

project journal 01
sept - okt 2023

julia van der ploeg
interiors buildings cities

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interiors buildings cities
msc3/4 palace
4573560



This is a project journal. Look at it like this book cart from the Stockholm public library. A compilation of thoughts, texts, images, drawings and ideas. An attempt to organize them and put them in the right place.

Fig. 1. book cart Stockholm public library

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Looking carefully at the rotunda. The central reading room of the Stockholm public library to understand the building and to understand Asplund.

A reproduction of the room in scale 1:25 to have access to the rotunda for the rest of the year. You don't have to go back to Stockholm to experience the atmosphere of Asplund's reading room. Simply stick your head into the 114cm wide cylinder.

The model confused me. As the model is extremely big, I expected grandeur before visiting the library in real life. However when I walked up the stairs it did not feel like I expected at all.

When walking across the room the weird echo is the only thing reminding me of the huge void above me. Other than that, the amount of books stored on the three levels don't dread me. At least not in the same way as I am dreading this insane amount of books to make on 1:25 scale.

Interestingly enough the scale of the room is fitting a city, but the experience contradicts this. There is something odd. I can't put my finger on it. Yet. More to discover during the weeks of model making.



carboard
paint
varnish



leather
mahogany

marble
brass



cardboard
mdf
tape
tension strap



Fig. 5. drinking fountain designed by Nils Sjögren
Fig. 6. glueing a section of the rotunda

Fig. 3. chair for rotunda designed by Asplund, 1:25

Fig. 4. chair for rotunda designed by Asplund, 1:1

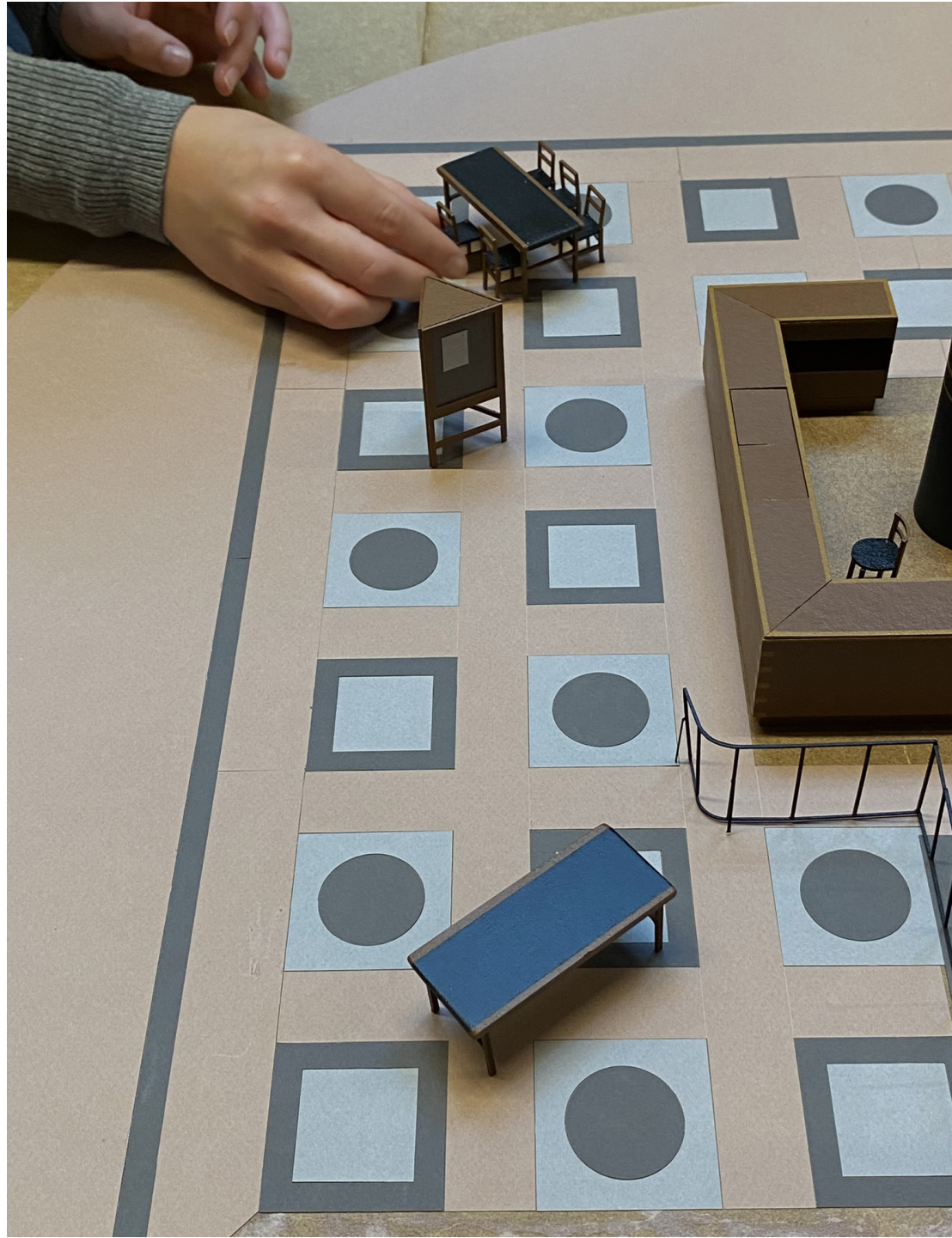


Fig. 7. furnishing the rotunda, 1:25



Fig. 8. the rotunda, 1:1

Fig. 9. *John Blund* by Nils Dardel in the story telling roomFig. 10. *The Dying Dandy* by Nils Dardel in the Moderna Museet

The artist Nils Dardel puts the Stockholm public library in a wider perspective. With the large fresco called *John Blund* he refers to one of his earlier works *The Dying Dandy*. Both works starring a sleeping boy as the center of attention.

John Blund is the large fresco in the storytelling room in the children's library. *The Dying Dandy* is exhibited in the Moderna Museet

I stumbled upon *The Dying Dandy* when visiting the Moderna Museet on Friday night. Friday night between 18h00 and 20h00, the Moderna Museet is free of entrance for everyone that wants to visit. Making it possible for anyone to just walk in and enjoy the art. Just like it is possible for anyone to enter the Stockholm public library.

I did not know about Nils Dardel before. I had just seen the fresco in the storytelling room in the library once that week. But in a glimpse I saw the painting in Moderna Museet was from the same artist.

Dardel has a specific style, where the boundary between his imagination and the reality becomes ambiguous. An approach that suits a wall painting meant to interest young children. Even more I think this motif is extremely relevant for the contemporary society. With modern media it is ever so challenging to discern what is the truth, what is fiction or what is entertainment.

In the library it should be clear what is fiction and what is non-fiction. Books contain truth. Nils Dardel's work is questioning this.

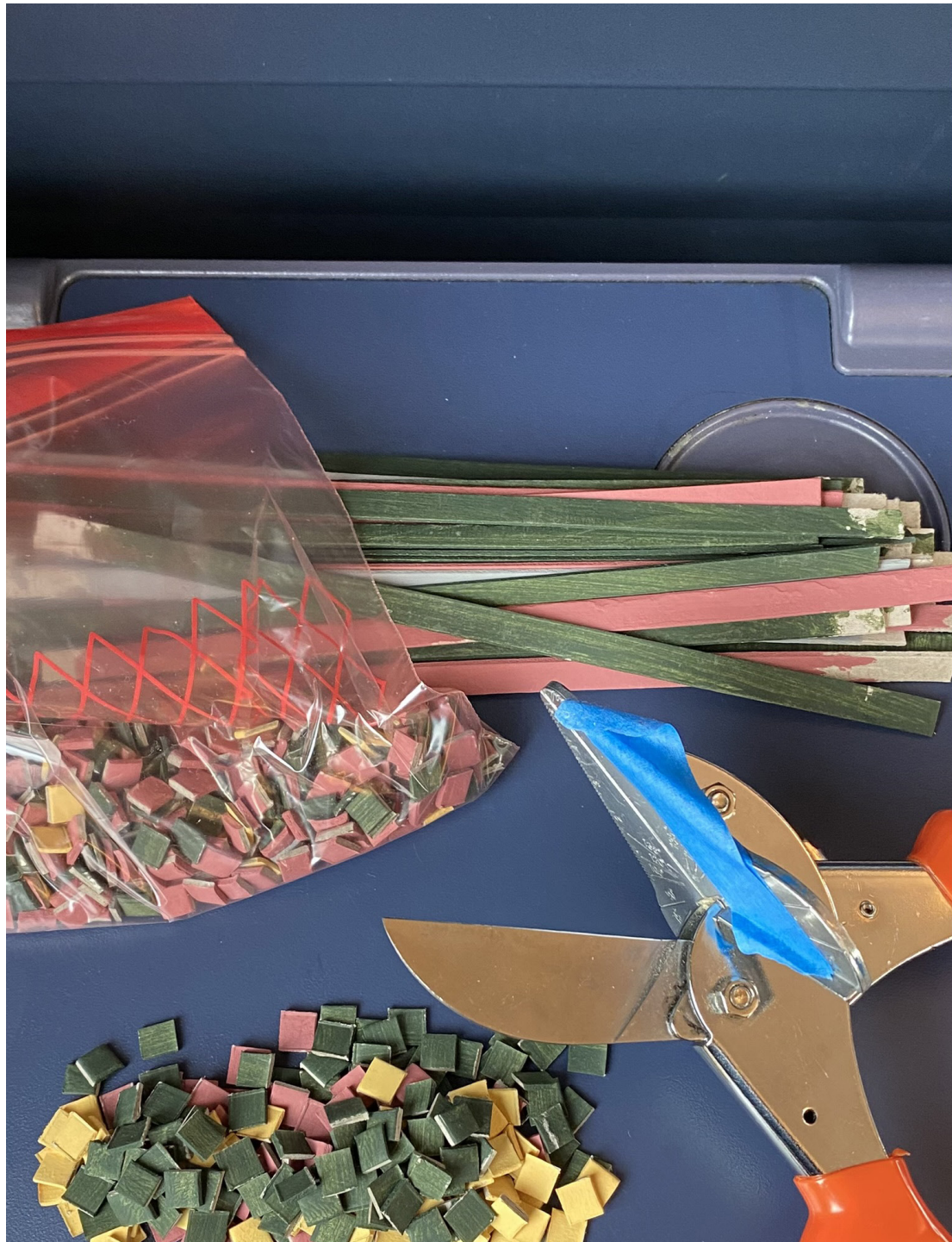


Fig. 11. cutting books on the train from Rotterdam to Stockholm

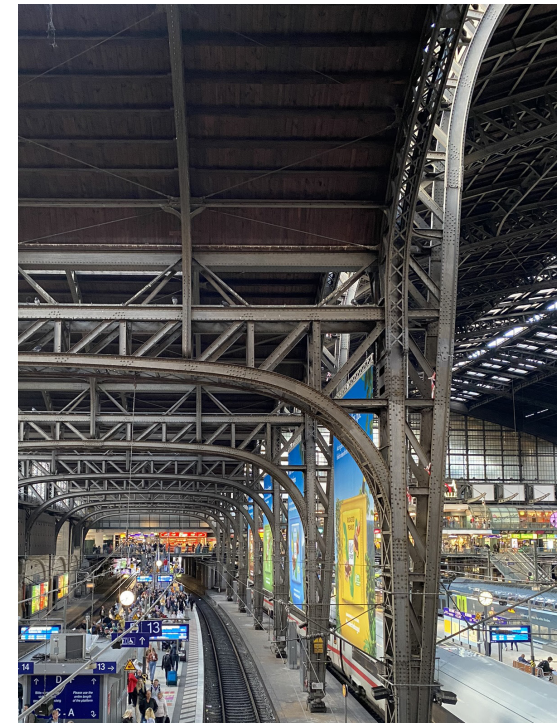


Fig. 12. Hamburg station



24 hours
train from Rotterdam to Stockholm
cutting books.
what to expect?
what to see?

