



## THE PRESENCE OF THE PAST: PETER ZUMTHOR RECONSIDERS LACMA DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

### Director's Statement

What if, instead of being hidden, a museum's collections were visible even if they were in storage? What if art objects could be methodically rotated to describe many cultural stories and not just one chronological and geographic historical narrative? What if there could be a comfortable and seamless transition from the casual space of an outdoor plaza to the inner sanctum of a meditative gallery? Could a museum have lots of windows to see outside, could kids be accommodated as easily as art historians, and could an arrangement of coincident spaces be suited to contemplation, education, or just hanging out? And instead of being a notorious energy hog, could a public museum building collect the energy of the sun to give back to its environment?

These were some of the questions I posed to Peter Zumthor in 2006, when we began studying what was possible in re-envisioning LACMA's galleries around its historical collections. The trustees had already begun this process in 2001 by selecting Rem Koolhaas and OMA's entry as the winner of the architectural competition to redesign LACMA. This bold choice of the only entry to assert that it would be far more effective to replace the existing structures than to renovate them attests to the early willingness to reconsider the art museum's architecture from scratch.

With support from LACMA's trustees and the County of Los Angeles, we have worked carefully over the last six years to develop this preliminary plan. Our goal is to create a new LACMA that would be responsive to its existing environment and have the potential to inspire its future. This exhibition is intended to give the public a sense of this process in its early stages within the context of the history of this unique and significant site.

—Michael Govan, CEO and Wallis Annenberg Director