

# From Nike to MoMA : brand-building and -processing in the 'theseum'

Autor(en): **Liebs, Holger**

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HOLGER LIEBS

## From Nike to MoMA

Brand-building and -processing in the 'theseum'

### 1) Event marketing

*The clever child. 'Can you touch a star?' one asks.  
'Yes', the child replies, bends over and touches the earth.  
From the estate of Hugo von Hofmannsthal*

The Venice Biennale, which is the oldest in the world, is also the most popular, thanks to the *genius loci* of the *Serenissima*. Every two years, the art world, whose one hundred most important personalities were selected and listed alphabetically by the Berlin art magazine *Monopol* in June 2005, meets for a Bellini-soaked get-together before the procession moves on from the national pavilion showcases of the latest works of art on the lagoon to the great marketplace in Basle. Here, at the world's largest art fair, it is not unusual for art works that have just been displayed to represent national artistic interests already to be up for sale. At the 2005 Biennale, the artist Olaf Nicolai put the allegedly disinterested presentation of art to the test by declaring as art an event that would have happened in any case: the 'Perseids', shooting stars in the constellation of Perseus and also known as 'The Tears of St. Lawrence', were not visible during the first few days of the Biennale, but could be seen from the entire northern hemisphere only in August 2005. However, the conceptual art work, whose only tangible surrogate is a brochure with instructions for star-gazing, should not be seen as a prank, but is meant completely seriously. Nicolai's work of art is authenticated through self-affirmation alone, and thus assumes the form of a product. The artist sold it to a collector before the Biennale had even begun. Thus Nicolai's commentary on the *grand spectacle* between the Lagoon and the Rhine is registered by the art world as marketing an event for which no advertising was necessary and also as an allusion to the unavailability of an aesthetic event in the art world – and hence becomes part of the system on which it passes comment. Naomi Klein's bestseller *No Logo* is also read mainly by big businessmen. Yet not all art works can so cleverly anticipate the use to which they are put or make that use their main characteristic.

### a) This way, please: Flick and Kippenberger

The title of Martin Kippenberger's picture *Ich kann beim besten Willen kein Hakenkreuz erkennen* (Try as I might, I can't see a swastika) plays a perfidious game with the disguise of its subject. Numerous bars are interlinked in such a way on the canvas that the search suggested by the title always leads only *almost* to the desired result. Taken on its own, the motif merely shows an abstract spatial construction, a kind of sculpture made of colourful wooden boards nailed together. Only Kippenberger's reference to a verbal cliché frequently repeated by Germans coming to terms with the Second World War turns the painting into a puzzle that sarcastically refers to denials of National Socialism in post-war Federal Germany. Decades after Hitler's dictatorship, swastikas still adorned the most insignificant entrances to buildings. Declaring the swastika to be a symbol of shame and a warning to future generations in fact legitimized its continued existence. It was also publicly legitimized on important institutions such as in the marble ceilings of the colonnades at Munich's Haus der Kunst.

Less than a year before the opening of his collection at the Hamburger Bahnhof (Hamburg Station) and the adjacent Rieck Halls in Berlin, the art collector and former entrepreneur Friedrich Christian Flick acquired Kippenberger's picture from the artist's estate. At this time, the financial basis of Flick's collection, which he had inherited from his grandfather, a convicted war criminal, was once again the subject of heated debate. Unlike Zurich, Munich or New York, which had rejected Flick's request for a permanent home for his collection, Berlin had willingly opened its gates to the collector. Flick had constantly refused to make a contribution as a private individual to the compensation fund for former victims of forced labour – a gesture that had been demanded of him time and again since he had announced his intention of opening his art collection to the public under his own name (Flick Sr. had exploited slave labourers during the Third Reich). Only in April 2005, six months after the opening of the 'Collection', did Flick donate the sum of Euro 5 million to the fund.