24 hours
train from Stockholm to Rotterdam
cutting some more books.
what did we see?
what do I think?

scale down
new opportunities
bring 8000 books in your backpack

Fig. 13. waking up on the nighttrain from Hamburg to Stockholm

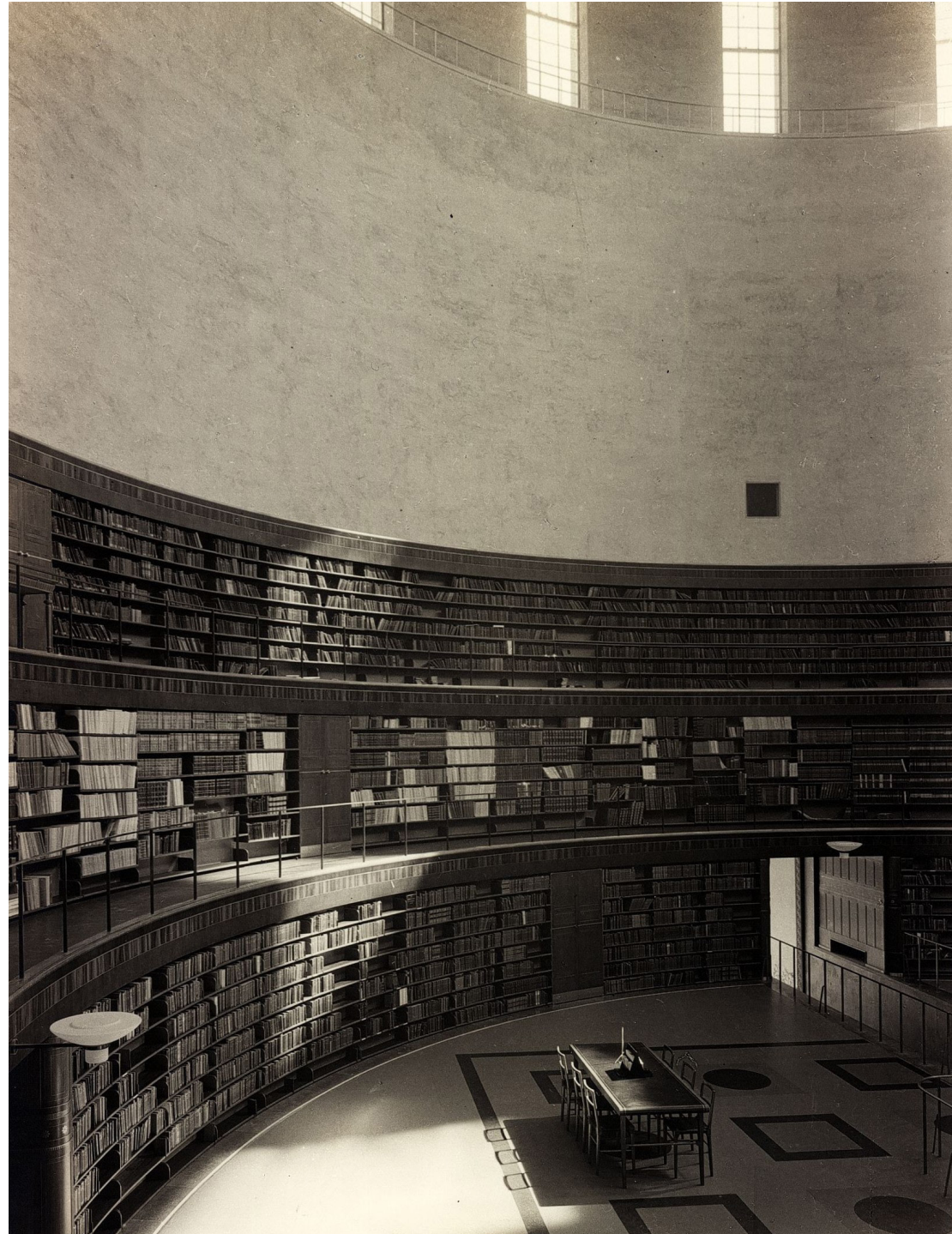


Fig. 14. the rotunda, 1927

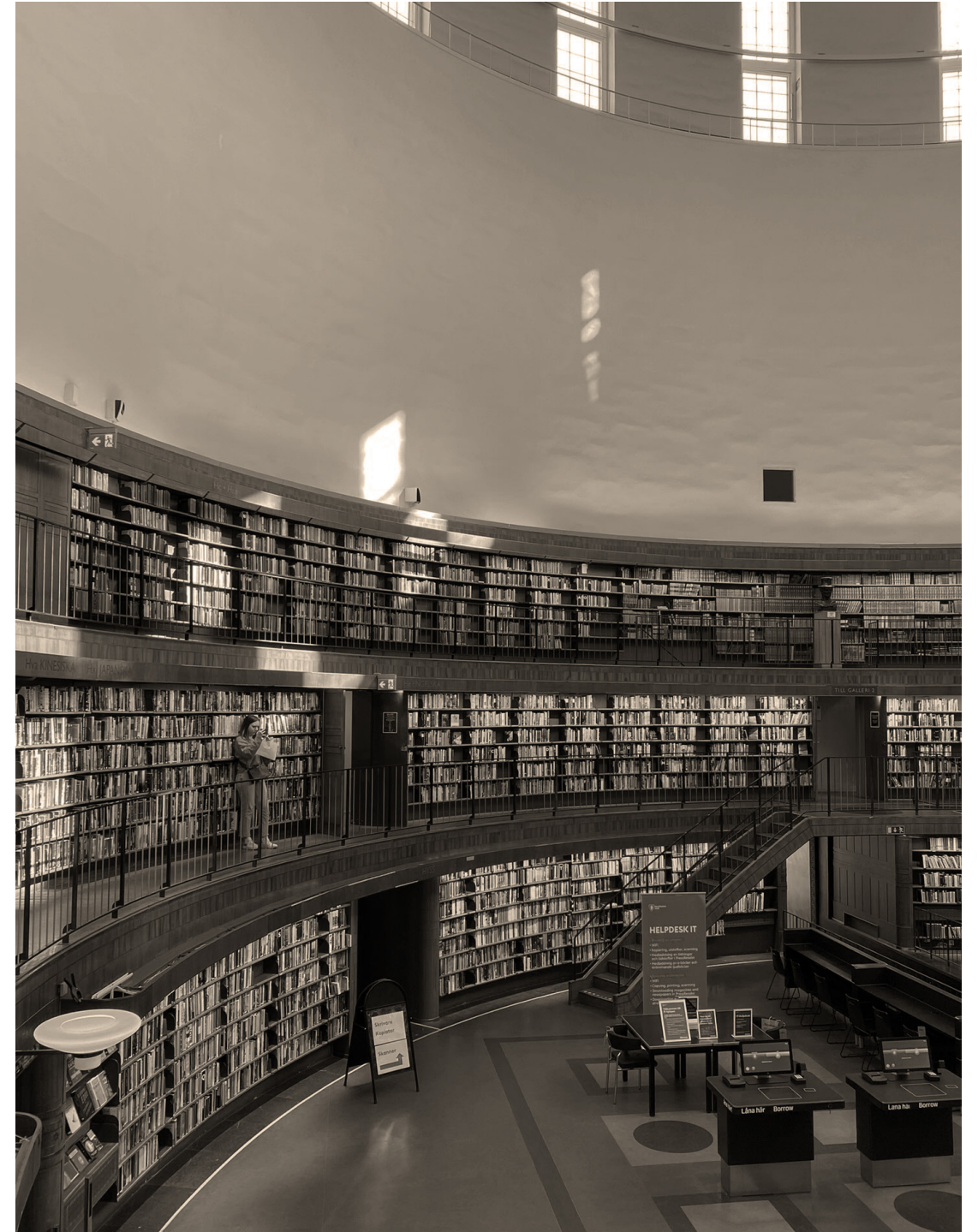


Fig. 15. the rotunda, 2023



Gunnar Asplund's son, Hans Asplund, later added the stairs above the entrance to make the other two levels of books accessible to the public. Before, these levels were meant only for the librarians. The stairs break the circle, diminishing the gesture of the entrance stairs coming up the rotonda from the lobby.



Alongside of researching the public library we looked into precedents of Gunnar Asplund. Conor, Kamil, Liuying and I researched the Lister County Courthouse together. The communal drawings and my part of the research will be incorporated in the following section of the project journal.

By the time Asplund designed the Lister County Courthouse, he was already well established in Sweden and known for building the Woodland Chapel. The courthouse was realised between 1917 and 1921 in Sölvesborg, a small town in the south of Sweden. The courthouse functioned for the whole Lister district, a peninsula adjacent to Sölvesborg.

A grand gesture for a small town village expressed by the juxtaposition of the monumental, vaulted entrance and the more modest windows.

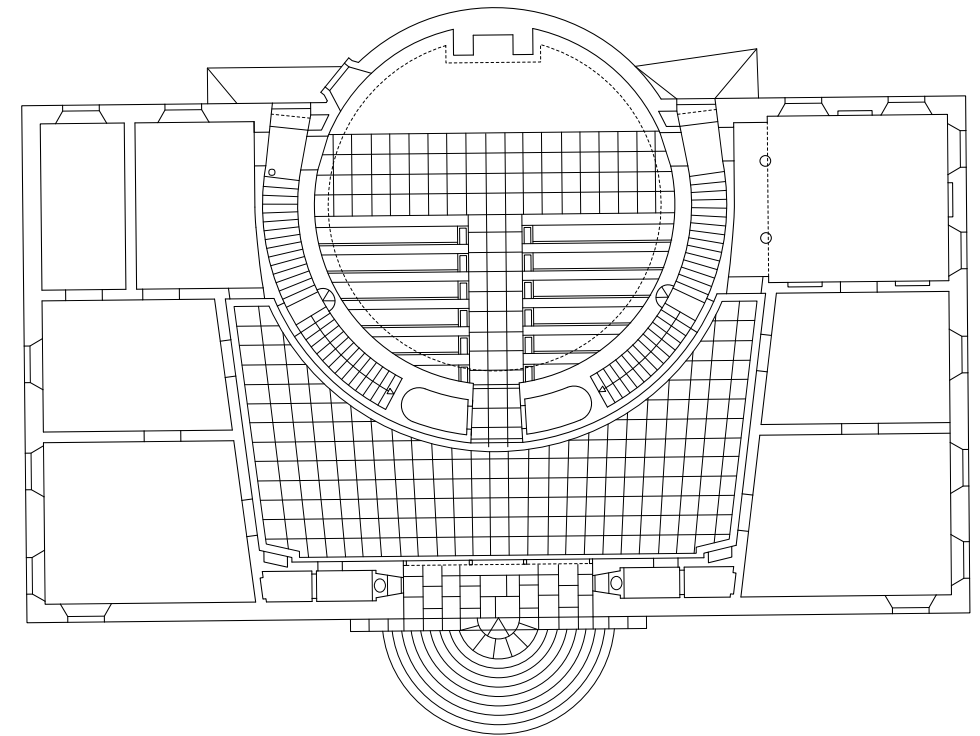
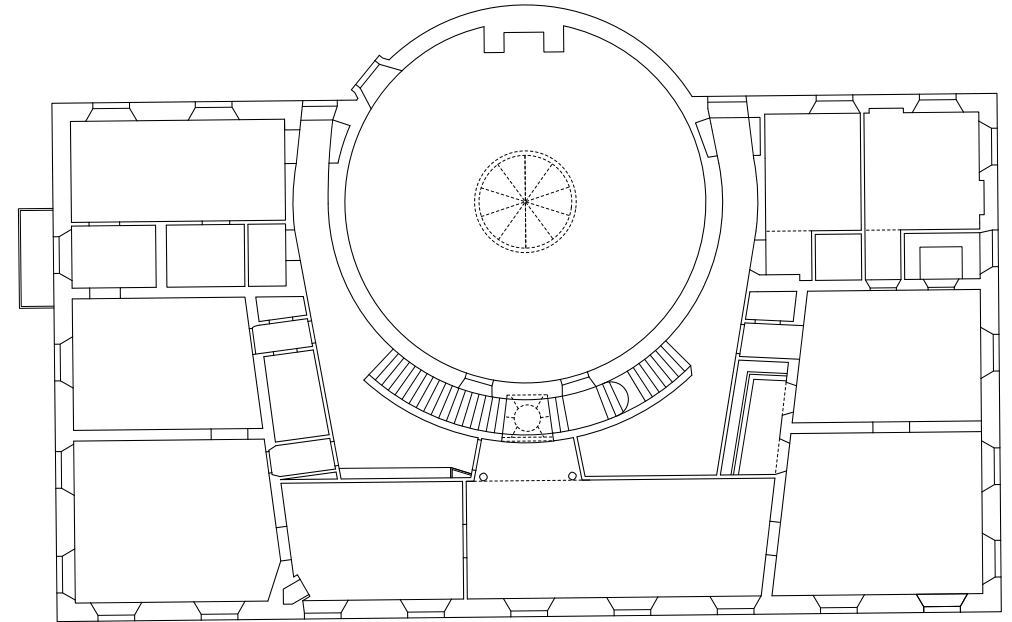


