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The Richard A. F. ***Penrose*** *Lecture*
The Changing Landscape of Museums
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ALLOW ME TO set the tone of this talk on the changing landscape of art museums today by recounting some of my activities of the past few weeks.

In December, I flew to Paris for a meeting with the director of the Réunion des musées nationaux.
Q. Was I negotiating for important loans of works of art and making my case with a carefully elaborated intellectual argument, presenting the institution's credentials of seriousness in such matters?
A. No, I was there to argue subtle points of U.S. government indemnity and commercial insurance with regard to terrorism coverage, an increasing concern worldwide.
In January, I wrote to a major art museum in London, with whom we were organizing an important exhibition, that we were dropping out.
Q. Was there some disagreement about the shape of the exhibition, its scholarly content, its focus, the unavailability of critical works whose absence would compromise the show? Or even an unavoidable scheduling conflict?
A. Not at all. The reason was that the British institution in question had decided to impose an "intellectual rights" fee for our participation, well into the six figures, giving as a reason that one of their curators had the lead role. Mind you, this was not a package show drawn entirely from their collection, for which such fees are now routinely charged, but a genuine collaboration, with loans coming from many different institutions and scholarly contributions from our own curators as well.
Recently, I took out the files on a group of Hellenistic silver pieces,which we had bought more than a generation ago.
Q. Was it to consider a new installation to better illustrate the migration of styles in the Mediterranean world, in Magna Graecia,or to compare to related works now on the market that we mightbe considering for purchase?
A. You know the answer. It's no; this was not an artistic, but apolitical issue. We needed to study the file in the light of a claim by a certain government that these pieces had been illegally exported from the putative source country and therefore should be returned.Well, I think that's enough of "a day in the life of." I think you get thepoint, which is summed in what these stories have in common.Which is, that they are not about art; art qua art. About works of art as rare and precious objects of aesthetic merit, about art, collected,preserved, and presented for delectation and study, which is the mission, the *raison justificative* of the art museum, *and* its great usefulness;for art, I hardly need to tell you, is a great deal more than pretty pictures or lovely objects. Works of art are important manifestations of the creative spirit; they embody the deepest aspirations of a time andplace, and therefore constitute critical primary evidence for the under standing of mankind and thus of ourselves.
So these stories—and each illustrates a critical issue for today'smuseums—are about works of art as something else altogether; they are about art either as national cultural property, of a narrow sectarian interest, or art as commodity; works of art as chattels, physical assets to be converted into lucre, marketed, packed, shipped, and unpacked,promoted, and reproduced. In other words, commodities to be openly traded in the new *cultural marketplace*, the museum world; that is astern way to characterize it, perhaps, but it's not so far off, I'm afraid.
"The adversary hath spread out his hand upon all her pleasant things:for she hath seen that the heathen entered into her sanctuary, whomthou didst command that they should not enter into Thy congregation."

I am not the first to quote the lamentations of Jeremiah in the context of a lecture on museums. In the late sixties Sherman Lee, then director of the Cleveland Museum of Art, quoted the lamentations in a talk in which he was deploring an exhibition mounted by my predeces-sor, Tom Hoving; it was called *Harlem on my Mind*, was held at the Met in 1968, and was a show of social history and photojournalism the changing landscape of museums containing almost no art.
Lee wondered about what this politically motivated exercise presaged, especially at a time when public clamor for greater social engagement and relevance on the part of museums called for dispersing their collections to local communities at the expense of their traditional role as central repositories.
So, in starting with some vivid instances of the growing politicization, bureaucratization, and commercialization of museums, a worrisome phenomenon to which I shall return, and which explains the jeremiad, I must emphasize, lest I appear merely querulous, that there is still a pretty good story to tell about art museums; they have weathered the storm of the 1960s rather well, and to their credit they have responded to the strident and misguided arch-democratic voices of that era with a responsible and salutary opening up to the public, a wider public than ever, without, for the most part, compromising their core mission.
Let me stress further that the degree of professionalism that informs all levels of museum work is as high today as I have ever known it. It is therefore a real shame that the conscientious, scholarly, and imaginative work that curators are producing today is so ill served by their museums' policies in so many areas—policies that have let the merchants into the "temple," though perhaps not quite yet into the "sanctuary." But there are indications that further invasions may not be far off, and we cannot afford to accept the current climate with complacency.

