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NO LOITERING: A PARADOX OF OPENNESS
ARE LONDON'S MUSEUMS SUCCESSFUL IN
CREATING GENUINE PUBLIC SPACES?



Figure 2 (Authors own photograph, 2017) SUPERFLEX exhibition in the turbine hall, Tate Modern, Herzog & De Meuron, London, 2000

Privatisation and regeneration of the city are crucial factors in the way that genuine public space has changed in London in recent years. I examine these issues through the lens of museum design, exploring museums as environments where public space seems to have been maintained and even increased. Focusing on the Tate Modern and the Design Museum I investigate whether these contemporary museums employ interior design as a device to challenge diminishing public space.

My research is built around the theory of intentionality put forward by Randi Korn in *Museums and Public Value: Creating Sustainable Futures* (Scott, C. A., 2013). Through this, I define genuine public space as a space free of social hierarchy, elitist connotations and restrictions. Spatially, this

definition denotes open spaces for people to engage as a community as well as more intimate, smaller spaces for people to occupy alone; in effect, spaces that allow the public to exercise their right to loiter. According to the *Oxford Dictionary* loiter means to “stand or wait around without apparent purpose” (Oxford University Press, 2018); an act that is, in all intent and purpose, a democratic right. Through examining contemporary museum design, I will assess whether museums provide spaces that allow the public to loiter.

I then assess the wider implications of the museums’ presence in the context of regeneration. By applying theories by Slavoj Žižek and arguments by Rowan Moore, I will underline how museum regeneration leads to a paradox; on the one hand museums provide a public space, on the other hand they facilitate a process of regeneration that has led to the privatisation of public space.

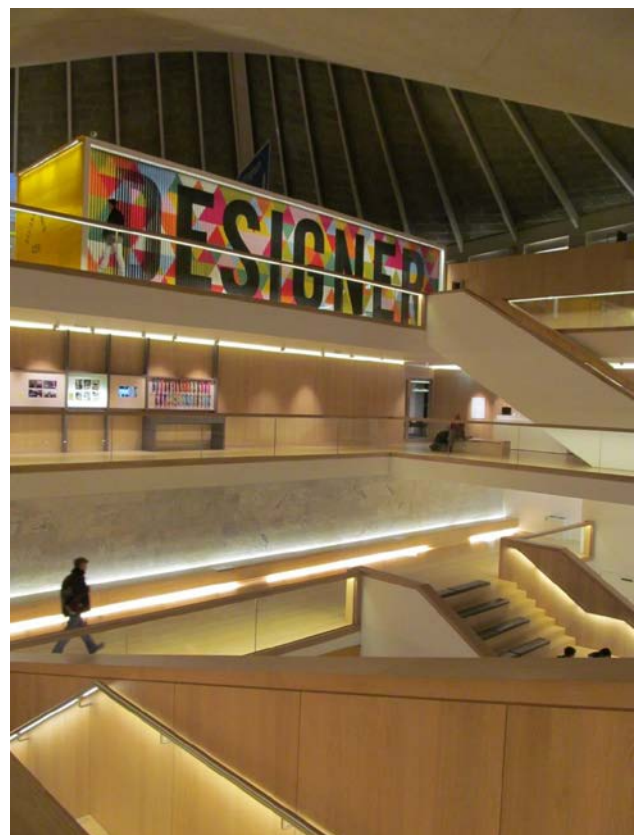


Figure 3 (Authors own photograph, 2018) The Design Museum, John Pawson and OMA, London, 2017