Fig. 17. Lister county courthouse

Fig. 18. Lister county courthouse first floor

Fig. 19. Lister county courthouse ground floor

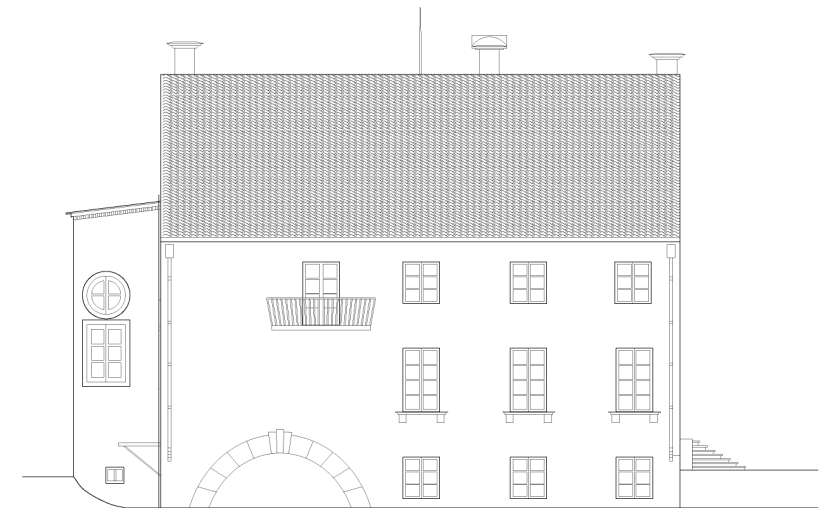
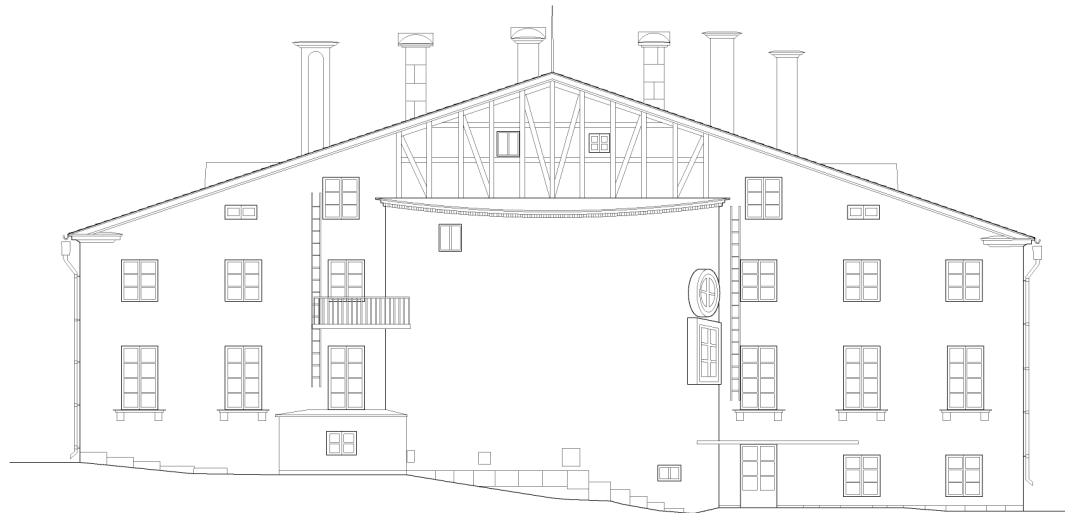
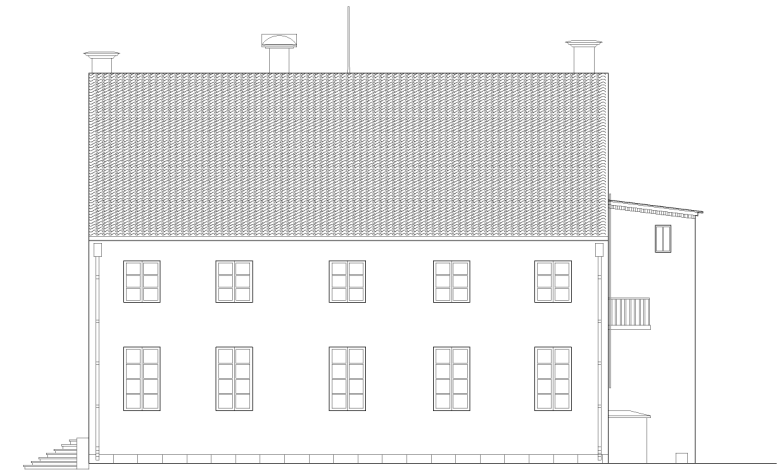
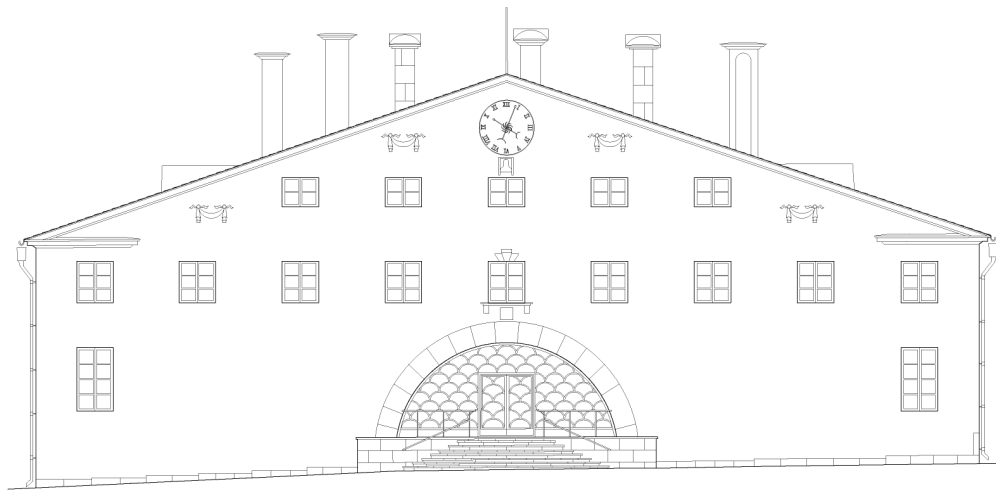


Fig. 20. Lister county courthouse east facade
 Fig. 21. Lister county courthouse west facade

0 1 2 5m

Fig. 22. Lister county courthouse north facade
 Fig. 23. Lister county courthouse south facade

0 1 2 5m



Fig. 24. Lister county courthouse section



Asplund connects the Lister County Courthouse with the local train station of Sölvesborg, by placing the building on the opposite side of a tree lined lane. This strong axis line also results in the very symmetrical facade design and suggests pushing the cylindrical space to burst out at the back facade.

The photo shows the current view on this axis looking out from the salon on the second floor.

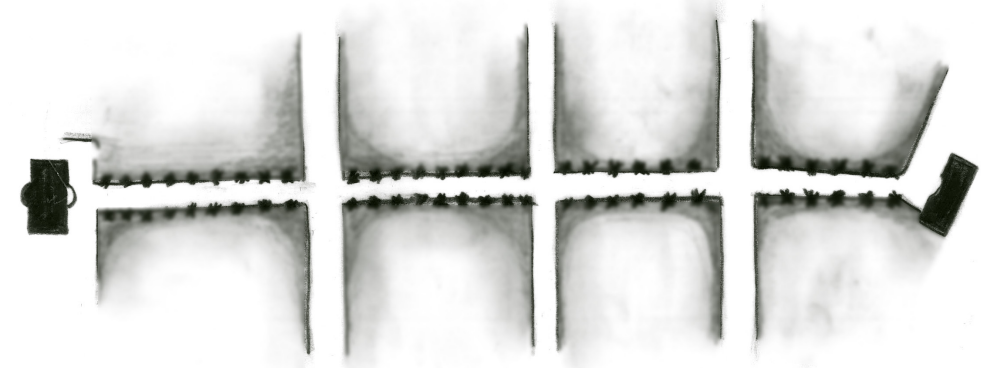
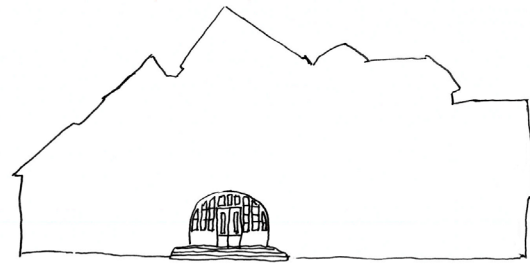
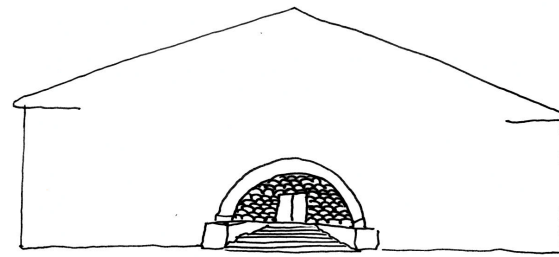


Fig. 25. view on axis

Fig. 26. axial road connecting the station and the courthouse



Furthermore, Asplund refers to the train station on the other end of the lane by mirroring the vaulted entrance. A method to unify the landscape.

According to Hakon Ahlberg (1943)¹, the mayor of Grönköping is a strict man. For a smaller community, the governing body has to be more strict in order to be respected. Therefore the facade of the courthouse in Sölvesborg expresses authority. The monumental facade faces towards the community and suggests some very important business is going on behind the vast entrance and the windowless space on the ground floor. Monumental courthouses are reoccurring in several other small Swedish towns.

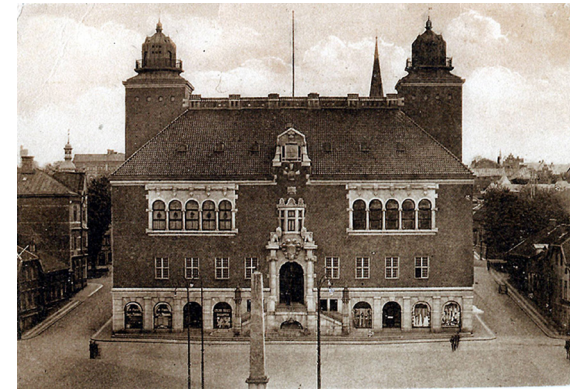
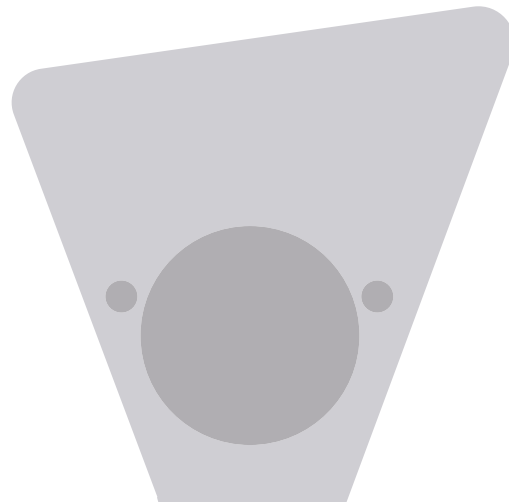
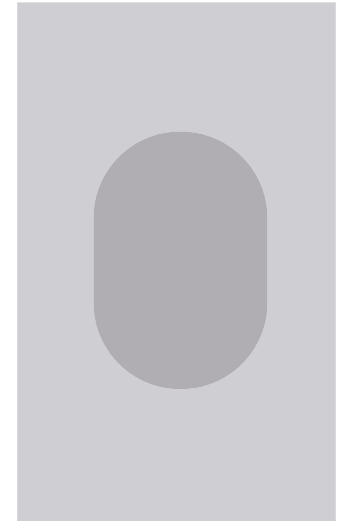
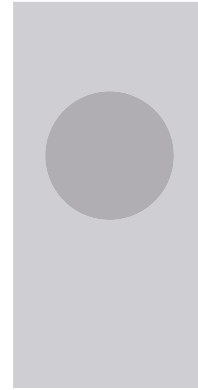
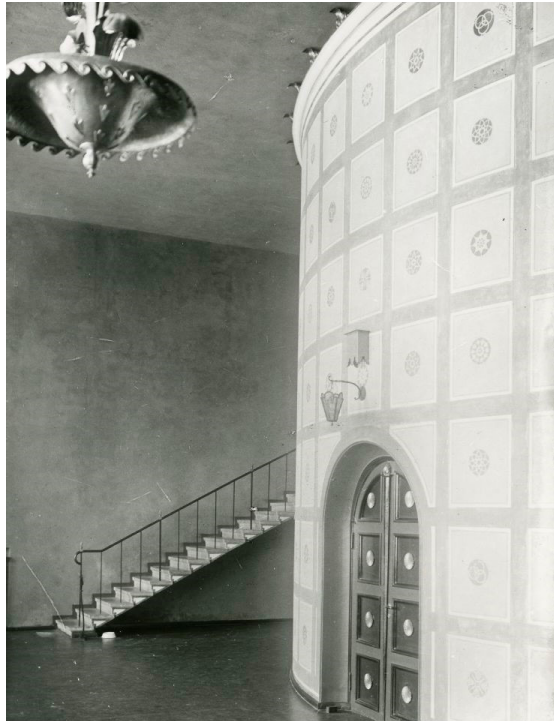