So what is the state of art museums today, and what bodes for tomorrow?
In the first place, we note that museums are today much larger physically, as well as in the size of the staff, and in their budgets. With such huge expansion in all areas it is inevitable that museums have become far more complex and harder to manage. I bring a quarter century of perspective to this transformation and I can assure you it is real, and dramatic.
Size in itself is not a problem, of course, but it is symptomatic of a prevailing attitude, an expansive approach to the museum's public role, and larger buildings do need to be maintained, and larger budgets fueled by money, which has to be made or raised. The resulting pressures have led to an unhealthy clash between market and mission forces. The very composition of museum staffs today tells much about which way is the tilt.
At the Met, which prides itself, I hope with justification, on having maintained a healthy balance between market and mission, the statistics are nevertheless very revealing. Since I've been director, going back to 1977, the building has almost doubled in size, from one million to two million square feet, and our professional staff has doubled (from 52 to 110 curators), whereas the support staff, that is, the administration, has multiplied by five, and the operating budget by ten. Yet how many more visitors are we serving? The sobering answer is only about 35 to 40 percent more. One of my predecessors, Francis Henry Taylor, who ran a much smaller Metropolitan in the 1940s, borrowed from Coleridge to describe the institution as a "stately pleasure dome"; I confess there are moments these days when I wonder whether it would not be more apt to describe it as a "cavern measureless to man."
This growth at the Met and elsewhere, which answered the need for housing growing collections and the desire to improve educational services to broader audiences, has resulted in spectacular and perhaps a bit too spectacular success, namely in a huge increase in programs, led by exhibitions. The fact is that the increased costs of the larger museums can only be met by increased revenues, and these, in art museums, are closely tied to attendance and admissions, and the ancillary income generated in the book shops, restaurants, parking garages, and the like.
Thus the continuing pressure to keep the public coming in ever greater numbers translates into pressure to mount yet more exhibitions; and success at the gate, it would logically seem, calls for subjects of a popular nature, a point to which I shall also return. With the need to sustain what has become a dizzying momentum in the activity level in order to maintain financial equilibrium, museums have in effect shifted from being primarily repositories for the display of works of art, to being activity centers. With the plethora of programs and initiatives launched almost daily, and with

exhibition openings following each other in rapid succession, and our hyperactivity in every arena, we are very far indeed from the application of Bernard Berenson's aphorism, "the work of art is the event."

Put another way, the prominence given to amenities and the high level of activity—which in my view is not the glow of health but the flush of fever—is the manifestation of a new focus, a shift of emphasis from collections to visitors. Indeed, the work of art, once sovereign, has ceded primacy of place to the public as our main preoccupation— just count staff and staff time devoted to visitor issues as opposed to works of art, and read the literature put out by the American Association of Museums, which emphasizes museums, first and foremost, as instruments for social change.

I don't mean that there is a conflict between art and public, of course; this is a matter of emphasis. Museums have always served the public for which they were established, always cared deeply about their visitors, but until relatively recently the main focus of attention was the work devoted to the collections, from acquisitions to research and the changing landscape of museums publication

All else devolved from these activities, including service to the public. It's now simply reversed; and while the collections are not neglected, not by any means, it just happens that it is the public to which most staff devotes its attention. And herein lies an interesting paradox: when the visitor occupies center stage, as opposed to the work of art, he is likely to be less well served, not better, because, as the museum strives to attract him and please him, it will tend to cater to him. To insure that he is counted at the gate, he will not be overly challenged (intellectually). Instead, the program will tend to be geared to his present level of artistic sophistication. By definition that is not a broadening or enhancing experience, of the kind that museums are obligated by charter or mission to provide.

