NEW MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART
New York

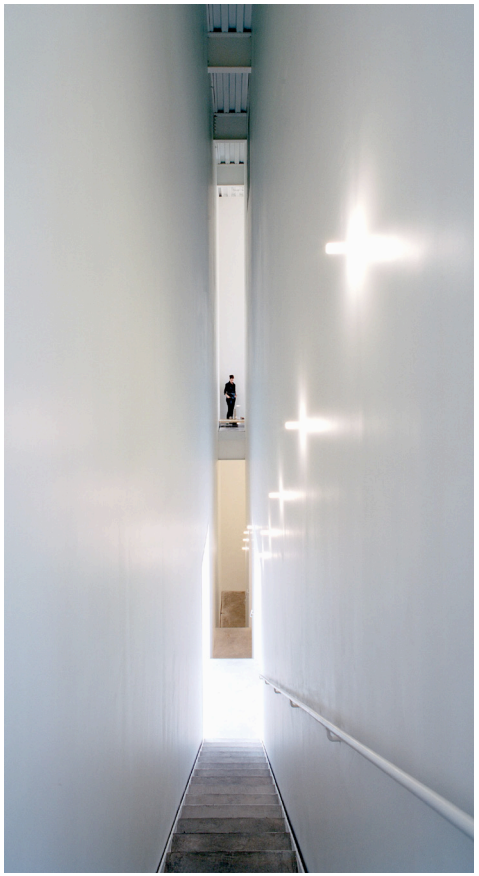
CEVHER DEMIREL
CHRISTY HAIG

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Architects: SANAA- Kazuyo Sejima, Ryue Nishizawa
Began practice together in 1995, awarded Pritzker Prize in 2010. Received commission for
Museum in 2002.

Client: Lisa Phillips, Museum Director
Date of Construction: Opened 2007
Project Location: 235 Bowery, New York
Building dimensions: 60,000 sq ft
Width: 71' **Depth:** 112' **Height:** 175'

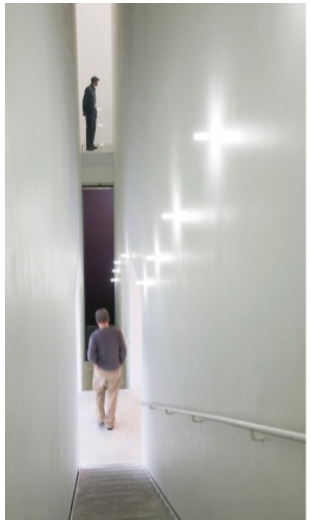
Program: 3 galleries, 200 seat "white box" theater/auditorium, café, reception, bookstore, education facilities, administrative offices multipurpose area for exhibition/public programs roof terrace.



PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The New Museum is a combination of "urban and elegant" set in the gritty area of New York City known as "Skid Row". The design is a series of "slipped boxes" of changing proportions organized around a central core and completely covered in a delicate skin of silvery mesh.

The ground floor is open to the street with a 15' glass facade welcoming the visitor (for free). The upper gallery levels are reached by elevator/stairs. At the top of the museum is a multi-purpose space surrounded by a terrace that connects the building to its neighborhood. This connection to the Bowery was important to Seijima/Nichizawa and evidenced by the openness of the ground level and the terraced area above.



The building is fabricated of corrugated aluminum panels covered with an anodized aluminum mesh that is installed 1.5" in front of it. The surface of the building appears differently throughout the day/night. Most of the openings are hidden behind the mesh. The mesh is representative of the rough industrial quality of the neighborhood. The aluminum material is much brighter than steel and gives a light quality to the surface. It also appears translucent which helps with the sense of connection to the neighborhood.The interior surfaces are almost exclusively white, polished concrete on the floor, and walls and ceilings, including the duct work are painted white.

On the lobby level the ceiling has a suspend mesh, similar to the exterior tying the interior/exterior together. The first floor includes the reception area, a café, a skylighted gallery at the rear and a museum shop. Mesh screening also surrounds the museum shop. The loading dock is to the left of the main entrance purposely exposing the backside of the museum, another nod to the gritty area of the Bowery.

