THE GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM IN SALZBURG: A PROJECT BY HANS HOLLEIN
May 25 – September 1, 1990

An exhibition of a project by Austrian architect Hans Hollein will be presented at the Peggy Guggenheim Collection in Venice. Hollein’s design was the winner of an invitational competition initiated by the Mayor of Salzburg for a museum in the Mönchsberg, a large rock formation that is one of the principal geological features of the city of Salzburg. Other entries in the competition were submitted by Giancarlo de Carlo, Gerhard Garstenauer, Jean Nouvel, and Josef Paul Kleihues.

The singular feature of the Hollein design is the fact that the proposed museum is entirely enclosed within the volume of the Mönchsberg rock on three levels. It has no facade. The gallery spaces on the top two levels are covered by a vast system of skylights that offer natural light to the subterranean museum. The museum is reached through the courtyard of the Burgerspital, at the same elevation of the main streets of Salzburg, adjacent to the Festspielhaus, and at the end of the famous Getreidegasse, the Street of Mozart’s birthplace.

The museum project involves a total area of approximately 11,700 square meters: 6,500 square meters for exhibition space; 2,000 square meters for public circulation; and 3,200 square meters for offices, a public auditorium, storage, and other services facilities.

The Guggenheim Museum was invited to collaborate on the museum project by various Austrian Government and Cultural agencies during Autumn 1989. In December 1989 at the order of the Bundesministerium für Wissenschaft und Forschung, a commission was formed and vested with the responsibility for determining the feasibility of the project. The commission, which consists of representatives of the city of Salzburg, the region of Salzburg, the Federal government of Austria, and the private sector, has engaged several teams of consultants to assess, among other things, the following issues: technical problems of underground construction; environmental impact; the museum’s effect on the economy; components of a Guggenheim-operated cultural program; the design of an effective operating budget and governance structure for the museum, if it is built. The results of that study are scheduled to be published this summer.

The exhibition of the project consists of models, architectural drawings, and photographs of the site in the city of Salzburg. After Venice, the exhibition will travel to Salzburg where it will be shown at the Residenzgalerie July 25 – September 1, in conjunction with an exhibition drawn from the permanent collections of the Guggenheim Museum entitled Meisterwerke aus dem Guggenheim Museum. There will be a press preview for both exhibitions on July 24.

Thomas Krens, Director of the Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation, which operates the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York and the Peggy Guggenheim Collection in Venice says, “the prospect of a Guggenheim Museum in Salzburg was not immediately self-evident to us. But the quality of Hollein’s design, in its logic and drama, is compelling: if the project is built, I believe not only that it will become Hollein’s most famous building, but that it will be recognized as one of the most unique and poetic architectural achievements of the century. Hollein has struck a perfect balance.
between fantastic and memorable public spaces and the functional integrity of galleries hospitable to the requirements of the art they display.

“It is also clear that the project provides a remarkable opportunity to enrich the architectural and artistic resources of Austria, the city of Salzburg, and the international cultural community. On these grounds, the Guggenheim is honored to have the possibility to participate.”

“Nevertheless, the decision of the Guggenheim’s participation and the possibility of the actual construction of a Salzburg Museum will depend on the outcome of feasibility study, followed in all probability, by many more months of discussion. The presentation of the project in Venice during the Biennale insures, at the very least, that the details of Hans Hollein’s extraordinary design will reach a wider audience. The Guggenheim Foundation is pleased to be able to provide this opportunity.”

Hans Hollein is one of the most accomplished architects in the world. His Museum Abteiberg in Mönchengladbach and new modern art museum in Frankfurt testify to his experience and success with museum architecture. The Haas-haus in Vienna’s famous Stephansplatz is another Hollein-designed project that will open in September. He is the commissioner for the Austrian Pavilion at the Biennale and has designed numerous museum exhibition installations during the course of his career. He is a professor at the Hochshule für Angewandte Kunst in Vienna, and has taught at the Düsseldorf Academy in West Germany, and Washington University, University of California at Los Angeles, and Yale University in the United States.