And so we see more and more museums vying for so-called blockbuster exhibitions that perforce mostly explore the same limited number of subjects, endless variations on a theme. I'm sure the current touring exhibition on van Gogh and fields is full of beautiful pictures, but can we really say that the show had to be done, that the pictures needed to be brought together for us to better understand the oeuvre of van Gogh? Shows like this, and other such variations on a theme, as I've said, are meant to appeal to a public whose range of interests in art, on the whole, is relatively narrow. And who but museums should be blamed if that is so?

If museums continue to spoon-feed the same subjects to their public, themes endlessly revisited because of their predictable popular appeal (most people, after all, favor what they already know), then the public will not learn to demand more of museums or of art, their horizons having not been sufficiently expanded. We must show more trust in our public. People are eager to learn.

Even the most recondite subject will find favor if presented with seriousness, clarity, and a modicum of flair. Exhibitions don't have to qualify for the tabloids to be successful. For example, a priori, the art of Byzantium, or tapestries of the Renaissance, to use examples from the Metropolitan Museum, are not what you would expect to be popular subjects. Yet these and many other exhibitions of a similarly arcane nature have proved enormously popular. The public knows full well the difference between pabulum served up to entice it into the museum— which it will ultimately resent, knowing it has been shortchanged in the process—and programs born of seriousness of purpose and true educational motivation.

What is in question here is not a museum's need to be responsive to its public—for it goes without saying that it should—but public approval based on trust, on the visitor's sense that he is not being pandered to.

In the end no one appreciates being indulged or patronized, and it is by treating our visitors with respect that we will gain theirs, in challenging them, *and* to reassure those who might fear for the bottom line in such an approach, I would say that with their visitors' respect, museums would also gain their long-term loyalty and support, the loyalty and support of those, and they are many, who understand that works of art are difficult of access and require, to be appreciated, some degree of attentiveness; that they do not blare out their message at the blink of an eye nor offer the quick fix provided by most amusements; that is, the currency of the entertainment industry, of places whose business it is to provide easy gratification, such as amusement parks, gambling casinos, and the like, but not museums.

While for most members of the public, visiting a museum is, quite naturally, a leisure time activity, and therefore a choice as between amusement parks, let's say, and the art museum, I don't believe the public equates these activities. The vast majority of museum visitors, as a multitude of surveys confirm, go to art museums as a deliberate choice to raise their sights. And, linked perhaps to the phenomenon of declining leisure time, our public tells us it is seeking to offer broader horizons for its children. The educational value of museums is stressed, though not only that provided by programs, but also that inherent in the contemplation of art itself, unmediated.

Yet the prominence we give to our amenities and our myriad activities has caused many in the press and elsewhere to compare museums to shopping malls and theme parks. Perhaps that is why I now receive invitations to conventions addressed to "Entertainment Executive."

Sadly, some of our colleagues actually feel that they can only succeed (read success as measured by numbers), if they compete with the entertainment industry. The Guggenheim says it publicly. I quote their director of corporate communications in a statement that amounts to an astonishing lack of trust in the institution's very reason for being, the work of art: "We are in the entertainment business, and competing against other forms of entertainment."

And yet, of course, we should do exactly the opposite: it is by clearly differentiating ourselves from all manner of entertainment that we maintain our integrity, that we remain not only useful but essential.

Rather than competing with the entertainment industry for audiences— with theme parks, for one, which is bound to fail, incidentally—we must emphasize what makes us different and special, indeed unique, such as authenticity and the wonder of art, and we must capitalize on these differences—and not desperately try to be something else.