Why did Flick acquire Kippenberger's picture of all things? At the Flick exhibition it was displayed in a central position in the room containing works by Kippenberger and Dieter Roth. By acquiring the work, Flick, who is better known for his reactive response to outside impulses than for relentless frankness concerning his family's past, appears not to be ridiculing the subject of the sentence, 'Try as I might, I can't see a swastika', as does Kippenberger, but to identify with it – as the point in time at which the picture was acquired seems to indicate. The idea spread by various quarters that the Kippenberger painting should even be used for the exhibition poster was not taken up by the Stiftung Preußischer Kulturbesitz (Prussian Cultural Heritage Foundation), which also owns the Hamburger Bahnhof. At press conferences

before the opening of the 'Friedrich Christian Flick Collection', Flick was happy to pose, smiling cheerfully, in front of another one of Kippenberger's pictures, one of the series entitled *Acht Bilder zum Nachdenken, ob's so weitergeht* (Eight pictures to think about whether things can go on like this). The picture shows a Langnese lollipop, a bright red ice-cream on a stick in the shape of a hand with an outstretched index finger. 'That's the way', the picture seems to be saying, but also: 'Actually, it doesn't matter where you go, because who can take the direction seriously when it's shown by an ice-cream?' However, the policy of posing in front of this picture for the press alters the message of the picture decisively. The new motto: the main thing is that things move forward – with the 'Flick Collection', with coming to terms with the past, even with Berlin's cultural policy. We'll think about things later. Combined with the speech by Chancellor Gerhard Schröder at the opening, these press photographs were an act of pictorial politics: the art collector usurped Kippenberger's ideas for his own ends, with the intention of ending the exasperating discussion surrounding his inheritance – and achieving a cultural and political consensus for his collection in the Berlin Republic, where history seems to have been forgotten. The ambivalence of the art works was thus silenced in favour of an unambiguous personal statement tailored to suit Flick: No, National Socialism really doesn't come into it any more.<sup>1</sup>

If one considers the 'Friedrich Christian Flick Collection' as a cultural brand that should be sustainably promoted in Germany's cultural life, the collector's acquisition from the estate of the artist and his pose in front of Kippenberger's picture were clever event-marketing moves. Considering the 'Flick Collection' as a brand is not a mere invention: for tax reasons, but also due to the size of his collection – after all, he is a trained businessman – Flick has set up a company on Guernsey in the British Channel Islands to manage his collection professionally. He had been accused time and again of creating added value by exhibiting his collection because the presentation of the art works raised and ennobled their status. In the spring of 2005, rumours circulated that Flick wanted to sell works from his collection to New York's Museum of Modern Art. In reaction to this, a New York symposium examined Flick's collecting strategy and sent a list of signatures, which also contained the names of artists, to the MoMA, urgently requesting that the museum should not acquire any works from Flick. Only later did Flick, who incidentally had roundly denied the rumours, pay into the compensation fund, after which matters calmed somewhat.

In the context of branding strategies in the art world – Flick's handling of art in the media, which is individually motivated but also the result of a deliberate cultural and political decision and financially supported, is such a strategy – the art works themselves are the weakest links in the chain. They cannot defend themselves

against the manipulation and demands of the museum and exhibition world and the cultural, economic and political strategies whose purposes they serve. On the other hand, most of these branding ‘projections’ are not as long-lived as the art works they seek to exploit – but that is of no real importance for the success of cultural brand strategies. Incidentally, the MoMA has not acquired a single work from Flickr to date – it would also have to think carefully before taking such a step: would it not damage the museum’s brand, perhaps as a result of uncomfortable historical debate?

### **b) Waiting for the MoMA: the queue as a branding bestseller**

The MoMA’s artistic canon was developed under the aegis of Alfred Barr Jr. in the first half of the twentieth century; essentially, the MoMA exhibition in Berlin’s Neue Nationalgalerie (New National Gallery), which attracted 1.2 million visitors in 2004, was still based on that aesthetic canon. However, it is remarkable that the marketing campaign launched by Berlin’s Staatliche Museen (State Museums), which also belong to the Stiftung Preußischer Kulturbesitz, attracted visitors with magenta-coloured posters featuring slogans such as ‘The MoMA is the Star!’ or ‘Warhol is the Star!’: the strongest argument for visiting the exhibition was not the art works themselves, but their home, the MoMA, a tangible institution and star in Berlin, and the artists whose work it owns. Despite the forceful words of MoMA Director Glenn Lowry, who stressed at the press conference that the only ‘stars’ were the works of art, the advertising campaign, which cost over Euro 8.5 million, focused exclusively on the strong MoMA brand. And successfully: due above all to the permanent queue in front of the Neue Nationalgalerie over a seven-month period, the MoMA brand was constantly in the media and attracted ever greater numbers of visitors. During opening hours in August 2004, a queue averaging 6,000 people had to hold out for seven hours.

