It’s easy to see in the open geometry of the plan a reference to some of Klee’s compositions, and the hefty Sleender cables supporting walls, lights, and screens evokes his spidery penmanship. Piano’s greatest feat is to give these tiny, intimate works the space they need to breathe. Such a concentration of invention could easily overwhelm the viewer; here each work seems to float in its own white void, bathed in a cloud of soft light, achieving an emotional as well as a formal resonance. Portals are ground, not chronologically, but by affinity, so that you can explore the infinite variety of ways in which this master employed line, colour, figurative and abstract imagery along congruous and never repetitive. Triangular stairs and a piston-operated lift that is a work of art in itself carry you down to a room of similar size that presently houses the 166 sketches Klee did in his last fertile year. Here, the works are arranged on a peripheral and inner wall that trace the rectangle defined by slender structural columns. Scattered around both galleries on eye level, piles of 40 hand puppets that Klee made around 1925 to amuse his family. Fabricated from the commonplace materials and crudely painted, they have a compelling talismanic quality, enveloping the inner child in the artist and in all who connect with his work.

That spirit carries over into the children’s museum, a clipped, cubic box raised on white stilts in the same orange hue as theKlee and Klee scholar walls of the outer lobby. Regular performances of chamber music (Klee was an accomplished violonist), dance, and theatre will be interspersed with lectures and readings. All will reflect the versatility of the artist and his friends, over four turbulent decades and their enduring legacy.

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