Fig. 27. Lister county courthouse facade analysis
 Fig. 28. Sölvesborg train station facade analysis

Fig. 29. Karlskrona Rådhus (1912)

Fig. 30. Borås Rådhus (1910)
 Fig. 31. Ystad Tingshus (1903)



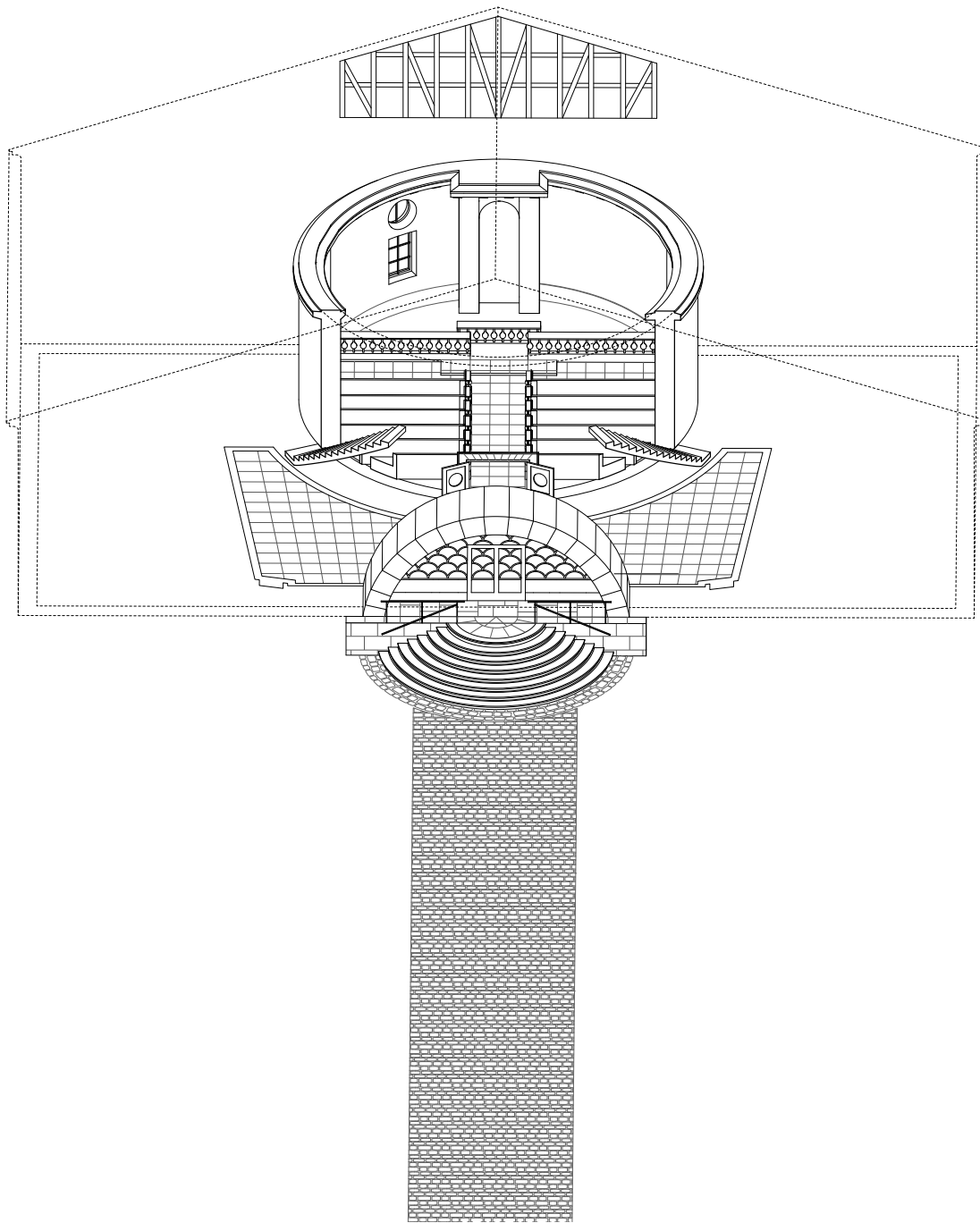
In 1915, the art historian Heinrich Wölfflin wrote 'The Principles of Art History'². Wölfflin categorised the experience of art into dialectical pairings whose measure is the experience of the individual who moves through them. The sequence or composition of the square and the circle is a clear example of this principle. This pattern reoccurred in several designs of nordic architects around that period of time.

Fig. 32. Jyväskylä Workers Club, Aino and Alvar Aalto, 1924 - 1925
 Fig. 33. Copenhagen Police Station, Hack Kampmanns, 1918 - 1924

Fig. 34. spatial analysis of the Jyväskylä Workers Club
 Fig. 35. spatial analysis of the Copenhagen Police Station

Fig. 36. National Insurance Board, Sigurd Lewerentz, 1928 - 1932

Fig. 37. spatial analysis of the National Insurance Board



The drawing summarizing the Lister County Courthouse turned into a symbol emphasizing the symmetry of the plan. It starts with introducing the axis as a pedestal. Then the arching entrance is shown in relation to the lobby hall. The drawing enhances the different finishing patterns that one encounters when moving through the building. Also one of the central themes of *the circle within the square* is visible through the visualization of the courtroom within the contours of the building. We chose to show the half-timbered structure at the top back of the building, since it is a particular design motif of Asplund. It is a reference to the vernacular architecture from the area, which was greatly influenced by the proximity of Danish culture. Lastly, next to the strong symmetry in this building, the drawing also shows the moment where Asplund breaks this principle; this is the circular and square window on the left side in the courtroom.

“Men solen stod över Liljeholmen och sköt hela kvastar av strålar mot öster; de gingo genom rökarna från Bergsund, de ilade fram över Riddarfjärden, klättrade upp till korset på Riddarholmskyrkan, kastade sig över till Tyskans branta tak, lekte med vimplarna på skeppsbrobåtarna, illuminerade i fönstren på stora Sjötullen, eklärerade Lidingöskogarna och tonade bort i ett rosenfärgat moln, långt, långt ut i fjärran, där havet ligger. Och därifrån kom vinden, och hon gjorde samma färd tillbaka genom Vaxholm, förbi fästningen, förbi Sjötullen, utmed Siklaön, gick in bakom Hästholmen och tittade på sommarnöjena; ut igen, fortsatte och kom in i Danviken, blev skrämnd och rusade av utmed södra stranden, kände lukten av kol, tjära och tran, törnade mot Stadsgården, for uppför Mosebacke, in i trädgården och slog emot en vägg.”

“The sun was standing over the Liljeholm, throwing sheaves of rays towards the east; they pierced the columns of smoke of Bergsund, flashed across the Riddarfjärd, climbed to the cross of the Riddarholms church, flung themselves on to the steep roof of the German church opposite, toyed with the bunting displayed by the boats on the pontoon bridge, sparkled in the windows of the chief custom-house, illuminated the woods of the Liding Island, and died away in a rosy cloud far, far away in the distance where the sea was. And from thence the wind came and travelled back by the same way, over Vaxholm, past the fortress, past the custom-house and along the Sikla Island, forcing its way in behind the Hästarholm, glancing at the summer resorts; then out again and on, on to the hospital Daniken; there it took fright and dashed away in a headlong career along the southern shore, noticed the smell of coal, tar and fish-oil, came dead against the city quay, rushed up to Moses Height, swept into the garden and buffeted against a wall.”

-*Röda Rommet*
(Strindberg, 1879)³



Fig. 39. Konserthuset, Ivar Tengbom, Stockholm



August Strindberg found a memorable way of depicting Stockholm's city life when he wrote *Röda Rommet* in 1879. Whereas the novel was received as a satire on Stockholm society, he also writes his modern perspective on the urban space. By describing the city from a bird's-eye perspective, he is on par with the French novelists, like Balzac and Hugo, of that time. Through his writing, Strindberg draws parallels between Stockholm and 19th century Paris. *Röda Rommet* was followed up by *Gamla Stockholm*, in which Strindberg elaborates on Stockholm's connection with Paris by taking inspiration from Victor Fournel's *Les Rues de vieux Paris*.

Accordingly Albert Lindhagen, chief city planner, proposed a transformation for Stockholm based on Haussmann's plan for Paris. This plan was accepted in 1866, after which Stockholm was no longer a small local town but soon represented monumental qualities. (Stenport, 2002)⁴



How was Stockholm?

It was really good! We visited many interesting projects, spent good time in the library and learned a lot about Asplund, Lewerentz and Stockholm as a city.

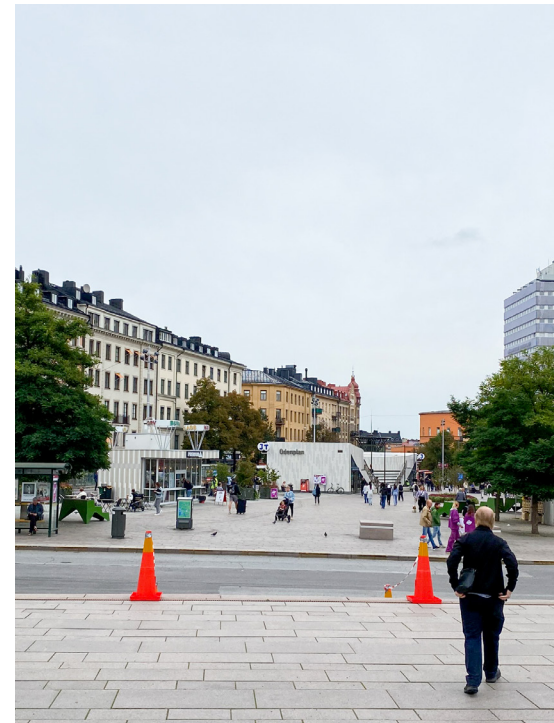
And what about the city?

I feel it is lacking character; streets aligned in grids; repeated monumental building blocks.

Every. Block. Same. Size.

Gamla Stan is the exception.

Home and the interior life is hidden in the blocks.



These pages exhibit multiple positions of the library within the urban fabric of Stockholm. As one navigates through the streets of Stockholm, the library pops up every once in a while. Manifesting its distinctive and integral role within the landscape. The monumental rotunda towers above its surrounding structures and serves as a prominent landmark.