Only then can museums hope to capture and retain the loyal visitors they seek, not those best described as fickle, who would flock to the changing landscape of museums some razzle-dazzle event or two, and never be seen again. I must say, the increasingly frequent flirting of some art museums with spectacles of popular culture, which I would prefer not to name, brings to mind Hamlet's chiding the actors for their histrionics on stage, which "though it make the unskillful laugh, cannot but make the judicious grieve."

When museums rush to be commercial, or seek to titillate their visitors with cheap thrills, we see a lamentable failure of nerve and a sad lack of understanding, or to be kinder, expedient disregard for the true nature of art museums, which cannot be confused with, for example, theme parks, so that blurring the line between the two is both unnecessary and ill-advised.

I can best illustrate this by letting the late Harvard paleontologist Stephen J. Gould speak to the issue. As you may know, Stephen J.Gould was a master of high popularization and an acknowledged fan of theme parks. Here is Gould writing about *Dinomania*, an exhibition mounted at the American Museum of Natural History at the time of the showing of the film *Jurassic Park.* Gould condemns the inclusion of plastic dinosaurs and articulated robots in the galleries as a lure for the public:

"All institutions have central purposes that define their integrity and being. Museums exist to display authentic objects of nature and culture— yes, they must teach; and yes, they may certainly include all manner of computer graphics to aid in this worthy effort; but they must remain wed to authenticity. Theme parks are gala places of entertainment, committed to using the best displays and devices from the arsenals of virtual reality to titillate, to scare, to thrill, even to teach." And he adds, "I happen to love theme parks, so I do not speak from a rarefied academic post in a dusty museum office. But theme parks are, in many ways, the antithesis of museums. Theme parks belong to the realm of commerce, museums to the world of education." Gould then concludes by saying museums don't need to compromise to attract visitors, for, as he says, "We have an absolutely wonderful product to flog, real objects; we may never attract as many people as Jurassic Park, but we can still attract many: because, luckily, and I do not pretend to understand why, authenticity stirs the human soul."Gould's wonderful words apply just as well, naturally, to art museums, which should also be wary of market pressures.

Our institutions, even though often founded by businessmen, were not created to make money. Indeed, it has been observed that if there were money to be made in museums, then businesses would be buying them up or creating their own. Museums were based on deeper values, values that affirm human creativity on the part of individuals and *civilizations.*

Now it is worth spending a moment on this word's cognate, *civility*, for that is a virtue increasingly lost in the relations among museums, where once basic notions of comity applied. And the dispiriting stories I began with, which are the norm, not the exception, are an illustration of this. Civility lost in the frenzied quest for revenue generation, with popular exhibitions at the head of the line.

Yet, if the public is to trust in the integrity of our programs, it must be reassured that these come about as the result of a process of scholarly detachment and, among museums, a spirit of collegiality. This is important because the works of art exhibitions comprise are mostly borrowed. Now, there was a time, one I still remember, when loans, quite properly, were obtained only after providing the potential lenders with a serious rationale, an intellectual argument as justification. Today, I'm afraid, for many loans, the intellectual argument—which we should and which we actually like to make—is too often brushed aside and replaced by requests for payment or a quid pro quo (swapping picture for picture). The insistence on strict reciprocity is now so pervasive that some institutionalized it

Here is a quote—verbatim—from a letter sent to me by the director of a major museum from whom we had requested a loan, and to which we had subsequently refused one for unassailable conservation reasons, the picture being in an extremely fragile state: "It is with great regret that I am compelled to refuse you the loan of 'x' which we had previously granted, in vain as it turns out, since you now deny us the loan of picture 'y,' thereby breaking established principles of reciprocity." Only in my colleague's mind, I'm afraid. But rather more serious, is that the issue of the picture's fragility seemed to be of so little concern to him.

Now I don't want to bore you with a recitation of the innumerable examples of such textbook exploitations of market forces, but again, lest I be branded a Cassandra, I'll mention a couple because the attitudes revealed are what should really concern us.

