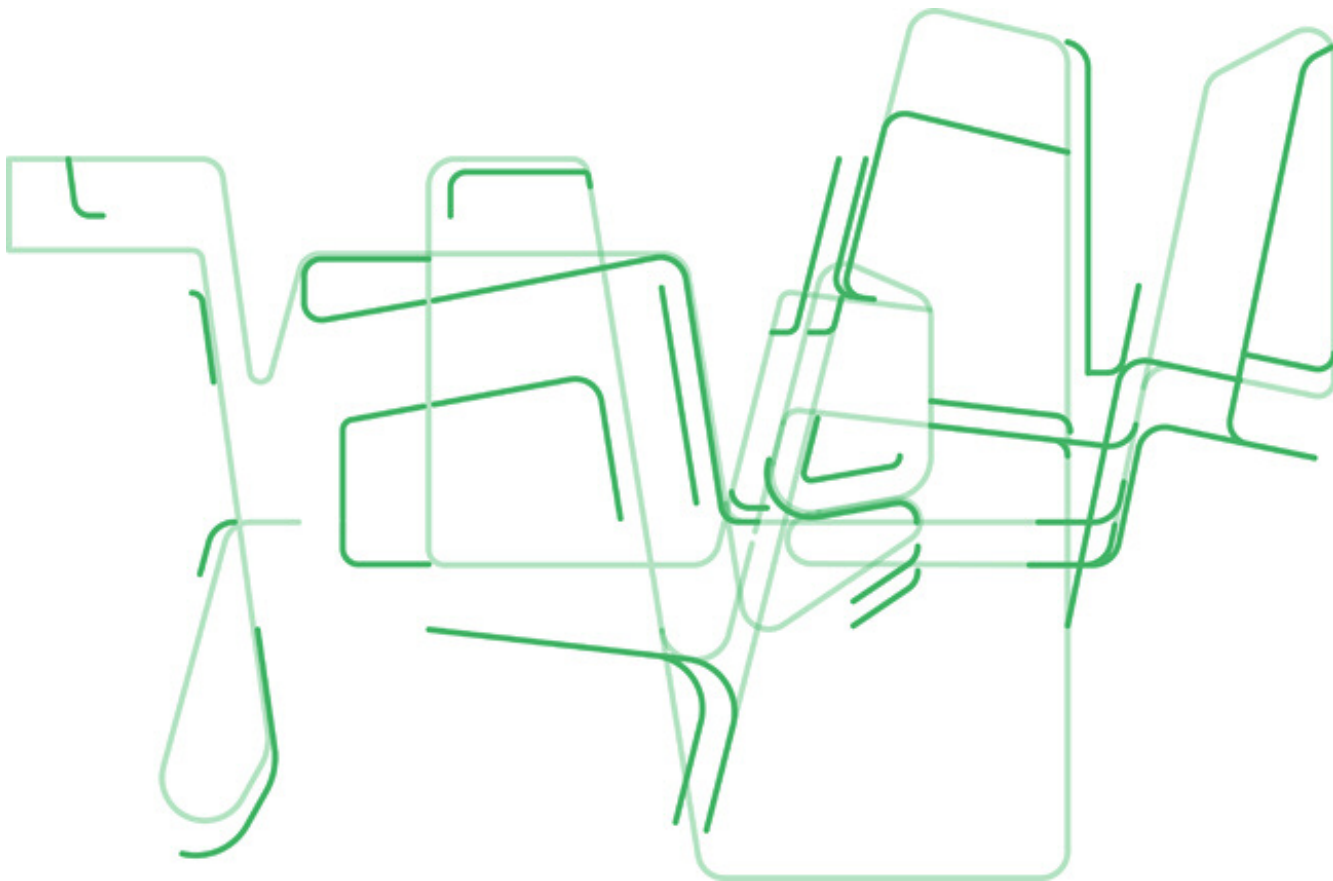
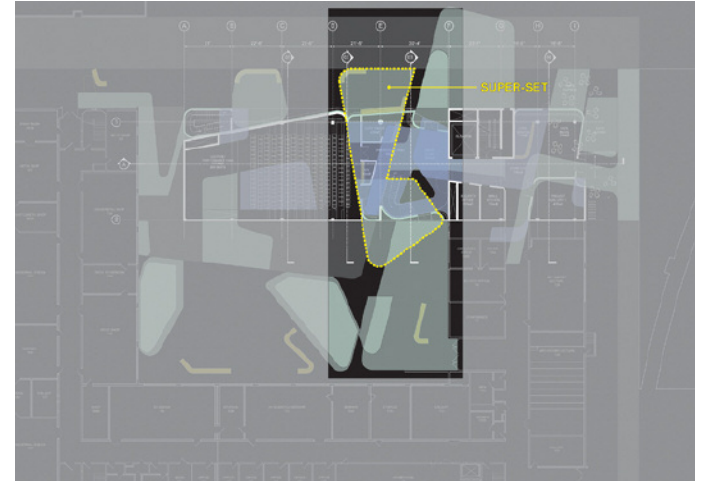
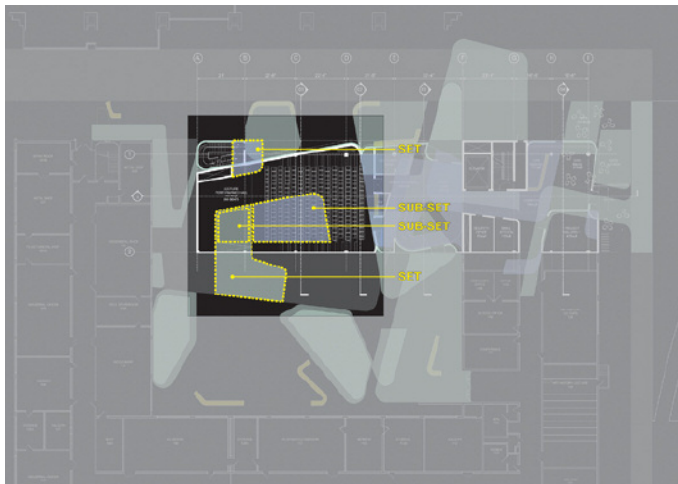