Fig. 42. the library seen from Odengatan

Fig. 43. the library seen from Observatorielunden

Fig. 44. the library during seen from the skatepark

Fig. 45. the library seen from Odengatan

Fig. 46. the library at night seen from the skatepark

Fig. 47. the library seen from Odenplan

Fig. 48. the library seen from Vanadislundan

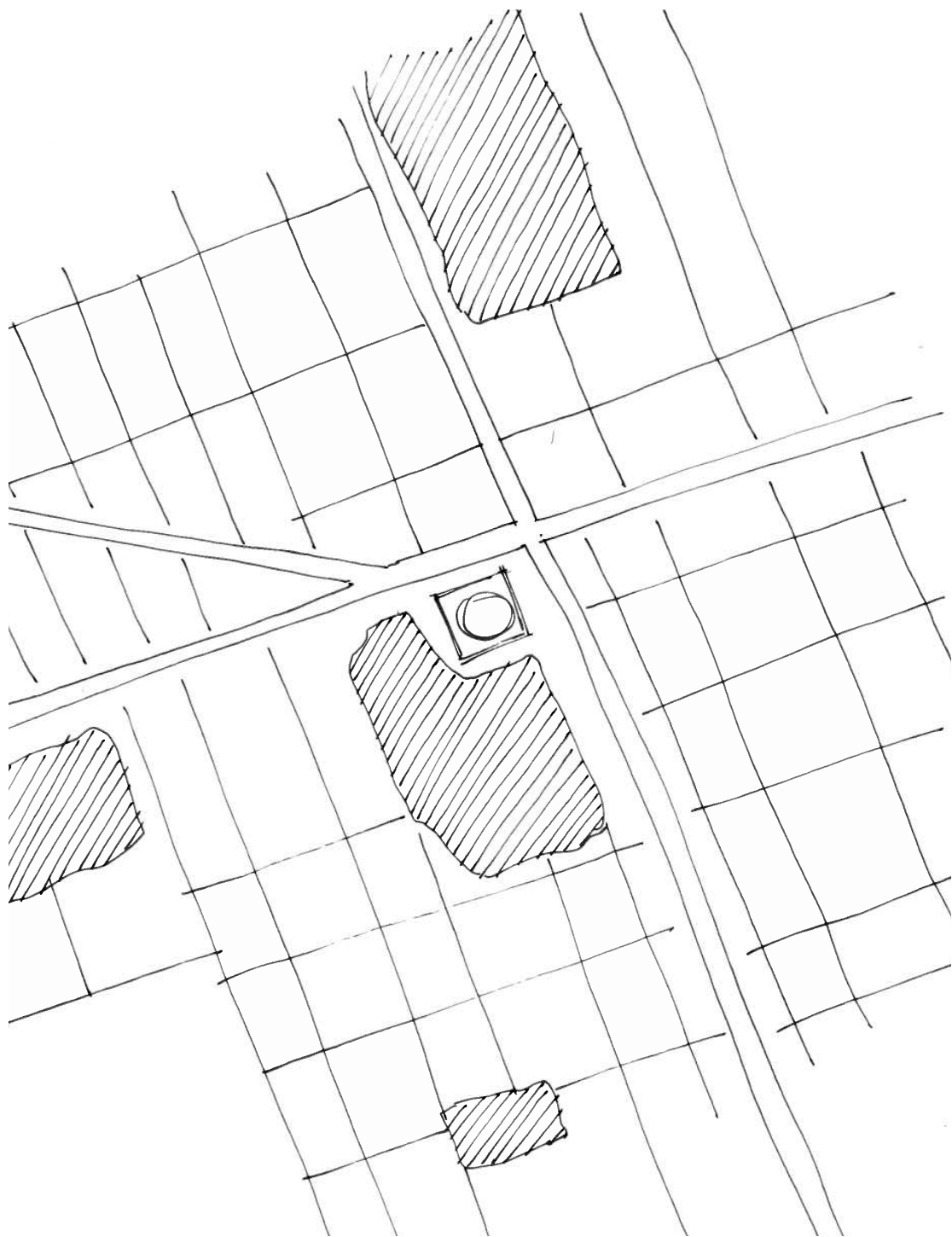
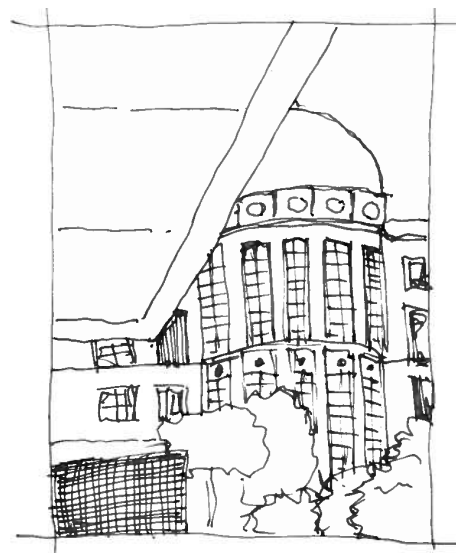


Fig. 49. experience of the urban context of the library



The Stockholm public library is situated along some principal roads crossing the city. Inbetween these axes, the neighborhoods are aligned along a relatively strict grid. This results in a uniform city, but on the otherhand there is not a lot left to discover.

Gamla Stan, the old city, is the exception to this continuous urban planning. A place to wonder around and explore the smaller streets and authentic houses.

The handelshögskolan (Fig. 50) is a grand building facing the library on the other side of the park. The cylindrical oriel also hosts a library for the Stockholm School of Economics.

Following Sveavägen more to the south, there is the Centrumhuset by Cyrillus Johansson (Fig. 51). A building on the corner of two roads. Accompanied by the two Kungstornen, which were considered as pioneers of modern European skyscrapers. The building follows the curve of the road and answers to the crossing with the rounded corner. Resulting in an imposing building marking the Sveavägen axis.



Fig. 50. Handelshögskolan, Ivar Tengbom

Fig. 51. Centrumhuset, Cyrillus Johansson

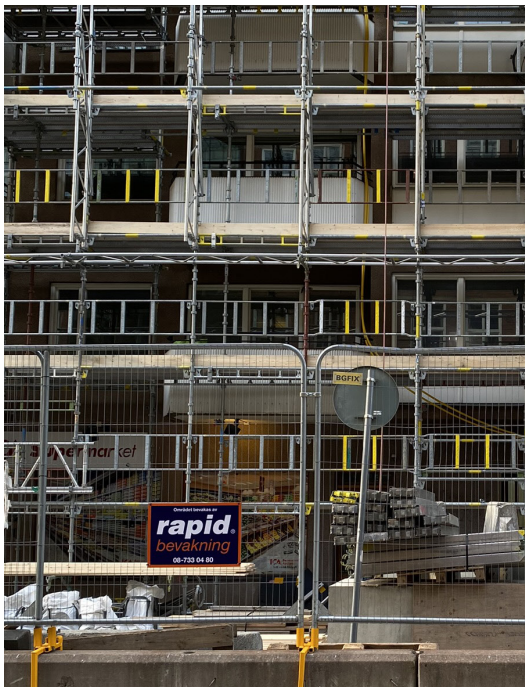


Fig. 52. Döbelnsgatan under construction
 Fig. 53. Krukmakargatan under construction

Fig. 54. the library under construction
 Fig. 55. city conference centre under construction

Fig. 56. the library under construction

“The basis of the home is commonality and mutuality. A good home is not aware of any privileged or slighted, no darlings and no stepchildren. You see no one despise the other, no one who tries not gain advantage at the expense of others, the strong does not press down and plunder the weak. In the good home you find compassion, cooperation, helpfulness.”

-Per Albin Hansson

the term *folkhemmet* was known country wide after Per Albin Hansson’s speech in 1928. *Folkhemmet* translates to *people’s home*. A concept that was successfully put into practice by the Swedish Social Democrats in the 20th century. This was the foundation of the Swedish welfare state that has prevailed until globalisation turned the sail around. The key principles of *folkhemmet* lay in a caring society in which no one is left behind and everyone is equal. Now these principles are loosely discarded, borders are closing. People are choosing for their own good and not the greater good.

While visiting projects in Stockholm, I noticed every public institution was called ‘hus’. Kulturhuset, centrumhuset, stadshuset, riksdagshuset, filmhuset..

Also the tourguide of the Lewerentz National Insurance building kept referring to the building as “house“. A remainder of the 20th century *folkhemmet* spirit. In a way it is interesting to think about people’s behaviour in these public buildings. Can they do like they do at home? How are the interiors of these “*hus*“? Are Swedish public buildings designed to feel like home?



Asplund was dealing with the monumental expression found in the more traditional public institutions in its own way. By embodying a domestic atmosphere and taking the ordinary into account, Asplund sought to contradict the anonymity in public buildings (Storgaard, 2018)⁵.



Berlage Keynotes
Lecture Jan De Vylder
14 september 2023

a language:
quoting Jan de Vylder quoting

when things that have nothing to do with
each other all of a sudden have something
to do with each other

sometimes doing something poetic can
become political and sometimes doing
something political can become poetic

-Francys Alÿs

mettre en jeu

-Ante Timmermans

here is what we have to offer you... confusion
guided by a clear sense of purpose

-Gordon Matta-Clarck

this is the show, and the show is many things

-S.M.A.K.

an exhibition gives birth to another exhibition
(literally)

-Pierre Huyghe

the emergency will replace the contemporary

-Thierry Geoffroy

solutions are the product of a lack of freedom
multiplied by a complacent satisfaction

-Sigmar Polke

living means being at home everywhere
-Ugo La Pietra

that it does not look good makes that it
looks good

it is not unfinished, if it is not finished

niet gecompliceerder maar ook niet
eenvoudiger

-Herman Haan

scale: "I like the span of thinking"

“Architecture is a language, and I think you have to have a grammar in order to have a language. If you are good at that, you speak a wonderful prose; if you are really good, you can be a poet”

-Mies van der Rohe⁶

architecture = language
library = architecture
library = language

A book for the books
Architecture for the architecture

If a library is a collection of books, it is like
a city; a collection of stories.

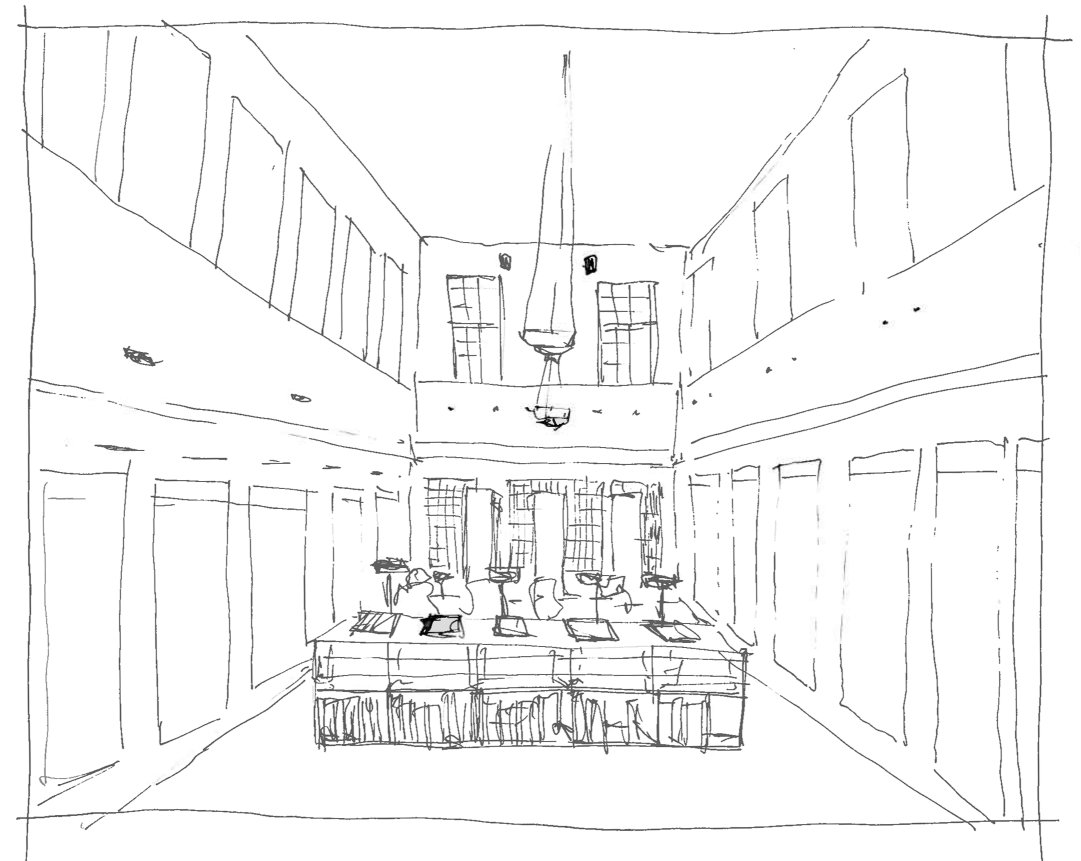




Fig. 60. the table in the library



Fig. 61. reading to each other at the table



Stoel

Staat de stoel daar nog
als afkerig bij de tafel
betrokken
niet meer verschoven
sindsdien

heeft iemand het gesprek
te vroeg verlaten
toen

komt iemand straks
toch afwezig
terug

neemt dan niemand
de tekst van zijn plaats
in

Roland Jooris
(Deleu, 2008)⁷

Mark Pimlott Oct
The window, between within without, here & there.



outline our thought

Samuel Beckett: The Unnameable. 'I am the partition',

a human place for observation and reflection → (double meaning)
the image was received as a piece of language; a repeated figure
interior separated from the outside

a membrane
but a window also connects the interior to the world
making it dear
for consumption or possession.