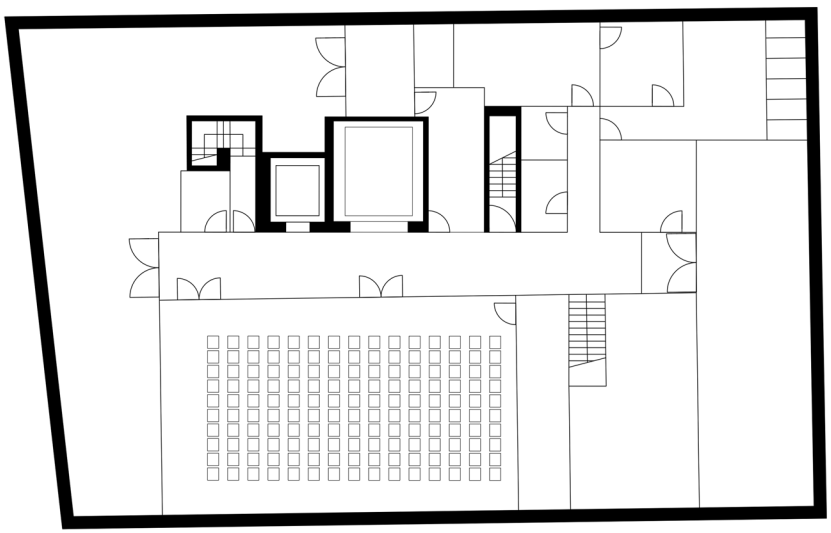
The gallery spaces, floors 2-4, are proportionally different on purpose as each area of the museum is unique. and the building is full of surprises. The stacked boxes have been slid backwards, forwards and to the side off the central core of circulation to allow natural light to enter the building through skylights running along the edges of the galleries. The architects provided support for the structure through diagonal structural beams and a central vertical core which allow the gallery spaces to be column free. The Education Center on the Fifth floor opens to the world below through a bank of windows. On the top floor the glass walled meeting room and the terraces provide some of the best views of lower Manhattan.

The New Museum was designed by Sejima and Nishizawa of SANAA, a Japanese firm. Their design was selected in 2002 because of the sculptural form of the structure, and the lightness and

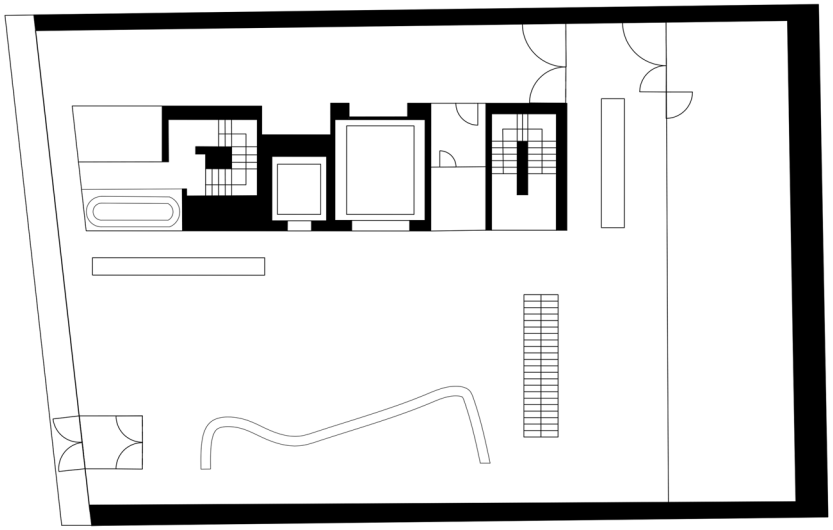
Site Plan

0 50 100 150 200

In the plans for each floor the central core of circulation, two elevators and two staircase, is clear. The lighter lines indicate the floor below representing the "slipping" between floors. Also represented are the skylights which run along the north and west edge of the 2nd floor gallery, the west edge of the 3rd floor, and the north edge of the 4th floor.