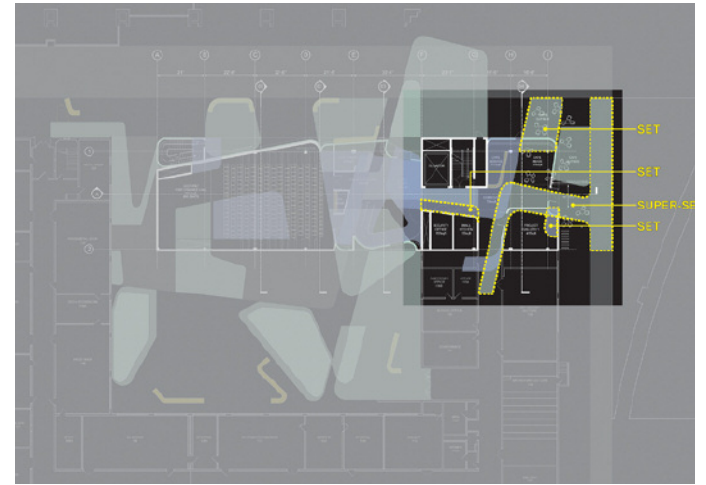
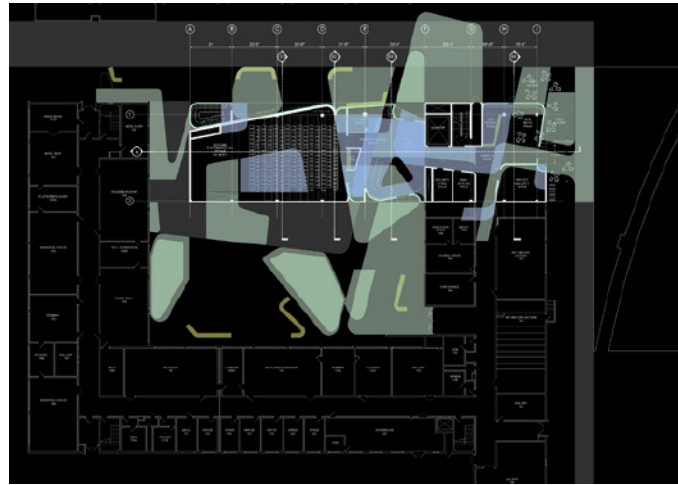