If a distinction is made, in the context of event marketing, between the event itself and a staged spectacle – in other words, a distinction between the self-created event, which initially produces only immaterial value (such as the documenta 1955, which allowed post-war Germans to communicate about their new cultural values for the first time) and the successful brand campaign, that distinction was at least blurred in the case of the MoMA queue, whose epidemic presence exceeded the wildest expectations and soon became a literal bestseller that was projected onto the mental state of a society trapped in depressive torpor (cheerful queuing being a synonym for a collective mental waiting position, a die-hard slogan in times of economic recession, as it were; it is also synonymous with a still-rampant, nostalgic view of the German Democratic Republic, in reference to the lack of goods under the GDR regime

and the obligatory queues in front of 'the people's' shops). Yet it is a well-known fact that the best party is always the one that one risks missing, and the salvation expected from the MoMA art works, their MoMA-label-specific charisma (combined with tourist-style advertising for a special New York glamour that, at least it was claimed, could be experienced for the first and probably the only time in Berlin), could hardly be better symbolized than by the many art lovers who patiently persevered for hours to be able to admire Hopper, Pollock, Picasso et al. Ideal for the branding strategists: in the realm of leisure and amusement, an 'experience-oriented' identification was established with the MoMA brand. That is how a company wants its clients: eager for knowledge, hungry for experiences, willing to consume and loyal to the point of exhaustion. The reward for the collective attachment to the brand awaited visitors inside, in the lower floor of the Neue Nationalgalerie: a parade of the most important works of art of the twentieth century, a procession of names ('Warhol is the Star!'), among which, incidentally, American artists predominated significantly.

In the context of branding strategies, one would describe the MoMA event in Berlin as successful 'guerrilla marketing'. The expression is already well established in business sciences, and refers to low-cost tactical measures by contrast with expensive advertising strategies based on the static image of a brand. Because conventional brand identities are static, companies like Nike, for example, prefer a flexible branding concept of urban intervention: while theme parks and car cities communicate brand identities in a local context, the sneaker manufacturer organizes freestyle events in so-called NikeTowns – small, urban units – which are possible in any city: emotional branding is thus created by means of campaigns to activate the clients, who can by this means experience the brand identity for themselves<sup>2</sup> in the NikeTowns, for example in communal sporting activities. The MoMA, which is actually based in Manhattan, positioned itself very similarly, based on a cost-benefit calculation that was attractive for the museum – the main building in New York was being altered at the time, so it made sense to loan the art works – and with the aim of positioning its brand in the urban context of Berlin, where it suddenly attracted more visitors than ever before – works of art are also mobile and are ideally suited to express the museum's brand identity.

Thus as a sales campaign the queue was beneficial for the MoMA's corporate image – and also for Berlin's museum world: just as the marketing strategists wanted, the queue and the incredible success of the MoMA exhibition diverted attention from the real wretchedness of Berlin's museum policy, which has practically no innovative concepts to offer. In the end, even fashion features were produced with the queue in the background – an unmistakable sign of the glamour that it conveyed. In the end,



incidentally, the MoMA also benefited the most from the Berlin showcase, not only financially through the exorbitantly high fees for loaning the art works, but also in marketing terms: the main building in New York, having been altered and extended, was reopened in the late autumn of 2004. It is now expected to attract even more visitors, who, for an entrance fee of twenty dollars, should if possible spend the entire day in the museum. As long ago as 2002, thanks to its merchandising and shopping areas, the MoMA was more profitable than the Wal-Mart shopping chain designated by *Forbes* magazine as the most successful of five hundred companies.<sup>3</sup>