I've mentioned that entire exhibitions are circulating routinely in exchange for substantial sums, as much as the market will bear. But the converse is also at work, and what you may not know, is that some museums have actually offered large sums of money in order to secure loans that the standing of their institutions or the level of their resident scholars would not otherwise justify, loans of works so important, usually, that without the dollar incentive, they would be turned down out of hand.

And if there weren't enough museums competing for works of art, we now see outside groups and service organizations joining the fray and circulating loan shows, for a fee. Among these are for-profit entities the changing landscape of museums including corporations. According to the *Wall Street Journal*, a large media conglomerate, "in an effort to move into the high-profile world of blockbuster shows, is circulating an exhibition of treasures from the Vatican Museums." The article goes on to say that the company expects to be paid back from ticket sales and, after it has recouped its costs, will split further ticket income with the participating museums.

In yet another market-driven maneuver, some museums are entering into formal but, it seems to me, rather artificial and exclusionary alliances, in order to assure themselves of the availability of major works of art or ready-made shows. Most notable among these are the Hermitage and the Kunsthistorisches with the Guggenheim. One not too obvious casualty of such alliances will be loans to serious exhibitions, exhibitions born of a scholarly imperative, where the argument made for borrowing a work of art is highly specific and does not allow for a substitute. Already we have seen important loans preempted by commitments to such alliances, or exhibitions of the "treasures from" variety that have been organized for a fee.

Add to all this the phenomenon of cultural tourism, and the demand for works of art to travel grows even further. In the U.S., for example, some city officials (even without the Olympics) have mounted huge exhibitions or spectacles that nevertheless include important works of art. And now, one European capital has just opened a large new space for the presentation of international loan exhibitions. What kind of shows? They've already got requests out for two on Impressionist themes, both to be held in the next year—how serious can these be? Cast out a big net, take what's offered, and cut the ribbon.

As I've just mentioned, by necessity, loans entail the physical movement of works of art and the concomitant risk in handling and shipping. For this reason alone, we must insure that the exhibitions towhich we lend have a seriousness of purpose that truly warrants taking the calculated risk inherent in any loan. This speaks directly to the obligation art museums have, not simply to the public of the moment, but to the public of the future through our responsible stewardship of the works of art in our care, of which we are the trustees for posterity.

Now, when I speak of our responsibility not to put works of art unduly at risk, that is in the nature of caring for their *physical* well being. But on another plane, not so easily defined, and seldom spoken of, I believe we also owe it to works of art that they be treated with dignity and propriety. Over and beyond the traditional art historical and museological attention we must pay to works of art, we owe them respect (they are inanimate objects and can't defend themselves) and so we must be mindful of the context in which they are shown. We can't wash our hands of this, comforted merely by the thought that it's the borrower's business—he pays the costs, it's safe, so why fret?

In truth, we are not free to do with works of art as we please. How we deal withthem should conform to the well-articulated professional practices of our field and to our unwritten, but no less widely shared, deontological code.

The context in which we show works of art, even on loan, must be appropriate and it must become them, which is why I was always uneasy about exhibitions in Japan presented on the top floors of department stores, and wonder now about Las Vegas hotels and casinos as venues. I know this has been called audience development, and taking art to the people, but I can't help taking this with a grain of salt, the business end of these ventures having been just a little too neatly defined. I also know that it has become popular to suggest that museums, in order to be fully accessible, to appeal to the broadest possible public, should not be removed from everyday experience, that they should blend into our public's quotidian surroundings as much as possible. A prominent architect described his program for an important American museum thus: "I tried to create a museum that was not elitist, that made art part of everyday life"; not, he added, like earlier museums, "pavillioned galleries set apart from the hubbub of daily life."

Ladies and gentlemen, when you enter an art museum, is it really an extension of that hubbub that you're after? Do you really want the museum experience to be demystified, as has also been suggested? I should also note that, more and more, in their building programs, museums are devoting actually less space to galleries than to gift shops, restaurants, members' lounges, and other such amenities.