Darwinian Regulating Lines: Tethers, Eddies and Reverberations *Ron Witte*





Program and form have become estranged of late. They appear again and again as entangled adversaries whirling throughout - but never together - our claims upon architecture's progress. Knowing full well that program and form are similarly and simultaneously implicated in what we produce, architects nevertheless seem more and more obsessed with obliterating one with the other a simplifying but stultifying strategy.

The problematic aspects of this tendency are self-evident, as are its many hypocrisies. Any program partisan worth his or her salt is invariably a knowing, if clandestine, formalist, and any form crusader can be counted on to assure (even if quietly) architecture's programmatic life. What is at stake, then, isn't why architects gravitate toward this program/form polarity but rather why we yearn for such didactic good/bad inevitability. Whether pursued as a polemicist's technique or as part of a more earnest belief-set, it seems that architects have decided that this is a zero-sum game, that either the programmatic or the formal project can be accelerated - and only the one at the expense of the other.

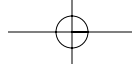
The San Jose Museum of Art + Design (MA+D) began with our interest in creating a more productive entanglement of program and form. If program and form have been on opposed sides of architecture's leading edge for too long, our ambition is to exploit the mutual provocations of form and program that are, in our view, architecture's primary catalyst.

These provocations are inherently dynamic, if not volatile,

which prompted us to explore a system of Darwinian Regulating Lines. We evolved the definition of a "regulating line" in several key ways. First, a traditional regulating line is by definition a ruling device, a static determinant of an optimized position in space, emanating from narrowly defined rule-set (proportional, rhythmic, etc.). In the MA+D, the regulating line itself is subject to relocation, refinement, and redefinition; there is no singularly idealized geometry of origin/conclusion for the regulating system - no golden section, no platonic solid, no rhythmic epitome, etc. In short, there is no imperative to migrate this line (and the architecture held in its orbit) toward an overarching geometric perfection. Instead, its optimal state is a product of the compound modulations of site, technology, form, program, and circulation.

A second way in which conventional regulating lines have been modified is that here they are instigators of new alignments - unforeseen relationships - along their looping trajectories. Acknowledging contemporary architecture's complex technical and spatial composition, these lines gather the entire array of the building's sub-components - material, structure, optics, movement, environmental systems, etc. - into a comprehensive system whose rich density offers unexpected perceptual, organizational, and technical possibilities.

Third, the lines here are hierarchically agile in their selective emphasis of both "local" and "total" aspects of the building. A small coat check area is more legible, formally speaking, for example,



than the far larger theater that it serves; the main gallery is veiled by a much smaller foyer that leads into it. In particular, our interest lies in those areas that act as foreground spaces for the building's largest spaces (the galleries, auditorium, and courtyard). These smaller spaces - programmatic "eddies" - acquire significant performance/figural densities that reside within and among the larger museum functions.

Taken together, these modifications significantly transform the "ideal" deployment of the museum's organizational system. Representational exactitude is supplanted by synthetic legibility. Geometric certainty yields to spatial optimization. Potential takes precedence over rigor. In short, this Darwinian approach replaces a collection of regulations (and the discipline that they produce) by a system of tethers (and the opportunisms that they engender) as the governing structure for the museum.