### **c) Unholy alliance: the party is everything**

Successful event campaigns in the art world, be they the responsibility of a collector and patron with the aim of repositioning his name in the cultural context, of a museum with the aim of raising the profile of its brand on another continent, or of a city that employs splendid illusion to distract attention from the more serious problems faced by its museums, function like the label strategies of companies who do not advertise their products (in this case the art works) first, but above all promise the consumer allegedly disinterested luxury and abundance in order to encourage him to consume. Particularly in museums, with their traditionally disinterested, independent collections cut off from the processes of capitalism, the interest of brand companies in sponsorship and other forms of financial commitment is a highly delicate matter. The public museums and art collections that began to replace the princely cabinets of curiosities from the end of the eighteenth century onwards sought to establish an eternally valid artistic canon that would write the definitive history of art once and for all – and thus also to disconnect the art works from the financial, social and historical circumstances in which they were created. However, precisely this historic disconnecting makes the art works presented in museums as well as the museums themselves attractive to companies today, which always operate in pursuit of specifically financial interests. In times of dwindling government resources, however, neither side is influenced in their branding-related considerations merely by the funding provided by companies expecting to see their sponsorship stated on exhibition posters. Economic support and cultural mergers now go much deeper. Armani in the Neue Nationalgalerie, Harley Davidson in the Guggenheim Las Vegas, Chanel in the Metropolitan: brands today have themselves become the themes of exhibitions, and the generators of these brands, the corporations, provide funding at the same time, while also benefiting from the cultural aura of the museum brands. In May 2005, the Metropolitan Museum in New York opened a Chanel exhibition whose subject was the history of the fashion house – and was financed by Chanel. Was it a

coincidence that Coco Chanel's at least controversial role during the Nazi occupation of France did not feature in the exhibition? Of course not. However, above all the show called the Metropolitan brand into question: it is a platitude in marketing circles that a brand's profile can be weakened through overuse – the 'Met' simply is not the place for showcasing a fashion empire, but stands for high culture ranging from Frank Lloyd Wright to prehistory and ancient history. But Karl Lagerfeld and Nicole Kidman certainly cut a dash at the opening in the hallowed halls of the museum.<sup>4</sup>

In the case of brands that are not created initially by products, but via immaterial experiences such as the art that is displayed in museums, one can refer to 'knowledge brands', in other words, brands in the immaterial realm of informational and educational products. The term was originally used by corporate consulting companies, who now also position themselves as brands that process services and above all provide collectively desired information. These 'knowledge brands' are successful when they have sufficient 'unique selling points' and 'specific brand attributes'.<sup>5</sup> Interestingly, in the art world, which has more to do with ambivalences and ambiguities, it is the precise diffusion of these characteristics that can become a brand – as it is not rare for corporations to expect art to cause productive disturbances and irritations, which in turn can attract attention in an increasingly visually uniform sphere of consumption. On the other hand, it is the charisma of artists and their works through which the museums can attract sponsors. Put all these factors together, and all you need is a good party – and everyone is happy.

That is what happened when the Hugo Boss Prize was awarded to the Thai artist Rirkrit Tiravanija at the New York Guggenheim Museum in 2004. The prize of \$50,000 was accompanied by a solo exhibition – and celebrated with a party. Tiravanija himself also organizes and implements collective events, only on a more modest scale, as installation events in museums that are kept as simple as possible, open to all and usually with cooking facilities – so that one might easily find oneself washing dishes or fetching beer cans in a museum. Tiravanija's social sculptures are models of hosts who intend to merge art with life, undermine the exclusiveness of temples of art, and hence the inhibitions of non-connoisseurs of art. The sponsor of the prize from Metzingen, who had no influence on the award, celebrated Tiravanija in a more pretentious setting, appropriate to the brand of the uniforms for managerial staff: at a glittering party whose exclusiveness was assured merely by the presence of *tout* New York.<sup>6</sup> Well, this seemed to mean little to the artist, but they will have encountered each other somewhere between the Thai wok and the oyster shells, the artist, whose brand is cookery events for art nomads, and the Boss people: this merger is vouched



for by the Guggenheim institution itself, which ennobled the sponsor and let the artist do as he pleased – and in the end benefited doubly: the emotional branding that informed the artist's dinner and fashion catering fulfilled a promise of opulence by the fashion brand as well as creating an appropriately subversive artistic event.

