expected to take up to ten years to complete. The Museum will be expanded to the northwest of its present site, and its "footprint" will be altered significantly. At present, no dollar figure has been attached to the project, pending the outcome of an extensive needs analysis, the creation and approval of final designs, and cost estimates for their implementation.

\* \* \*

No. 87

For further information contact Elizabeth Addison, Deputy Director for Marketing and Communications, 212/708-9593. Visit our Web site at [www.moma.org](http://www.moma.org).