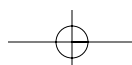
Loops & Eddies / Figures & Boxes

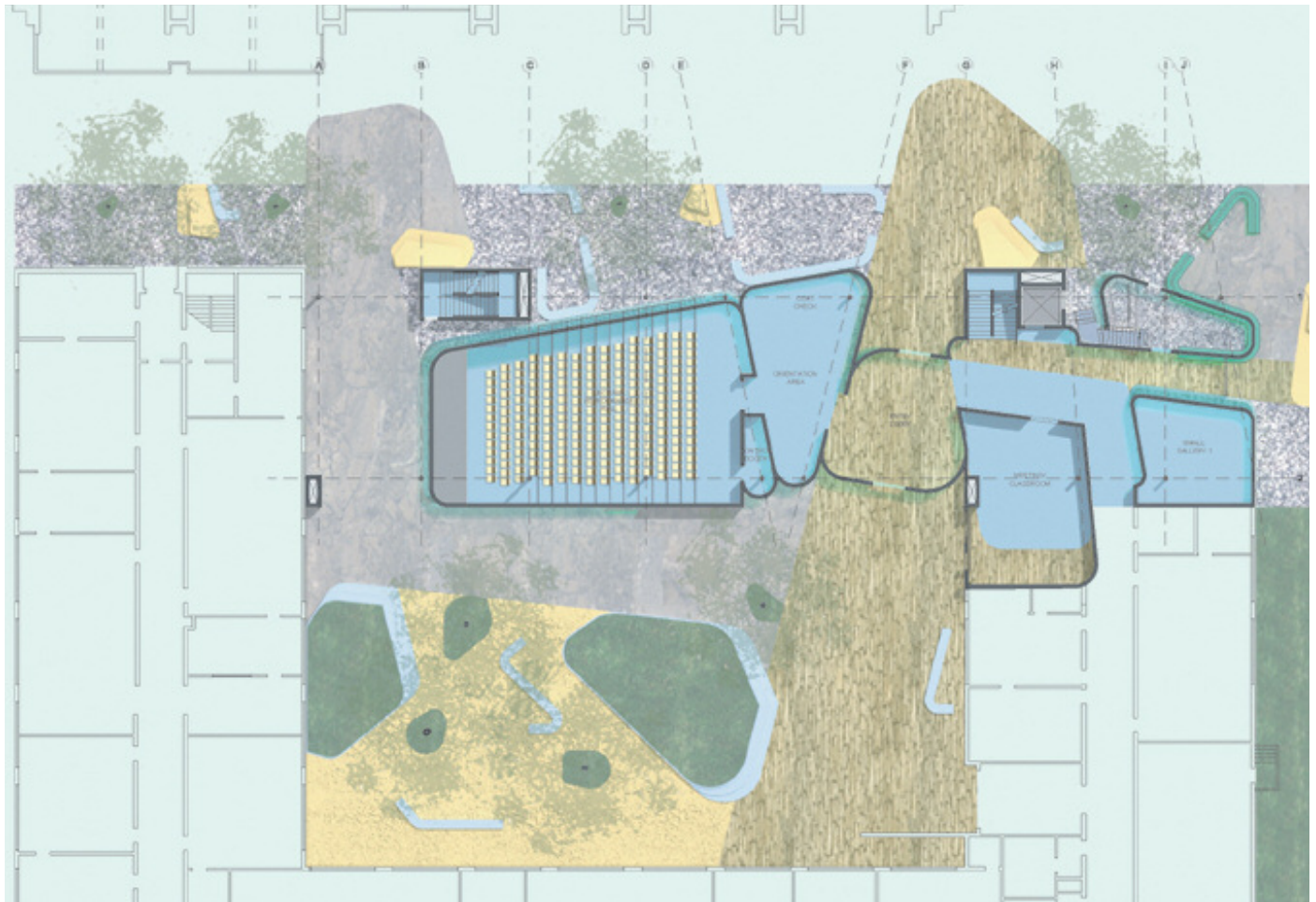
Each of the museum's floors is organized around a generative, looping tether that synthesizes site, program, form, circulation, and technical relationships. These tethers align a series of architectural overlaps, intersections, offsets, and tangents. Each line was initially

tailored to the programmatic parameters of each floor: the ground floor is governed by site relationships, the second by the primary gallery functions, the third by its teaching and secondary gallery roles, and the fourth by its primarily administrative program. Once each floor's primary relationships were established, the four loops were overlaid and refined to produce a second set of sectional opportunities, most significantly those associated with double-height spaces and structural, mechanical, and egress systems.

The larger spaces in the museum have been subject to a continual refrain from the client, namely that they be "flexible," "neutral," and/or even "universal," terms that invariably impose the "non-figural" on architecture. In response, we determined that the smaller eddy spaces - foyers, circulation nodes, reception areas, service counters, etc. - could comprise a set of "hot zones" in the museum. The size of these smaller spaces (generally no more than a few hundred square-feet) gives them the possibility of greater figural legibility within the context of the overall building (forty-thousand square-feet). More importantly, these small spaces can signal the presence of larger program areas without obligating those large spaces to become overly specific. In this way, the seemingly minor eddy spaces have evolved into primary figural loci for the museum.