17th century NL merchants houses. → Vermeer, de Hooch, emmanuelle de witter.

the window as a protagonist / figure / entity.
illuminates internal relations and those to the city

windows can be a companion, providing light
window sets a scene.

modernism: window = glass band. → dropping device.

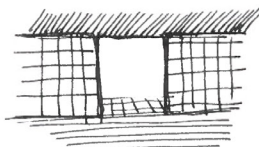
Lost in Translation
film

Afterlife

A window is not on its own!

Polbrecht
Joan → codix

similar approach
traditional
japanese
houses

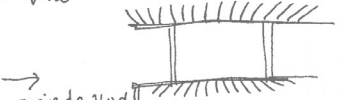


CONSCIOUSNESS
OF
THE PLACE
the window!!

window picture: world
is consumption
ownership of the view

(In praise of shadows)
Book

other symmetry
floor & ceiling: same surfaces.



glass reflects at night.

↳ observed by yourself.

windoswall
"disappearance of the window"
MIES vd Rothe.
picturing the world as a possession.

Power Relation of windows in corporate architecture

seeing to be able to WATCH
things happen through the window.

We Are a Window
Hitchcock

Dan. Graham

→ windows not horizontal nor vertical: ambiguity, or indecisiveness

city growth: monotonous, alienating, in the facade
19th century.
can be animated and suggestive of the life within
variety allows us to think

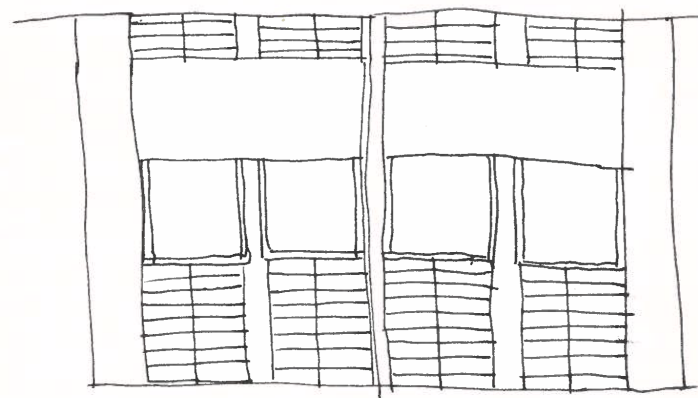
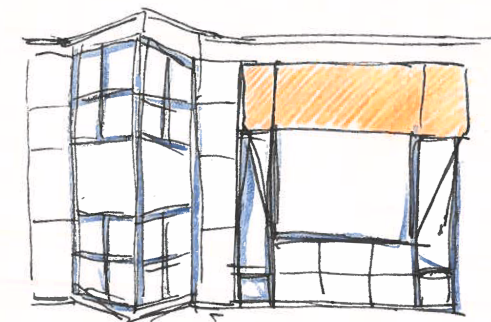


Fig. 63. notes on the window

Fig. 64. the windows of Stockholm



Fig. 65. the windows of Lewerentz

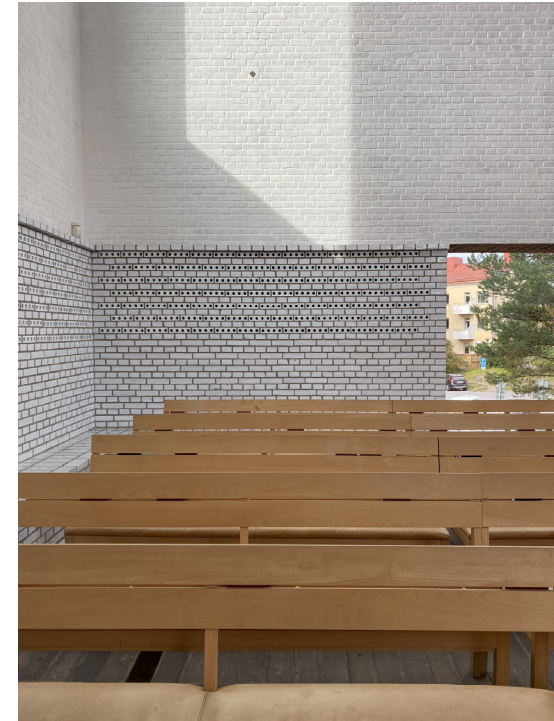


Fig. 66. the window of the Årsta church, Johan Celsing
Fig. 67. Kamil and Asia looking through the window of the library



Fig. 68. a window of a Stockholm architect
Fig. 69. a window in the library





Fig. 70. window seat, Stockholm public library



When visiting the different libraries of Stockholm, there was a noticeable repeated pattern: the reading or working place next to the window.

Mark Pimlott talks about the window connecting the interior to the rest of the world. Also he describes how the window illuminates internal relations, but also the relations to the city.

This explains the particularity of 'the spot' next to the window in the library. While working or reading in the library, you are connected to the bigger outside world. It can be a distraction from the moment, observing others. Or it could help to center yourself and connect to your surroundings of the moment.



Fig. 71. window seat, Kulturbiblioteket

Fig. 72. window seat, Tranströmerbiblioteket



Fig. 73. window seat, Kungliga biblioteket

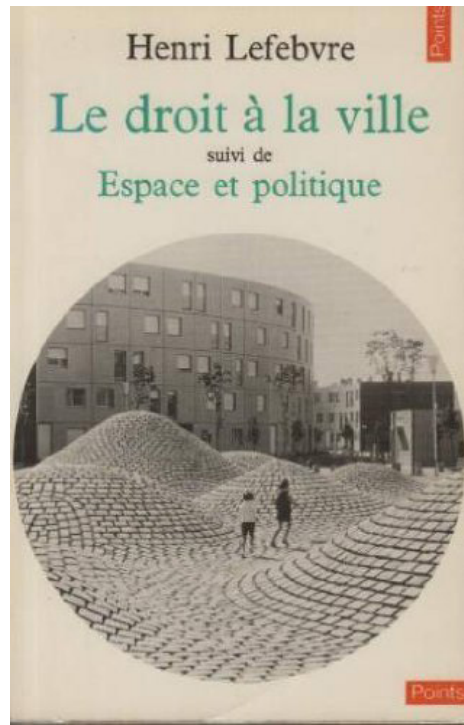


Are you saying the library is a city?

Yes.

An extension of the city, for everyone. With a noticeable sense of human scale. A place for all residents of Stockholm to stay and take part in the library-community.

The collage is representing different interesting nuances found in the city of Stockholm. Then reinterpreted in such a way it functions as an interior space. The differentiation between the moments, allows the visitor to inhabit and briefly make it their 'own place'.



In 1968 Henri Lefebvre introduced his concept of “the right to the city“ (*Le Droit à la ville*)⁹. Lefebvre elaborated on the city regarded as common good for all its residents. Moreover, everyone has the right to value the urban environment and participate in forming the city.

Important principles of Lefebvre:

People should have the right to access, use and shape the city according to their needs and desires

Lefebvre saw the right to the city as a way to empower individuals to have a say in the development and transformation of urban spaces.

Lefebvre believed that urban development should prioritize the needs of marginalized and disadvantaged groups, ensuring that they have equal access to the benefits of urban life

To avoid individuals to feel disconnected, Lefebvre vouched for reasserting the importance of lived experience and human interaction in the urban environment.

The right to the city should allow for diverse cultural and artistic practices to flourish, contributing to a more vibrant and dynamic urban environment.

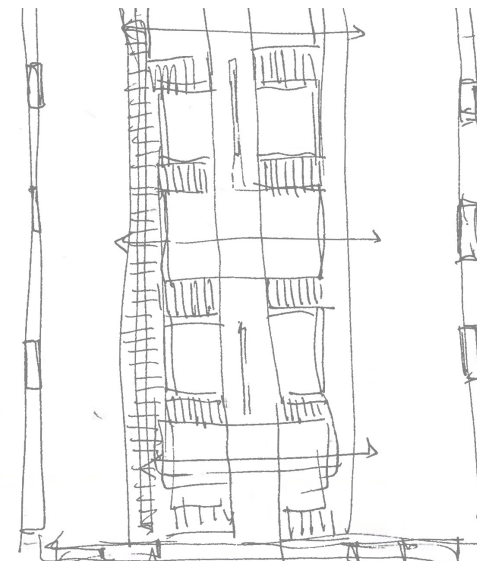
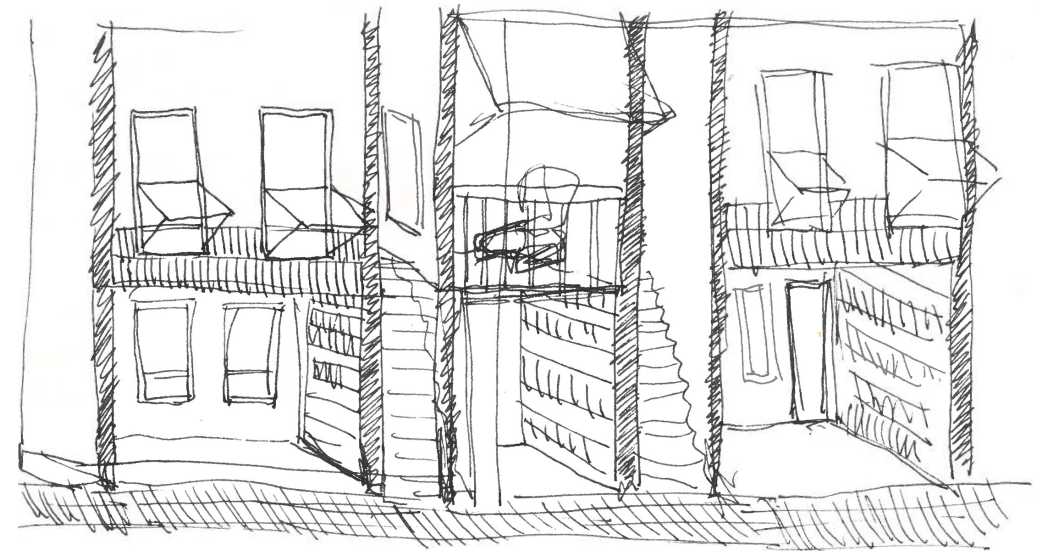
Principles for the city? Principles for a library?

The right to a library.



Fig. 75. Le droit à la ville, Henri Lefebvre

Fig. 76. anti-war Ukraine protest, Sergels torg



Sketching the library as a city. Integrating the city's social life in the library's function as static book repository. Shifting from a place that solely stores the knowledge to a place where knowledge can be created by the visitors together. In line with Lefebvre's view on participating as a creator of the city.

Fig. 77. the library as a city visualization

Fig. 78. the library as a city plan

The first alterations of the design for 'a room for a library' were evolving around one special corner found in the neighborhood of the Stockholm Public Library. In reality this corner functions as an entrance portal to an apartment building. This reference was molded into a completely different configuration. Resulting into a variety of spaces with each their own quality. Also the pattern was mirrored in the facade, generating a similar motif in the interior and exterior facade.

