

Below
**Frank O. Gehry &
Associates**, Vitra
International Furniture
Museum, Weil am Rhein,
Germany 1989

Menil Collection in Houston which he designed with Peter Rice. The later Twombly Gallery by Piano in the same 'museum campus' also subdues walls and emphasises the ceiling. It might be said that this is hardly surprising since all the buildings display works of art where the control of light must play a very important part; there have after all been endless attempts to find an ideal solution through the manipulation of the overhead plane.



Piano uses the roof to provide that control; Gehry tends to use the whole volume. He had done so earlier at the Vitra International Furniture Museum in Weil am Rhein, Germany – just across the border from the Beyeler Collection – and the Frederick R. Weisman Museum in Minneapolis.

The above two paragraphs contain facts. They also, however, imply conclusions which are inevitably assumptions. Even where there is a seemingly confirmatory statement by Gehry that 'I approach each building as a sculptural object, a spatial container, a space with light and air . . .' which has already been quoted, it is unwise to make categorical claims. We may see similarities, deduce sources, have acknowledgement of influences and yet remain unsure that any conclusions we draw actually match the design process which occurred.

I therefore propose to turn to written statements by a number of significant architects which might contain their opinions on the characteristics of the design process. This is not to put faith in such statements as infallible pronouncements; too often architects write what turns out to be a post-rationalisation. Nevertheless these writings represent published material which has presumably been checked and approved; we are assessing a considered opinion by the person most involved and not by an outsider.

An exhibition was held at MIT in May and June 1979 of six examples showing process in architecture. The catalogue recorded interviews with the architects concerned (Cruickshank, 1979). Donlyn Lyndon – with Moore, Turnbull and Whitaker one of the designers of the condominium at the Sea Ranch on the Pacific coast and also one of the authors of *The Place of Houses* (Moore *et al.*, 2001) – was one of the six exhibited and interviewed. Lyndon's statements are both general and specific. (LL is Lance Laver, DL is Donlyn Lyndon.)

LL: In what way is Islamic architecture a source for the courtyard?