As these eddy spaces become more figurally explicit, their



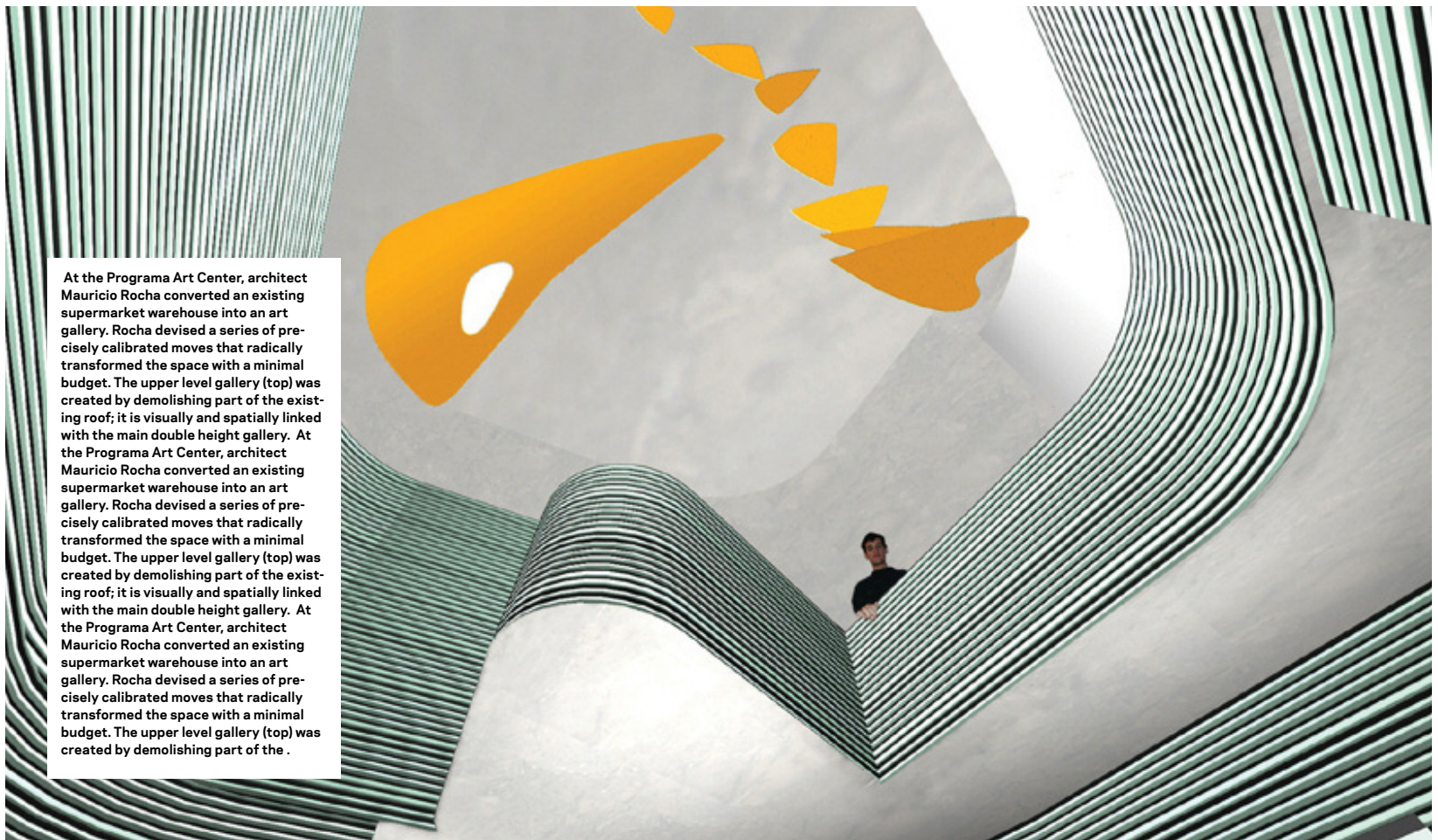
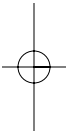
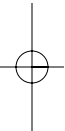
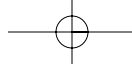


relationship to the museum's superstructure has been continually refined to ensure their integration within the overarching system of Darwinian lines. Our aim is to create a synthetic whole that holds intensified as well as aerated pockets of program, form, and/or technology. Thus, the loops produce greater and lesser intensifications of legibility, but always do so within a single organizational system. The pre-gallery space on the second floor, for example, is made more legible, more definitive, in terms of its presence, but it remains programmatically subordinate even while formally dominant.

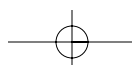
These intensified/aerated modulations of the plans prompted another important evolution in the system of regulating lines. Intensifications are achieved not only with adjacencies, but also through various forms of superposition: overlaps, intersections, and set/subset relationships. Aerations are created with spatial distancing: offsets, gaps, and tangents. Whether in the direction of intensification or aeration, these operations compel walls, floors, and ceilings to be deployed in ways that are both more extreme and more subtle than permitted by simple alignments. To exploit these spatial alternatives, we evolved the regulating lines by adding a second set of notations to them - short sub-segments that parallel each original looping tether. These sub-segments structure the alignments, variations, intensities and hierarchies among programs and forms throughout the building.