In many places, in many minds, the new cultural mall *is* the order of the day. When the growth of amenities begins to outpace all else in the museum, when for the "museum experience" all the ancillary activities—including tai chi in the galleries—are given primacy over the direct experience of art itself, we have a shift in priorities that bears watching. Once again, Shakespeare sums up the problem perfectly, in Hector's exhortation from *Troilus and Cressida*: "t'is mad idolatry to put the service before the God."

But closer to our time it is the great British art historian, the late Ernst Gombrich, who has most pertinently addressed our concern about the multiplication of programs and amenities leading to the new "museum experience":

Our egalitarian age wants to take the awe out of the museum. It should be a friendly place, welcoming to everyone. Of course, it should be. Nobody should feel afraid to enter it . . . but as far as I cansee, the real psychological problem here is how to lift the burden of the changing landscape of museums fear, which is the fear of the outsider who feels he does not belong, without also killing what for want of a better word I must still call respect. Such respect seems to me inseparable from the thrill of genuine admiration, which belongs to our enjoyment of art. This admiration is a precious heritage which is in danger of being killed with kindness. In short, we should not crowd out from the museum stage, for any reason, the principal players, those engaged in that most precious colloquy, between work of art, curator, and visitor. *That* is the optimum museum experience.

Now, having shown myself rather strict, and having painted a somewhat melancholy picture of the state of art museums, I wish to conclude on a more positive note, as I do believe—and I've said it earlier—that not any of the symptoms of the current malaise are irreversible. Nor have they reached our museums' vital organs. A number of the concerns I've raised reflect the cumulative effect of many relatively minor transgressions that, taken singly, are venial sins.But in the aggregate they do translate into a distorted view of our mission, and a new market-oriented culture that could well undermine the entire edifice if allowed to continue unchecked. Even in business, I think you know the price that is paid over the long term when R&D (research and development) is reduced, yielding to market forces.

But, given that notwithstanding all the commercialization and popularization, museums' acquisitions still reflect sound scholarship and connoisseurship, that art is, on the whole, admirably installed, that standards of conservation are high, that exhibitions, for the most part, are intelligent and well conceived (among those are such manifest blockbusters as *Matisse Picasso* at MoMA, *Manet/Velázquez* at the Met, or *Degas and the Dance* in Philadelphia; a subject with popular appeal can be legitimate and treated in a scholarly manner), and considering that the public is served by outstanding educational programs, it should not be that difficult to find a way to a healthy future,avoiding the pitfalls of excessive commercialization, consumerism, and popularization.

To this end, I would like to conclude with the provision of a few principles that I feel could be applied to great benefit by all art museums.

The first and most obvious principle, though by no means the easiest to follow, is to *build up the endowment.* It stands to reason that absolute integrity in programming is best achieved when there is adequate funding and the pressure to generate revenue is contained. What stands in our way is our own relentless push to increase programming and to build; these activities, combined with the ongoing need for operating funds, seem to absorb all our energies and exhaust our funding sources, just short of that critical "ask," as we say in the vernacular, for those much needed endowment funds.

Principle number two would be to make sure to *gain and retain the public's trust*, and central to this notion are three ingredients: *integrity*, *authority*, and *authenticity.* As guarantor of the public's trust I use *integrity* in the sense of probity, of course, as in our conduct, but also integrity as when the public puts its trust in museums to exercise independent judgment, uninflected by current fashion and politics.

Also important to public trust is *authority*, as that which inspires confidence in the visitor who feels secure in the knowledge that the finest scholarship informs the museum's programs and presentations. Our visitor's resulting confidence in the critical framework that curators use in the selection of the art on view, allows that visitor, in viewing the art, to abandon himself totally, freely to pure enjoyment—without that gnawing and unsettling feeling that something is being put over on him. That is the meaning *and* the greatest benefit of trust. This is authority as distinct from authoritarianism. It is neither prescription nor proscription; it is not the autocratic dictation, *ex cathedra*, of greater truths to lesser mortals. Indeed, authority carries within it the humility that is the mark of true scholarship; that is, it knows what it doesn't know and it calls for constant reassessment as new facts alter older beliefs. That is the authority that inspires confidence, and ultimately it affirms its credibility by the purity of its intentions.