## **2) Museums and institutional marketing**

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, when several new museums were opened, their function changed drastically: the shrines to art built by the architectural modernists increasingly became objects that were perceived for their own sake – 'agoras as much for hanging out as for hanging art'.<sup>7</sup> The most impressive example of this is the urban alien of the Guggenheim Bilbao with its titanium skin glittering in the Basque sunlight that Frank Gehry stretched over his amorphous museum structure: undoubtedly a 'landmark building', as the media reporting on the building proves, but difficult to work with from a curator's point of view. Museum architects like Gehry soon became indispensable to the institutional branding of the museums, and their 'signature brands' were suddenly sought-after for cultural construction projects all over the world. Besides the Basque titanium reptile, Gehry also built the Disney Museum and the concert hall in Seattle; Richard Meier built the Getty Center in Los Angeles and the MACBA in Barcelona; Daniel Libeskind designed the Jewish Museum in Berlin and the Imperial War Museum in Manchester; Rem Koolhaas, who is also working on a project for the Hermitage in St. Petersburg, built the Guggenheim Las Vegas and the concert hall in Porto; after the pyramid at the Louvre, I.M. Pei built the extension of the Deutsche Historische Museum in Berlin; Alessandro and Francesco Mendini, Philippe Starck and Coop Himmelb(l)au designed the museum in Groningen: for today's museum brands, the usually unique designs of a tiny elite of internationally active, so-called 'star architects' have become an integral part of their marketing strategies.

What makes sensational architecture so crucial today for any museum that wants to attract national or international interest beyond its local clientele? The new grand projects of the museum world, which have now sprung up after the first wave of new, postmodern foundations in the 1980s, cannot be explained in purely art-historical terms as a historical succession of architectural styles – such as claiming that the rather expressive new museum buildings are a response to a fictitious, collective longing for a visually narrative architecture<sup>8</sup> –, because they would be inconceivable without the face of the cities in which they stand. In many respects, these metropolises are 'branded cities'. One does not even have to look to the United States, where the NikeTowns, Sony theme parks or SegaWorlds now no longer build their 'edutain-

ment centres' on green fields, but in the city centres – and thus spectacularly redefine the urban environment the way in which the London NikeTown, opened in 1999, describes itself: 'more than a store, [...] a place to come for inspiration, information, opportunities to play, first-class service and the very best sports products'.<sup>9</sup> Europe's cities are also subject to this phenomenon of globalization, which is increasingly defining brands in spatial terms by cultivating them in an urban environment and creating hybrid settings between mall, theme park, venue, public place, advertising space and on-site art (such as the 'Autostädte' in Leipzig and Wolfsburg). This has not only increasingly discredited the latter art form – if on-site art has been anything more than the mere decoration of corporate settings in recent decades – but also poses a challenge to the museums and cultural buildings, the former flagships of urban and national (self-)representation.

This is already evident in the way some of the most prominent museums describe themselves, such as the Guggenheim Bilbao, which refers to itself as an 'international landmark', or the Getty Center, which sees itself as 'a crossroads for families, neighbours, scholars and students, tourists and teachers. It's a place for fun and reflection, overlooking one of the world's most exciting cities'.<sup>10</sup> In order to survive as cultural institutions in the branded cities today, museums must provide spaces and be equally attractive to tourists, shoppers and art lovers. They must pay just as much attention to the way they portray themselves and to their architectural performance as to their function as an institution. To do so, with shopping areas, aggressive marketing and landmark buildings they resort to the idea of 'earthly paradise' developed in the nineteenth century, when the concept of the museum as an institution and the spectacles of the world exhibitions were combined. Metaphorical slogans of the period, such as 'Babel commerciale', 'paradis terrestre' or 'modern temple', coined for the apotheoses of industrial production as which the world exhibitions of the time functioned, revealed the recognition of the ennobling potential of the architecture of the crystal palaces in which these product exhibitions could often be seen and for which they were especially built, as well as a new sense of reality in reaction to these grandiose illusory spaces developed by engineers. This accorded the exhibition form the opportunity to transcend everyday life, to protect it from its profanity, and lastly, paradoxically, to break the capitalist flow of goods: all characteristics that have also been ascribed to museums time and again since the nineteenth century.<sup>11</sup> Briefly put, the twentieth century's answer to this aestheticized industrialization was to adapt the aesthetics seen in museums for branding purposes. This increasingly took place amid signs of a revival of the convergence of the worlds of brands and museums, as represented by the product-like consumer worlds of the theme parks, Disneyworlds and,

most recently, the 'Autostädte'. In the latter, even the process of manufacturing automobile dreams has been transformed into an exhibition display – workers in blue overalls assembling the Phaeton on a fine parquet floor in a kind of glass shrine. In the new BMW factory in Leipzig designed by Zaha Hadid, the display, an assembly line, leads directly over the heads of Autostadt staff. All this serves to create a brand experience for the clients, who, half consumers, half cultural theme park tourists, collect their new cars directly at the factory rather than from their local dealer.