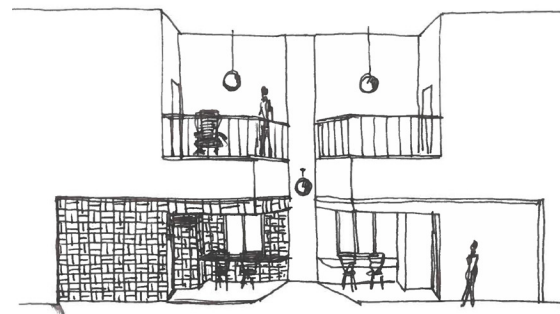


Fig. 79. diverse intimate spaces in the interior facade



Fig. 80. a corner, Riddarsporren, Stockholm
Fig. 81. mirrored space in the exterior facade



Fig. 82. preliminary sketch model interior facade
Fig. 83. preliminary sketch model exterior facade

The Half Moon Theatre is designed by architect Florian Beigel in London, 1985. The project is a progression of spaces. You enter from the Mile End Road through a gate leading into the Half Moon courtyard. This courtyard is publicly accessible to all. From this courtyard you can enter the auditorium. The auditorium and the courtyard are separated by a metal curtain. Other than that separation the flooring is extending from the exteriors to the interiors. Furthermore the outside facades are reappearing on the interiors of the auditorium. Bringing the urban surroundings to the auditorium, but with interior qualities creating a scenic space. Progressing through the large side doors, you will find a garden with the 'Young People's Theatre' hosted in a pavillion.

The interior facades assemble a theatrical setting. Based on public behaviour in the city, this setting allows everyone to see and to be seen. This concept originates from older theatres, like the Italian Teatro dell Arte and Elizabethan theatres.

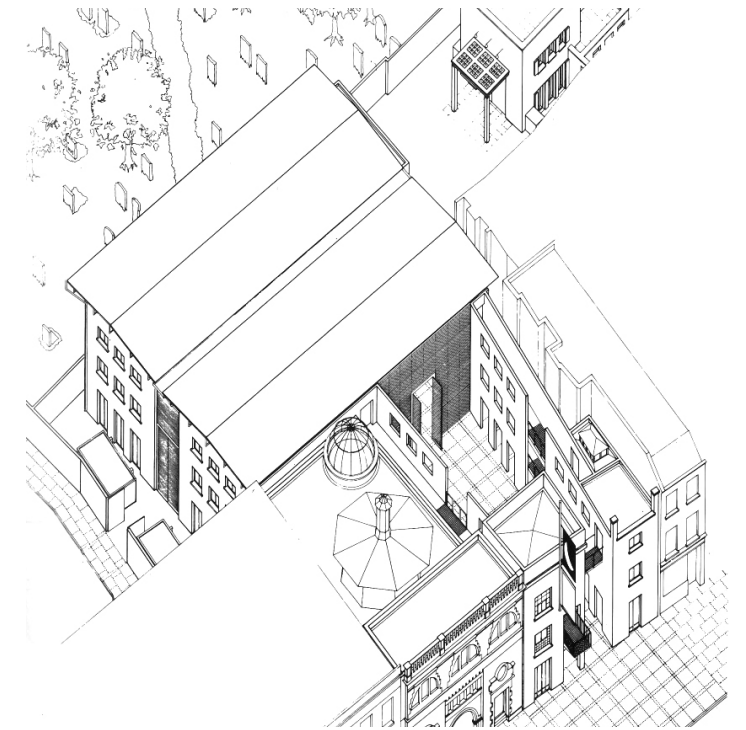


Fig. 84. Half Moon theatre auditorium

Fig. 85. Half Moon theatre auditorium

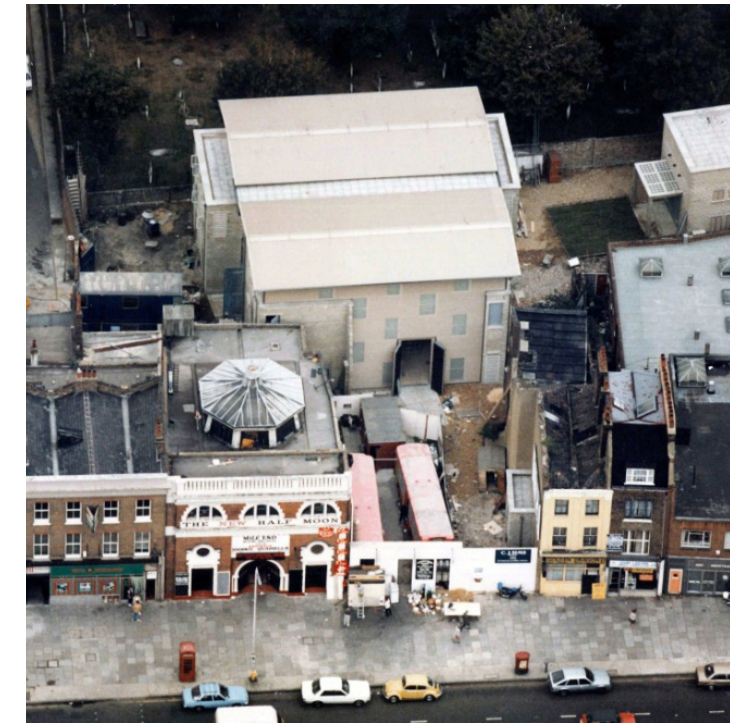


Fig. 86. Half Moon theatre axonometric

Fig. 87. during construction of the Half Moon theatre

While working on the design for 'a room for a library', we continued our research. This time we looked into the modern public library. Together with my group we analyzed the Labrouste Reading Room at the National Library of France. (La Salle Labrouste, Bibliothèque Nationale de France) (1854-75) This library is a landmark in architectural technology and library design. The innovative use of iron as a structural and ornamental material within the Labrouste Reading Room is best expressed simultaneously in plan and section. The Labrouste Room utilises an array of sixteen cast-iron columns to span a width and breadth of thirty-four metres. The cast-iron columns support nine domes with oculi that allows for the nearly uninterrupted flooding of natural light into the reading room. Despite the liberating nature of the structural system, Labrouste orientates

the room to complete a sequencing of spaces that runs north to south; courtyard to Labrouste Reading Room and reading room to book storage. This procession of spaces is reminiscent of temple architecture; pronaos to cella and cella to adyton.⁹ With such a comparison we might deduce the significance of the book as cult object in an increasingly secular French Republic.



Fig. 88. Inaugural engraving of Labrouste's reading room

The idea of the book as a revered object, was already initiated in the brief that Labrouste received from the committee. He was asked to build a 'house for the books'.¹⁰ This concept emphasizes the central role of books and the primary purpose of reading for gaining knowledge. In the design, Labrouste separated the book storage from the reading room, giving librarians the task of retrieving requested books. The significance of 'reading a book' is underscored in the furnishing of the reading room. The reading room is stocked with uniform tables and identical lamps, creating individual reading spaces. This setting is not inviting any discussions or collaborations of any other sort (Fig. 89) Asplund's original design for the Stockholm Public Library shared a similar distance between the visitors and the books. The stories housing the books in the

rotunda were initially only accessible for the librarian. Later, additional stairs were added so that the individual could find a book for themselves. This is more conforming to the contemporary character of libraries, where everyone is free to explore their preferences.

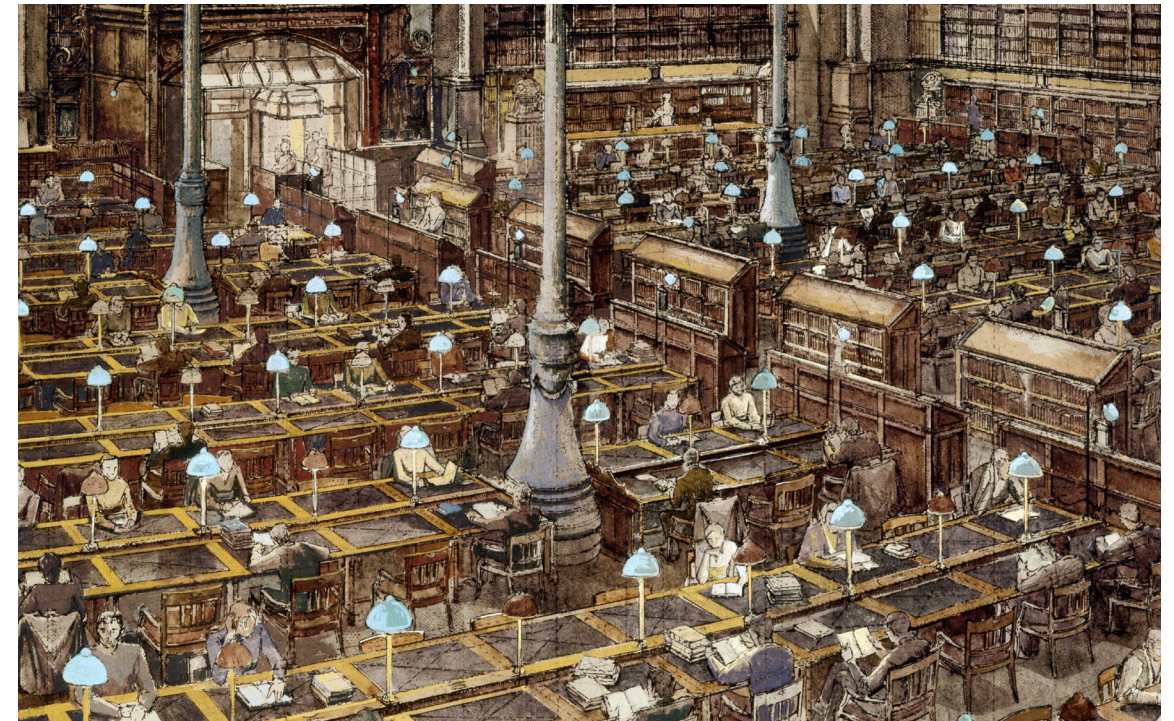


Fig. 89. La salle Labrouste de la Bibliothèque nationale



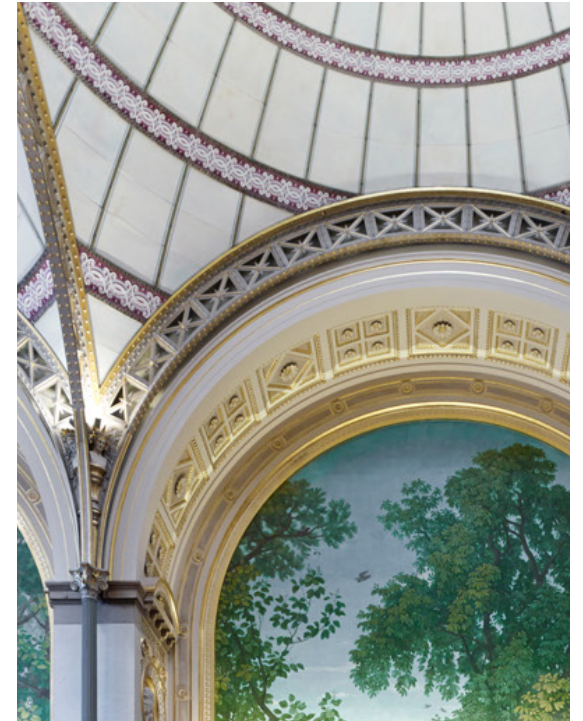
The programme of Labrouste's library reflected the changing society at that time. After the French Revolution, cultural institutions started opening to the public. Public libraries were no longer a sacred space for privileged people, but became accessible to all. This explains the importance of a great reading room which can fit hundreds of people.

Labrouste's library is located in the centre of Paris 900m to the north of the Louvre Museum in the place of a former Imperial Library. Restoration took place between 1854 and 1875 and started from the south. Labrouste didn't simply restore or redesign an old building, but also revealed facades of the palace's courtyards to the public which were not visible before.



The spatial qualities of the library are dictated by the two structural independent systems. The solid build-up of the building walls create a contrasting frame for the entirely autonomous light iron structure of the domes in the main reading room. Specific light conditions in Labrouste's library were achieved thanks to the unique solution of locating nine oculus in each dome. That makes circles of light overlap and produce diffusive and even lighting. Moreover, the domes are finished with bright ceramic tiles which reflectively dissolve the source of light. Altogether this creates a unique and ideal light for reading.

Labrouste's fascination with new technology and materials available after the Industrial Revolution is visible in the highlighted structural elements that are simultaneously used as ornamentation. The entire reading room is furnished with paintings of natural landscapes. Combined with the elegant columns like trees and the diffused natural light creates a forest-like atmosphere. This breaks with the traditional and formal conception of a library as it existed in the past.



The Bibliothèque Nationale de France undergoes renovation every 30-50 years. Comparing photos spanning over a century, Labrouste's room appears remarkably well-preserved, suggesting the enduring quality of the original design. Jean François Lagneau, the architect overseeing the recent renovation, expressed, "We successfully achieved our goal. The subtle changes in the reading room allowed us to restore Labrouste's intended colors while adapting the space to modern needs, ensuring it continues to serve its original purpose."