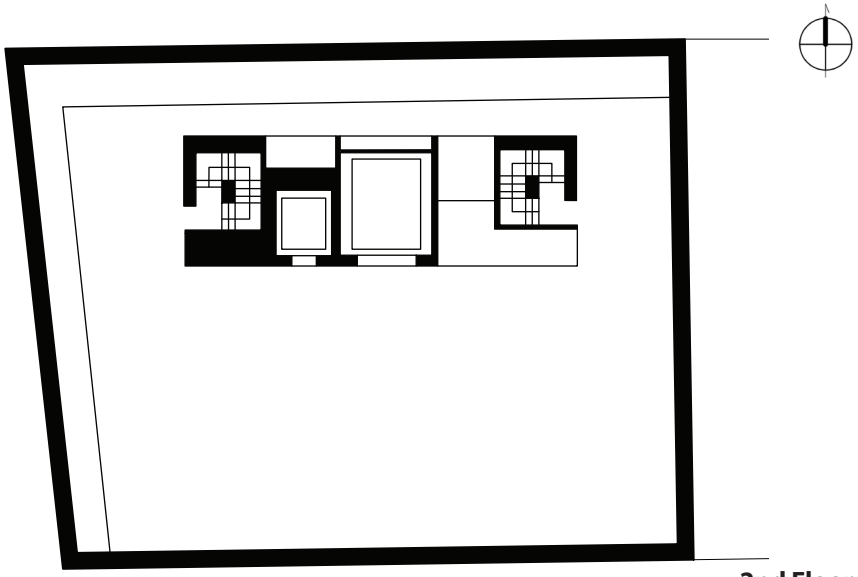


Basement Floor

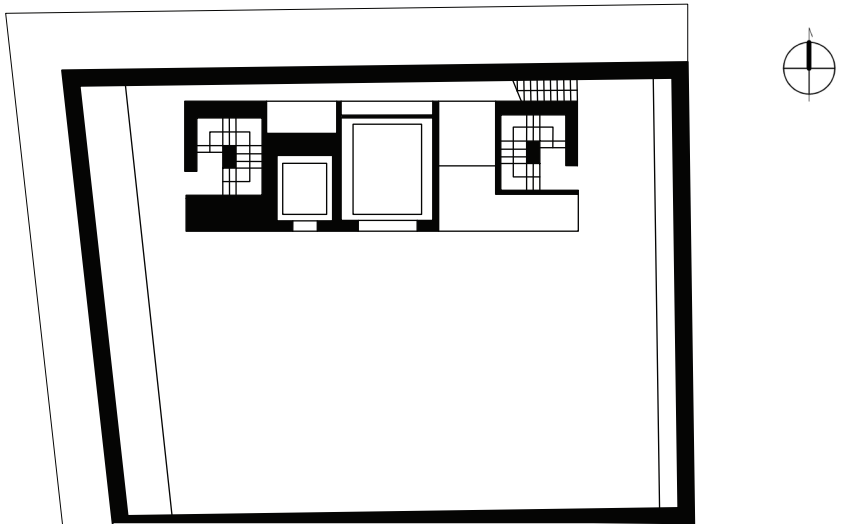


1st Floor

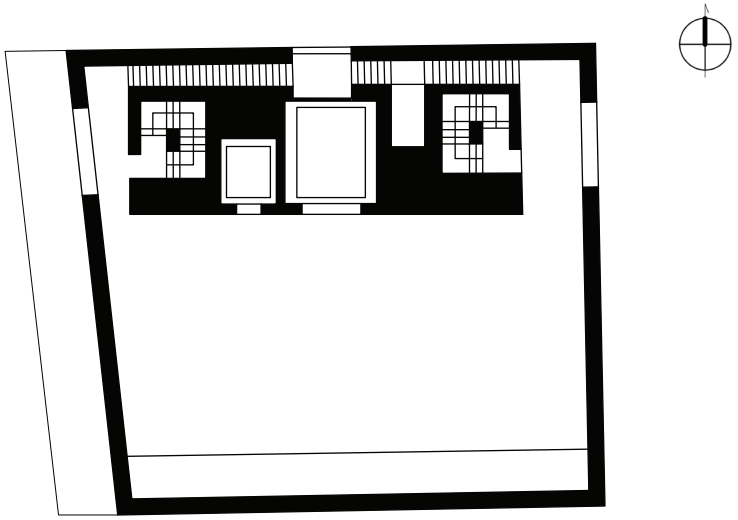
0 5 10 15 20



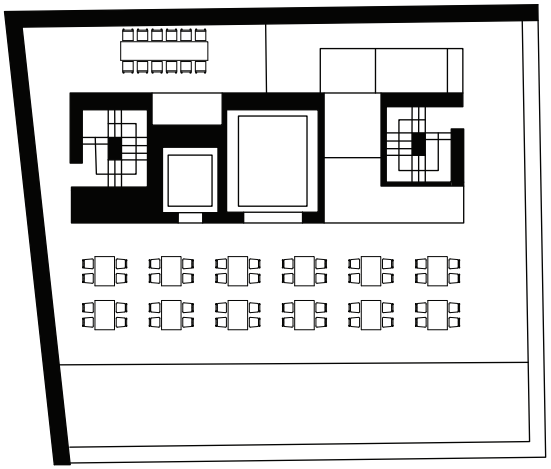
2nd Floor



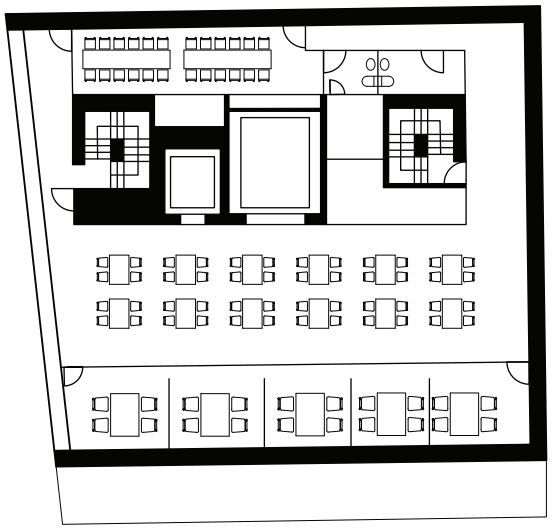
3th Floor



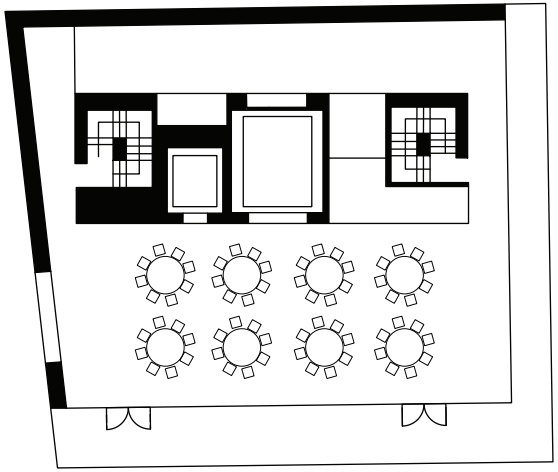
4th Floor



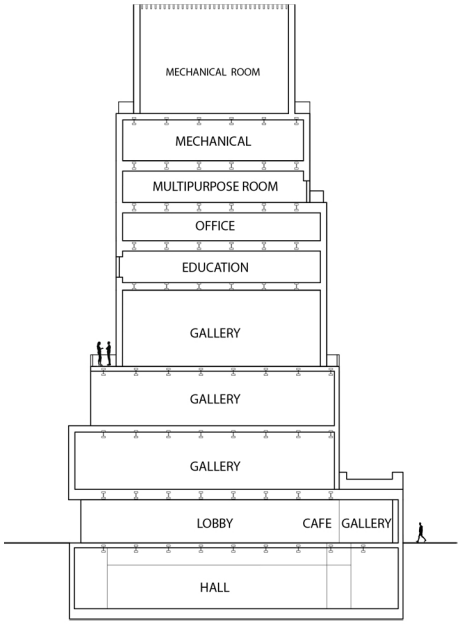
5th Floor



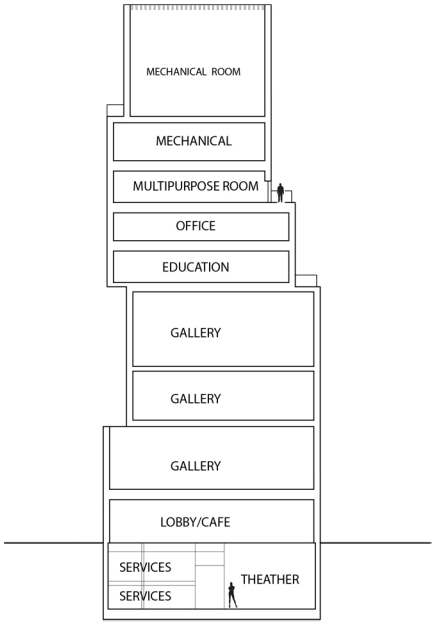
6th Floor



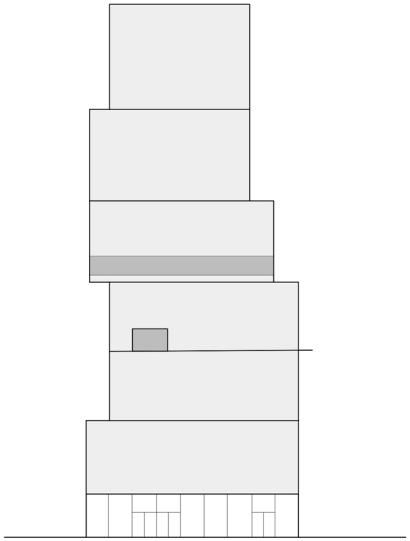
7th Floor



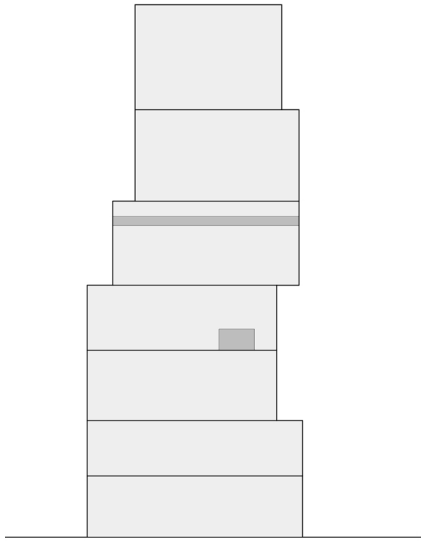