Conversely, the museum's marketing strategies<sup>12</sup> do not focus on their exhibition displays, let alone on their collections. Instead, something has established itself in the world of museum branding that Graeme Evans calls 'karaoke architecture': it is not what is sung that matters, but that the song should be delivered with verve and gusto.<sup>13</sup> Today's museum brand leaders – the MoMA, the Guggenheim empire, the Louvre, the Prado, the Tate Gallery, the Hermitage et al. – see themselves in a post-industrial society that would like to see culture and consumption combined in its leisure time, and seeks spaces for this; the museums see themselves as service providers who make those spaces available.<sup>14</sup> To achieve this, these spaces must impart values such as uniqueness and distinctiveness, true to the branding principle that brands are attractive because they establish a certain order or coherence in a varied area of attention, making them easier to 'read' or identify, but that this potential orientation also bestows a collective validity. One of the outstanding characteristics of museums ever since their inception has undoubtedly been their longevity, which has made them places of refuge from the flow of time, places of contemplation, the formation and illustration of artistic development over centuries. However, at a time of cultural globalization, in which the museums are also participating in grand style through their adaptation as prestigious flagships of urban development and architectural landmarks this uniqueness is no longer relevant. Today it is precisely the smaller companies, which have practised branding for decades that are proving their ability to weather crises, as exemplified by Apple or, in Germany, Persil. These brands do not have short life-cycles, are not dependent on fashions, and can now fall back on a long tradition and loyal regular customers. And it is also difficult to copy their brands.<sup>15</sup>

However, one can also overstrain and thus weaken established brands that have developed over a long period, as the example of the Las Vegas Guggenheim (LVG) demonstrates. This franchise of the New York parent house, opened in 2001, is no longer a museum in the institutional sense, but a brand tailored to local needs: half product of a joint venture with the Hermitage in St. Petersburg, from which it borrowed exquisite, mainly post-Impressionist works of art, half the showcase of a motorcycle shop (in accordance with the biking passion of the Guggenheim director

Thomas Krens, a motorcycle show was organized), the LVG, ennobled by the signature brands of Rem Koolhaas (architecture) and Frank Gehry (design of the motorcycle exhibition) opened as an architecturally magnificent hybrid between theme park and museum in the middle of the 'strip', the entertainment mile aimed at attracting walk-in, tourist customers (who comes to Las Vegas for high culture?): a *theseum* (from 'the-me park' and 'mu-seum'), a mixture between museum-like form and 'edutainment' content.<sup>16</sup> The Las Vegas Guggenheim is based on an idea of the 'global Guggenheim' that Krens developed in the 1990s in favour of channelling capital towards a cosmopolitan cultural strategy. Closely linked to this idea was a transnational expansion of the Guggenheim brand: to Spain, Austria, Japan, Brazil, and so on. Most of these institutional expansion plans have failed, including the Las Vegas 'branch' – partially due to the attacks of September 11 and their worldwide financial consequences, but partially also because it became increasingly obvious that the art and architecture of the Guggenheim idea had to serve to market the company. However, the LVG failed to repeat its success in Bilbao: to brand the location, in other words the city, rather than being swallowed by it in terms of attention. The great museum projects of recent years, the Tate Modern or the Tate Baltic, Vienna's museum district, the new MoMA in Manhattan, or precisely the Guggenheim Bilbao, have all asserted themselves as brands in at times strongly branded environments, because they achieved a harmonious balance between symbolic architecture that functions as a brand logo, as it were, and the treasures that they exhibit, and even accorded the art works a central role. These museums have become icons of the metropolises, if not even magnets of post-industrial urban society. Incidentally, one repeatedly named model for the *theseum* of our times, the museum machine of the Centre Pompidou in Paris designed by Renzo Piano and Richard Rogers, already demonstrated in the 1970s how a brand can be generated that attracts audiences by merging an aestheticized industrial architecture, as invented by the 'Archigram' group and Cedric Price in the 1960s, with great public platforms, multi-functionalism, tourist attractions and art. Until it was observed that most people simply did not manage to get beyond the entrance area, Perspex escalator tube and observation deck and into the museum. But at the end of the day, that didn't really matter. Because the figures were right.