The third component of the *public trust* principle, after integrity and authority, is *authenticity.* If it is also at its core, it is quite simply because, since what we promise is authenticity, the real thing, that is what our public expects to find within our walls, not repro ductions or imitations, at least not in place of the original work of art. After all, part of the thrill we derive from looking at a work of art, over and beyond its aesthetic appeal, is the knowledge, the confidence we have, the absolute trust we must have that the work of art before us is the very one created by the artist to whom it is ascribed, not a clone, not a simulacrum, not anything else. Which is one reason, incidentally, why we should not fear the advent of the cyber-museum even with high-definition images. The lure of the original, the magic of the authentic is just too strong, and it is human nature that it will always be sought. A happy thought this, for it means that art museums will always be needed the changing landscape of museums

This last principle, the public trust, has its converse, *trust in the public.* Briefly put, to earn and keep the public's trust we mustn't sell the public short. We must match our faith in one's mission with faith in the public's ability and desire to share in it, a faith that experience shows is not misplaced.

I would also include *commitment* among the principles, for to insure the right priorities there must be total commitment and belief in the core mission on the part of the governing authorities, not just lip service. One caveat: one must be careful not to turn the mission into a sacrosanct doctrine, a mantra held up righteously at every turn. This can only engender distrust on the part of those for whom the mission may not be quite so self-evident and, in any event, unexamined beliefs—including one's mission—tend to be an impediment to judicious change.

A further principle should deal with recognition of our *uniqueness*, a proper understanding of our special nature, and the realistic— that is, more modest—expectations such an understanding should

engender. In other words, we must accept that art museums are not about mass entertainment and thus we must set attainable goals.
We should emphasize, in programs and promotion, what makes us unique and different, and accept that museums will always have—that is the nature of the artistic experience—a relatively limited audience.
In this context I thought some of what was written recently as a result of the change of publishers at Random House was pertinent here, and I quote from a late January *New York Times* editorial byVerlyn Klinkenborg: Like the film and music industries, publishing is now driven wholly by the search for blockbuster books and blockbuster profits, a practice driven in part by paying large advances to blockbuster authors. The old assumptions of book publishing that it earned modest, steady profits built on a respected stable of authors and a deep backlist now seem practically prehistoric. . . .
Perhaps it's too much to hope for the beginning of the end of conglomeration in the book world or for a return to a more modest set of expectations. The museum world, too, which has the advantage that right up front it can proclaim its nonprofit status, should have more realistic expectations.

Therefore the next principle: consider *growth* with some degree ofcircumspection. Growth per se is not a path to success. It should be clearly aimed at enhancing the museum experience, but largely, in my view, in terms of today's audiences, which, considering the pace of activity in our museums and the demographics of our cities, are probably about as large as we can expect. In terms of numbers, then, I have a sense that museums are now at or near their solstice.
This may vary from city to city and from museum to museum, of course, so speaking for the Met, I would say that the numbers we have seen recently while both the Leonardo drawings show and *Manet/Velázquez* were on simultaneously, are likely to represent, for years to come, a high point of visitorship.

And the last principle, with which I conclude, is this: focus on *education*, by which I do not mean only the museum's education programs, but education in the schools, which I'm afraid is largely out of our hands, that is, the hands of those who run museums. And I don't mean art history, either, over which we should have some sway or impact, but history, literature, and the humanities in general, because if we want to maintain our present levels of visitorship and wish to achieve some growth and greater diversity, then we must use all our influence to try to develop the visitors of the future; and they can only come from a well-educated citizenry.