1st Section



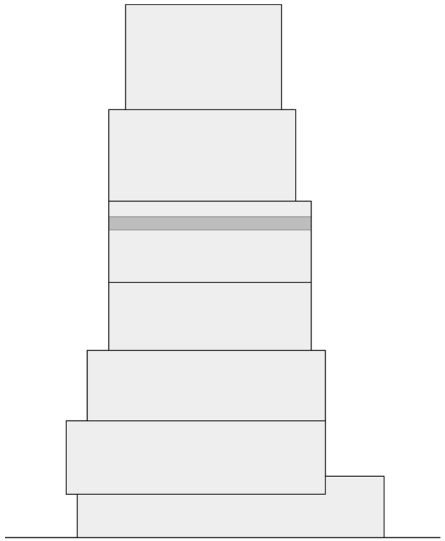
2nd Section



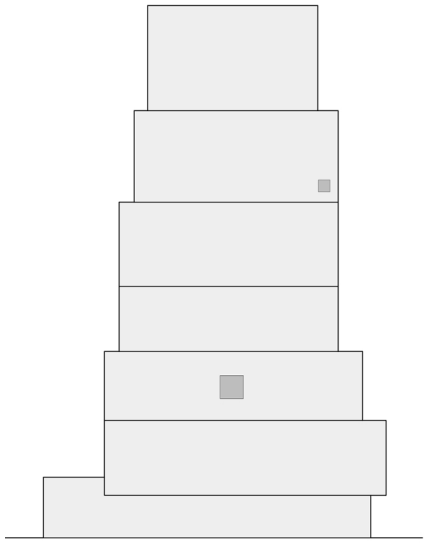
West Elevation



East Elevation



South Elevation

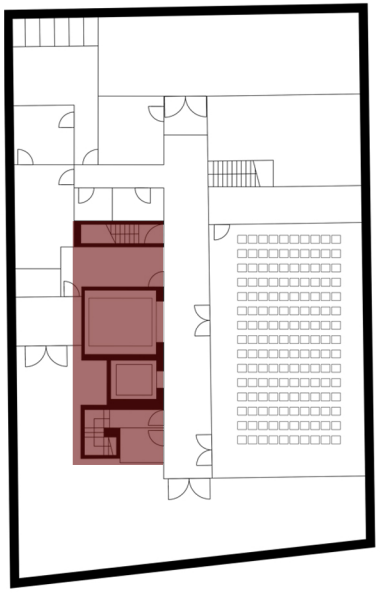


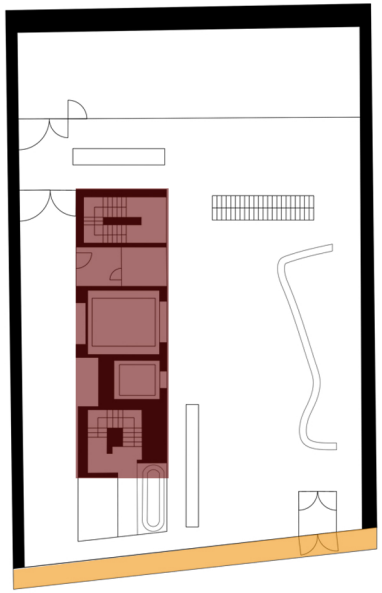
North Elevation

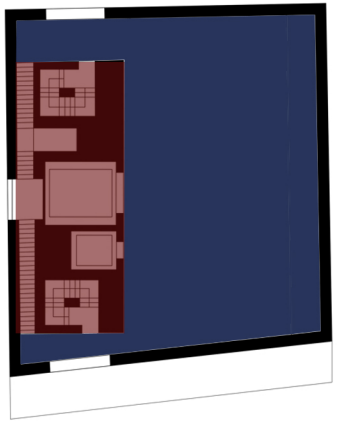
0 5 10 15 20

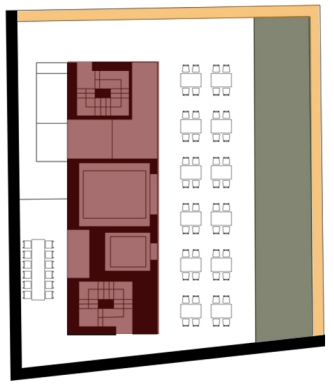
0 5 10 15 20

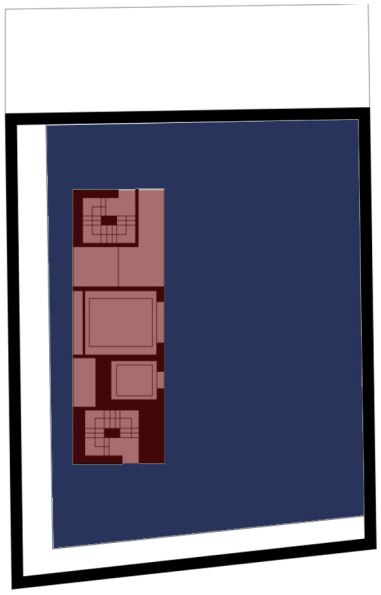
CONCEPT DIAGRAMS

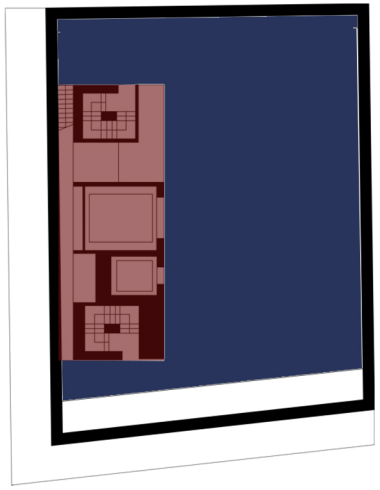


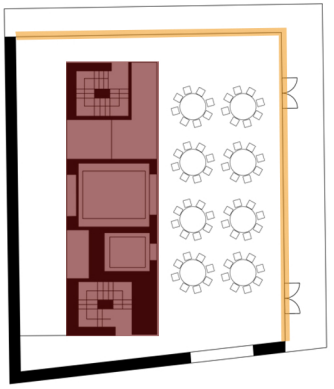