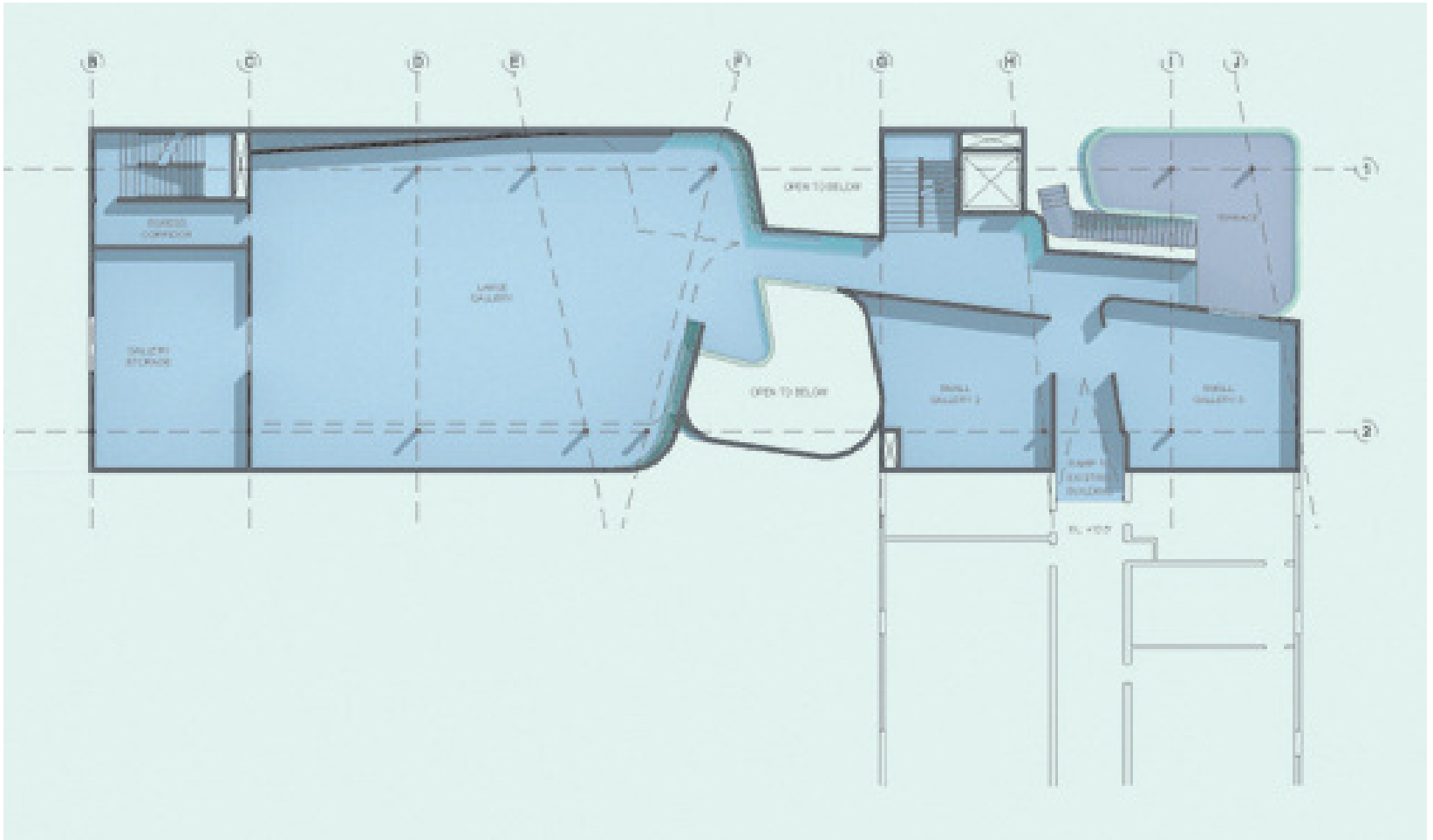
This second layer of organizing segments compounds the relationships that we can establish among spaces and, more generally, provides an alternative to over-simplistic claims on continuity. It enables a compound wholeness predicated on the aggregation of relationships that are tethered to the loop line (tethered through the operations of offsets, laps, and tangents described above). The building's productive syntheses are enabled not through the representational trope of continuity (the continuous line, surface, etc.) but rather through the dynamic consequences - the spatial laps and reverberations - of the organizational system.