- 1 See Diedrich Diederichsen, 'Zwei Bilder zum Nachdenken', *taz*, 24.12.2004, p. 21.
- 2 See Lentos Kunstmuseum Linz, ed., *Just do it*, exh. cat., Vienna, 2005, pp. 50ff.
- 3 See Graeme Evans, 'Hard-Branding the Cultural City – From Prado to Prada', *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, vol. 27.2, June 2003, pp. 417–40, p. 431.
- 4 See Michael Kimmelmann, 'Critic's Notebook: Art, Money and Power', *New York Times*, 11.5.2005, Section E, p. 1.
- 5 See Frank Höselbarth, Rupert Lay, Jean-Christophe Ammann, eds., *Branding für Unternehmensberatungen. So bilden Sie eine Wissensmarke*, Frankfurt am Main, 2001.
- 6 See Ingeborg Harms, 'Kein Label ist auch bald ein Label. Immer eine gute Party: Der Hugo-Boss-Preis geht an den Künstler Rirkrit Tiravanija', *Frankfurter Allgemeine Sonntagszeitung*, 14.11.2004, p. 31.
- 7 J. Iovine, *Guggenheim New York; Guggenheim Bilbao*, New York, 1999, p. 5.
- 8 See Dieter Bartzeko, 'Die reinste Verschwendung. Magie zwischen Minimalismus und Exzentrik: Tendenzen im Museumsbau der neunziger Jahre', in Uwe M. Schneede, ed., *Museum 2000 – Erlebnispark oder Bildungsstätte?* Cologne, 2000, pp. 129ff.
- 9 Cited after Evans 2003 (see note 3), pp. 417ff.
- 10 Ibid., p. 429.
- 11 Georg Maag, *Kunst und Industrie im Zeitalter der ersten Weltausstellungen. Synchronische Analyse einer Epochenschwelle* (Theorie und Geschichte der Literatur und der Schönen Künste, vol. 74), Munich, 1986, especially pp. 78ff.
- 12 This is not an entirely new development: according to a survey conducted one year after Frank Lloyd Wright planted the New York Guggenheim on the edge of Central Park in 1959, 40 percent of visitors came to the museum for the architecture, and only 5 percent for the art. See Evans 2003 (see note 3), p. 430.
- 13 See Evans 2003 (see note 3), p. 417.
- 14 Wolf Lotter, 'Der rote Faden', *brand eins*, 2/2005.
- 15 Incidentally, unlike the 'Autostädte', museums cannot reveal the production of the works they display – an essential identification potential in brand 'experience centres' – unless they also integrate artists' studios. Yet there are also opportunities in this area that are already being exploited, such as the art work that is created 'in situ'.
- 16 See D. F. Batten, 'Venice as a 'Theseum' city: the economic management of a complex culture', International Arts Management Conference, HEC Paris, 1993.

### Summary

Event marketing in the art world is less and less concerned with the promoted product, i.e. with art itself. The example of the MoMA's Berlin exhibition in 2004 shows that the New York museum's aim was to strengthen its brand by encouraging the 1.2 million visitors to identify with the MoMA 'knowledge brand' through their experiences – literally at the expense of Berlin's cultural policy. Art is no longer promoted as a product, but, like the label strategies of other companies, as the luxury and affluence that is allegedly connected with art, with the aim of encouraging the consumption of merchandise. Today's new museums are built using the 'signature brands' of star architects in order to provide unique 'service spaces' in the cities, many of which are branded tourist sites. The museum brands are thus cultivated in an urban environment; their architecture serves increasingly to create hybrid public spaces, combinations of mall, theme park, venue, public space, advertising space and art. These museums, based on the model of branded theme parks and focusing on improved 'readability', but also on collective appreciation of their spectacular architecture, could also be described as a new type of space – the 'theseum'.