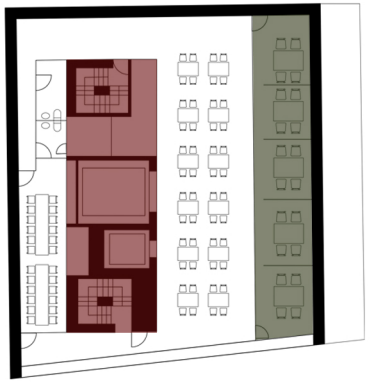












Gallery Spaces: Three floors of uniquely sized open space galleries

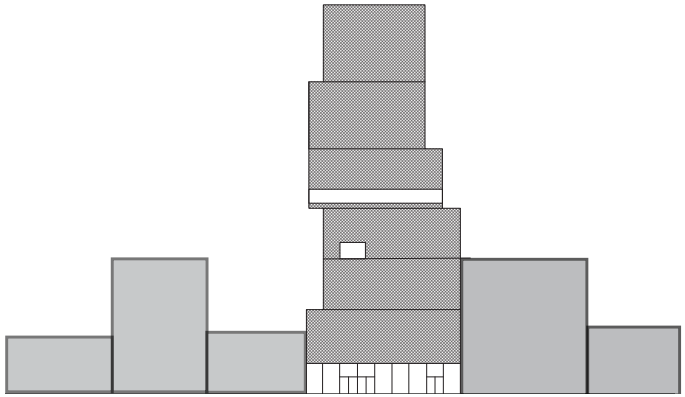
Central Core: Stairs and Elevator – Sited to the south side of the building to leave open space for galleries. Provides structure so there are no

Education/Administration: Grouped together on upper floors of the museum, have natural light and flexible work spaces.

Glass Facades: First floor as a seamless transition street to lobby
Fifth floor education level
Seventh floor multi-purpose room