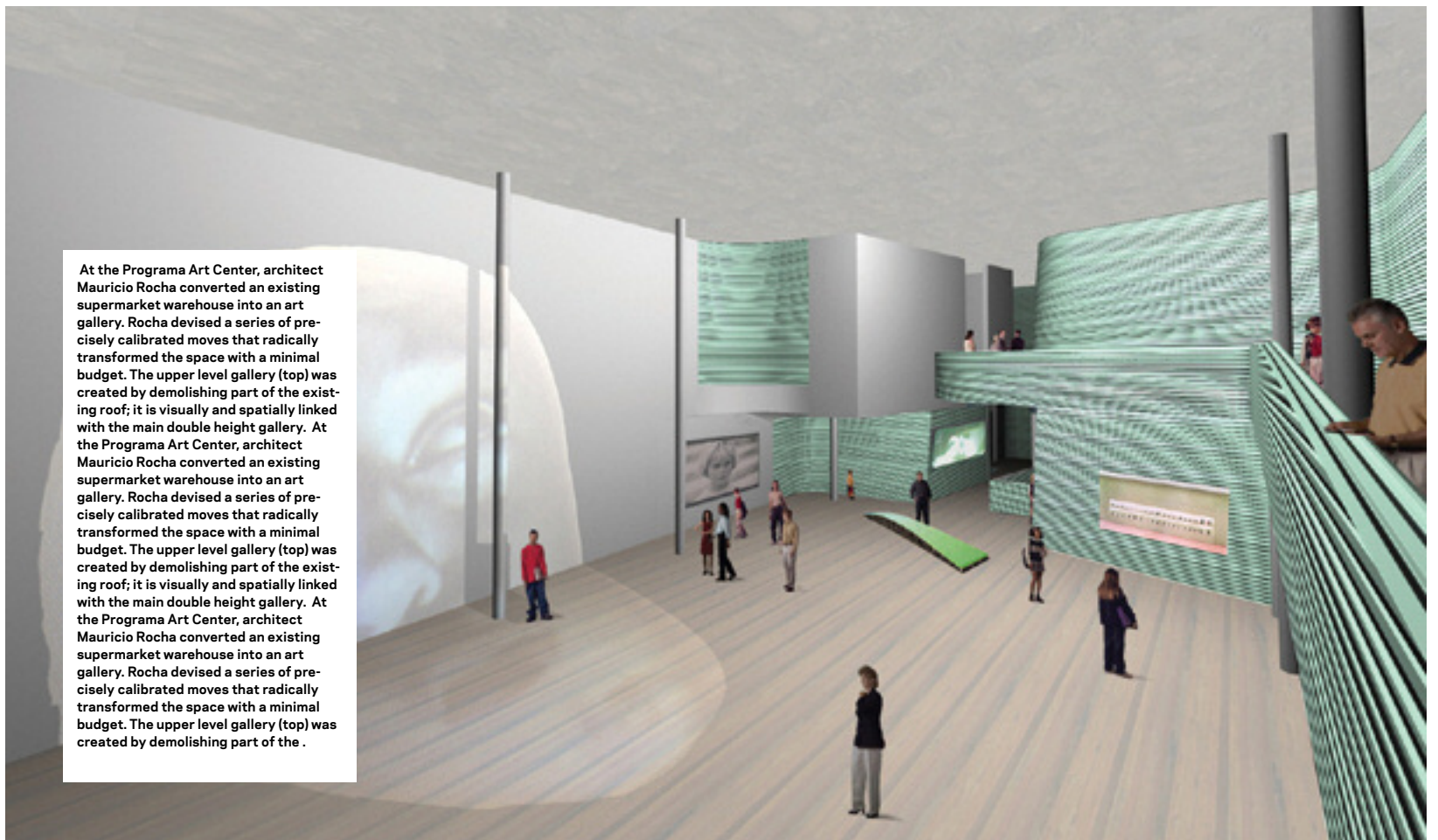
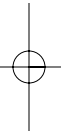
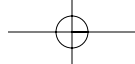
The Darwinian Regulating Line draws together program, form, and technology. Mirroring architecture's generalist status, it synthesizes and accelerates the relationships of architecture's sub-threads to one another. In the Museum of Art + Design this system fosters a totality, albeit a totality teeming with the susceptibilities and potentials upon which architecture thrives. Here, the Darwinian Regulating Line organizes a complex building and site, assuring that the museum is filled with the ever-changing cadences of control and liberation that are intrinsic to vibrant architecture.