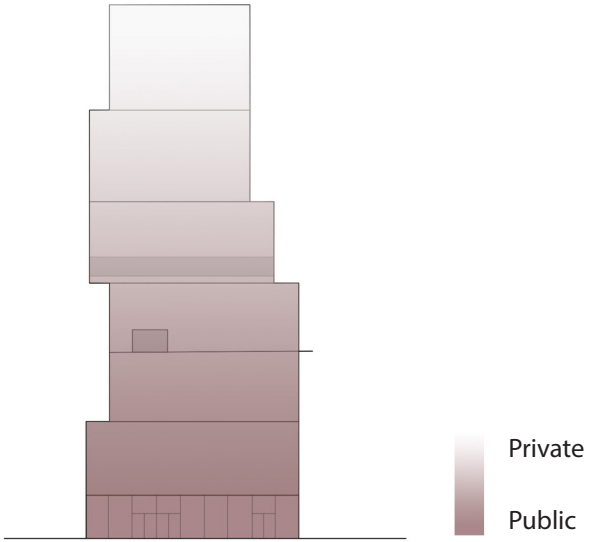
SITE CONTEXT

The streets of lower Manhattan do not follow the rectangular grid of the rest of Manhattan and the Bowery is no exception. The museum, like this area of New York, is very accepting and open, and yet tough at the same time.

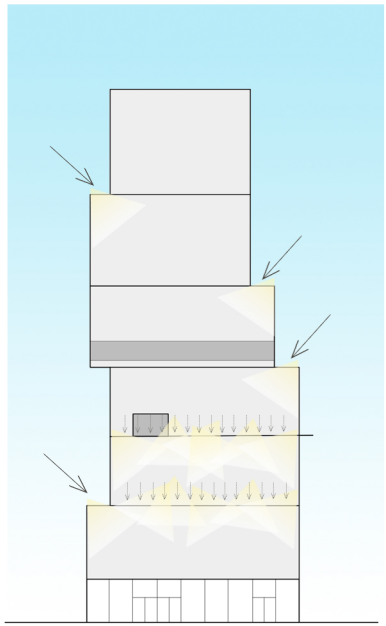


The scale of the museum is considerably larger than the surrounding buildings. The boxes that make up the floors can be viewed as the volumes that surround the museum on the horizontal plane turned on end.

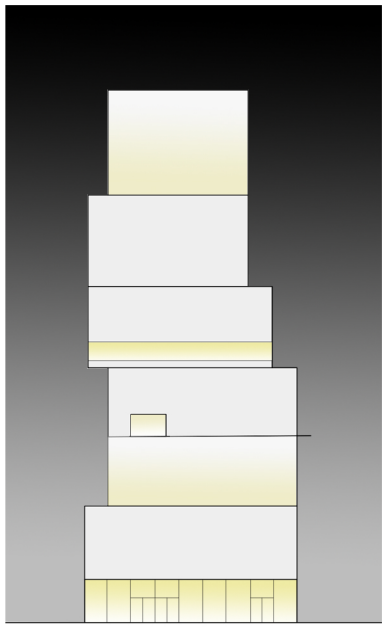
ACCESS TO MUSEUM



NATURAL LIGHT

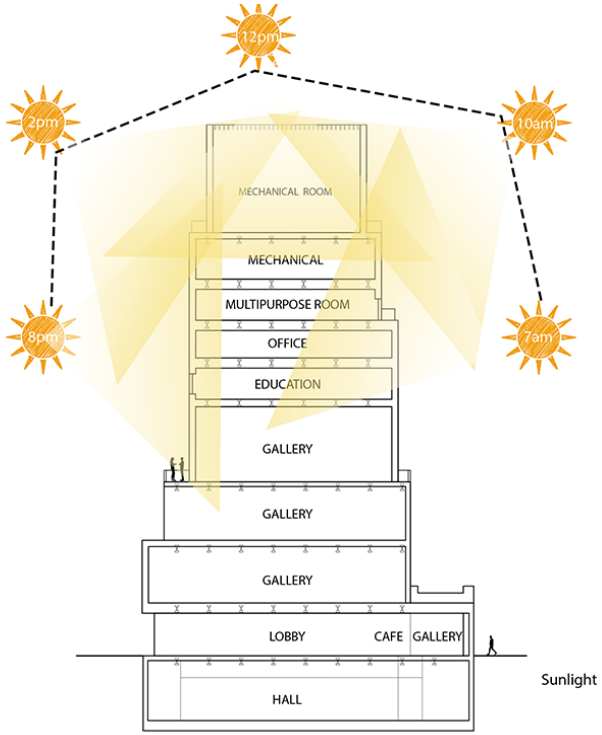


Day



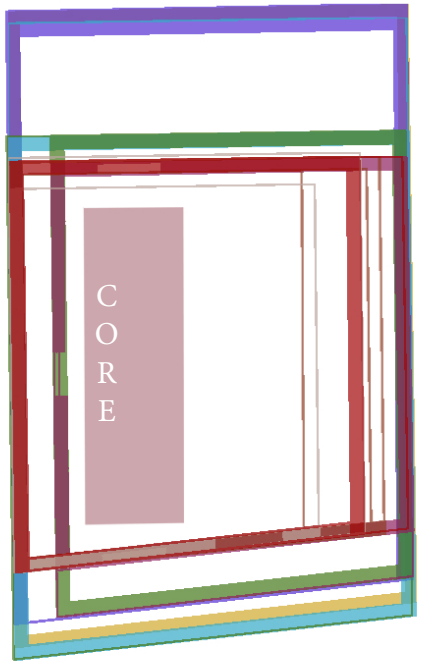
Night

The arrangement of the boxes make it possible to have skylights on different floors of the building. These skylights which provide natural light to the galleries during the day allow interior light to spill out of the building onto the facades in the evening.

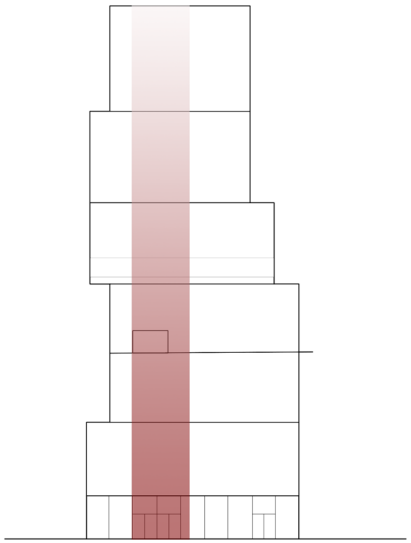


The skylight orientation on different sides allows for natural light to enter the building through out the changing hours of the day. The angle of the light changes as the sun moves from east to west and from early morning through the evening