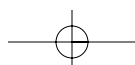
At the Programa Art Center, architect Mauricio Rocha converted an existing supermarket warehouse into an art gallery. Rocha devised a series of precisely calibrated moves that radically transformed the space with a minimal budget. The upper level gallery (top) was created by demolishing part of the existing roof; it is visually and spatially linked with the main double height gallery. At the Programa Art Center, architect Mauricio Rocha converted an existing supermarket warehouse into an art gallery. Rocha devised a series of precisely calibrated moves that radically transformed the space with a minimal budget. The upper level gallery (top) was created by demolishing part of the existing roof; it is visually and spatially linked with the main double height gallery. At the Programa Art Center, architect Mauricio Rocha converted an existing supermarket warehouse into an art gallery. Rocha devised a series of precisely calibrated moves that radically transformed the space with a minimal budget. The upper level gallery (top) was created by demolishing part of the .

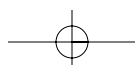
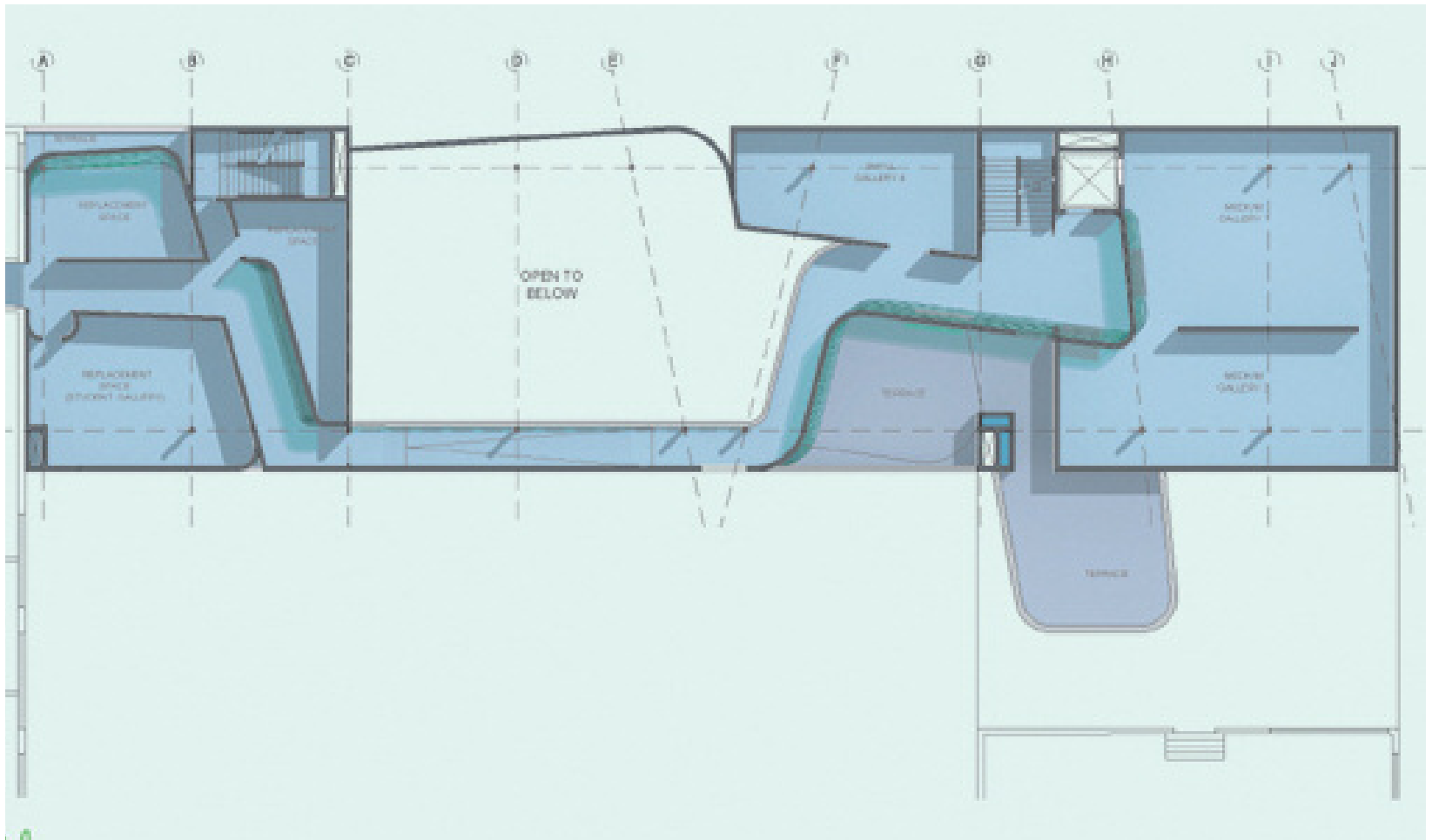
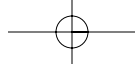






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