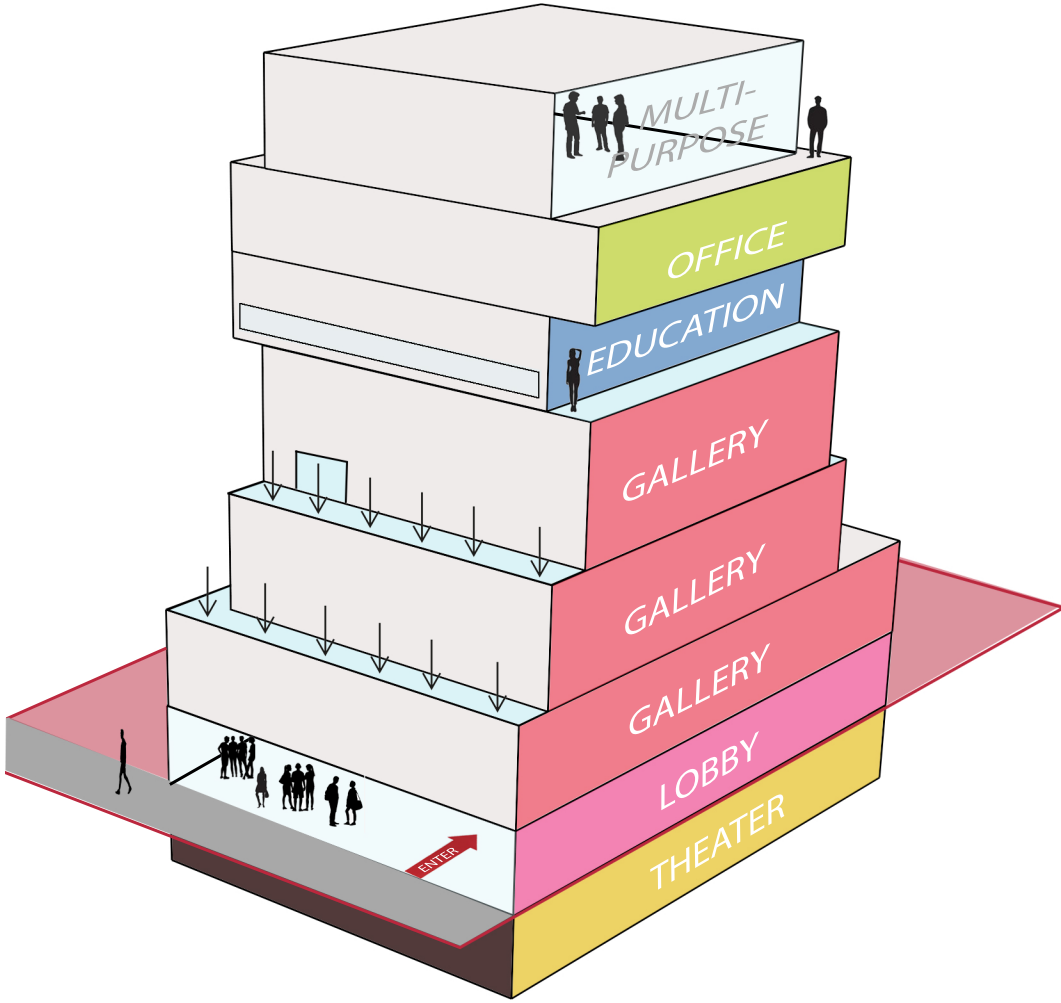
CIRCULATION



The central circulation core anchors the building. The various floor outlines are identified by the different color outlines.



The hierarchy of the building is separated by floor with the more private spaces in it being found on the upper floors (offices and education).



DEEPER ANALYSIS

The museum's connection to the neighborhood is clear when you see the glass facade at the street level. As you rise through the building to the seventh floor and the multi-purpose space/terraces you have the same experience of connecting with the neighborhood. Seijima and Nishizaway also created unique spaces for the New Museum galleries. By slipping the stacked boxes and changing the height of each gallery the visitor has a different experience as they enter each of the floors. The focus on space for display was a primary consideration so all of the structure is buried in the circulation core and the exterior walls. In addition ,the skylights on each floor allow for different experiences of the light.

Gonchar, J. (2008, March 16). Behind SANAA's Illusion of Weightlessness. Architectural Record.

In this article in Architectural Record Joann Goncar gets beneath the skin of the New Museum, and explains the structural planning that was done by the engineers of Guy Nordenson Associates. They were able to create the illusion of "lightness and immateriality" that was desired by the client and the architects of this project.

Grima, J., & Wong, K. (2008). SHIFT: SANAA and the New Museum. Baden, Switzerland: Lars Muller.
This excellent resource (from the WIT Library) includes comprehensive interviews with Sejima and Nishizawa, architects; Lisa Phillips, Museum Director; and other theorist, photographers, and architectural historians.

Merkel, J. (2008). SANAA'S New Museum of Contemporary Art. Architectural Digest, 78(3), 98-101.
Jayne Merkel highlights the ways in which the New Museum of Contemporary Art fits in the landscape and culture of the Bowery. With clear references to the neighborhood and the mission of the museum, she describes the interior and SANAA's addition to the New York landscape.

New Museum. (n.d.). Retrieved September 16, 2020, from https://www.newmuseum.org/
The website for the New Museum includes a comprehensive section on the building, and the vision of the architects to create spaces that could be inhabited by the contemporary art program of this museum.

Pearson, C. (2008). At New York's Smart New Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo-Based SANAA Creates an Ambiguous Icon for an Area in Transition. Architectural Record, 196(3), 133-139.
Clifford Pearson highlights the program development of this project and the way the architects were able to incorporate many facets of use into its spaces. He also explains how the sense of weightlessness is expressed, and other smaller details such as how the anodized aluminum mesh wrapped the building.