Fig. 90. Bibliothèque Nationale site plan, 1:5000

Fig. 91. Labrouste's reading room

Fig. 92. Painted panels in Labrouste's reading room

Fig. 93. Labrouste's reading room

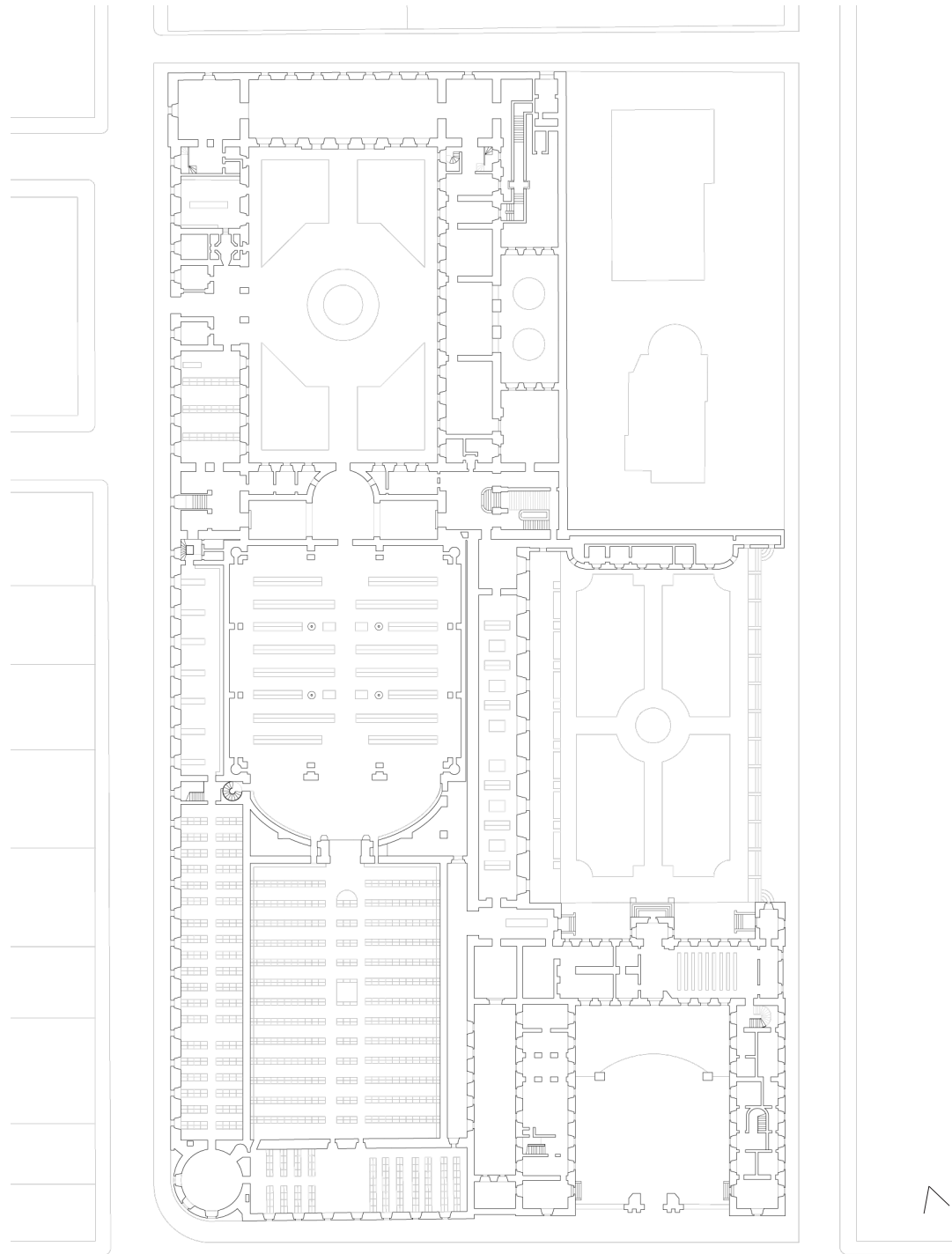


Fig. 94. Bibliothèque nationale ground floor plan, 1:1000

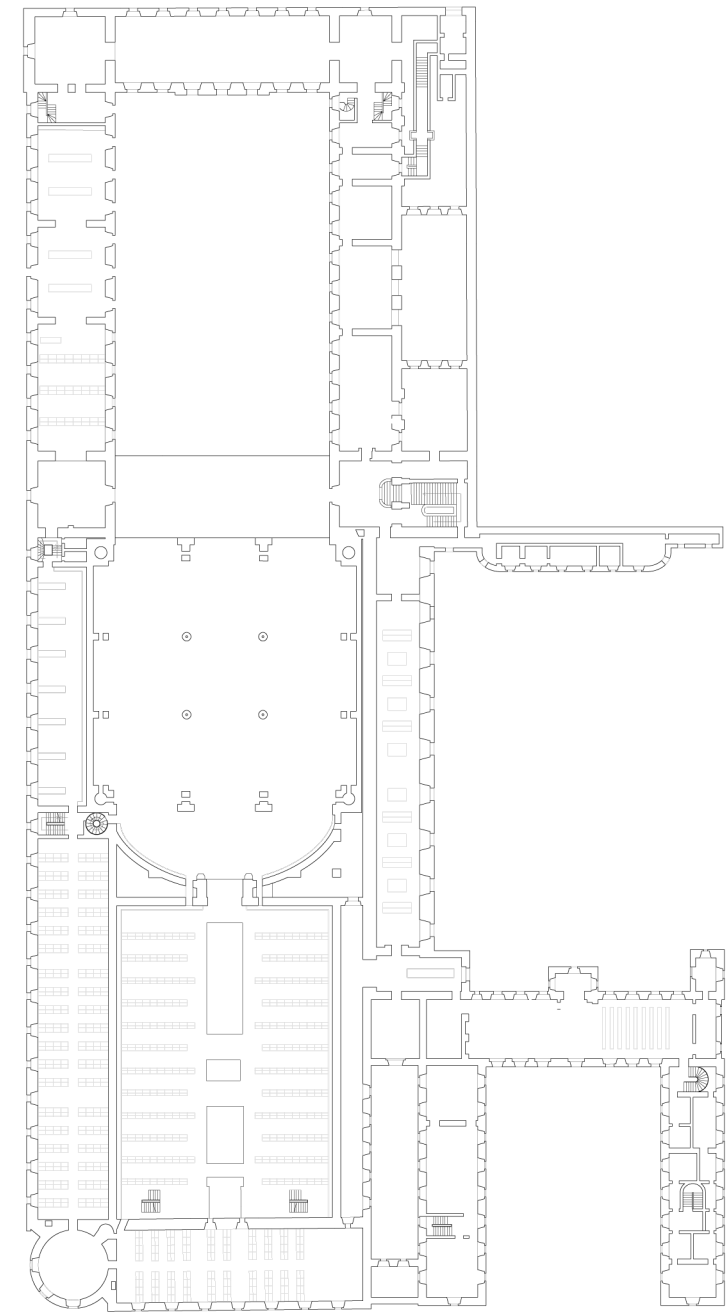


Fig. 95. Bibliothèque nationale first floor plan, 1:1000

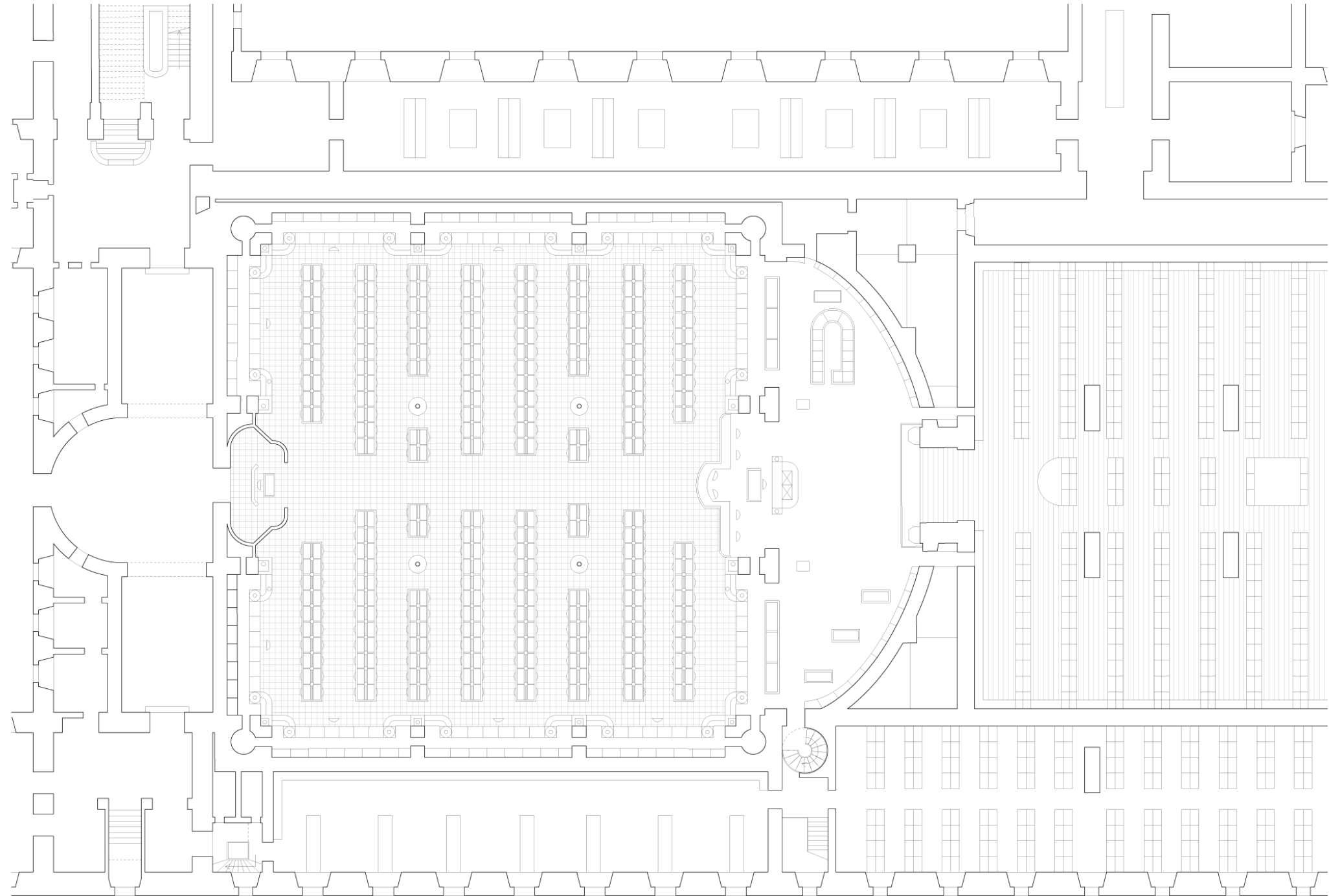


Fig. 96. Labrouste's reading room, 1:200

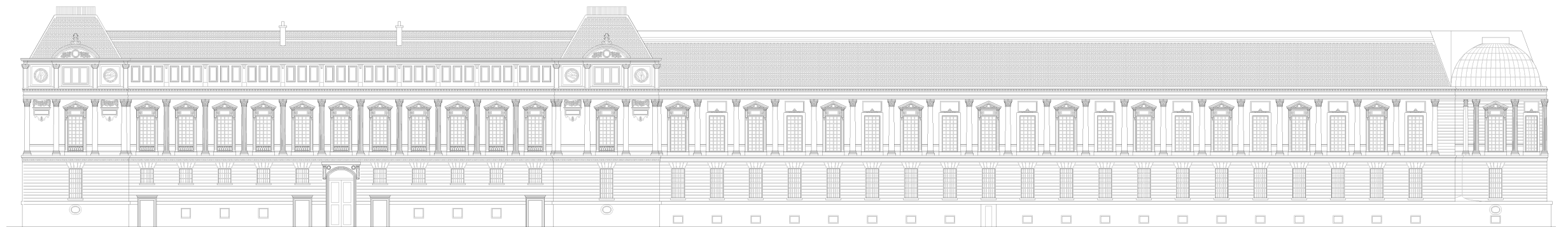


Fig. 97. Bibliothèque Nationale West facade, 1:500

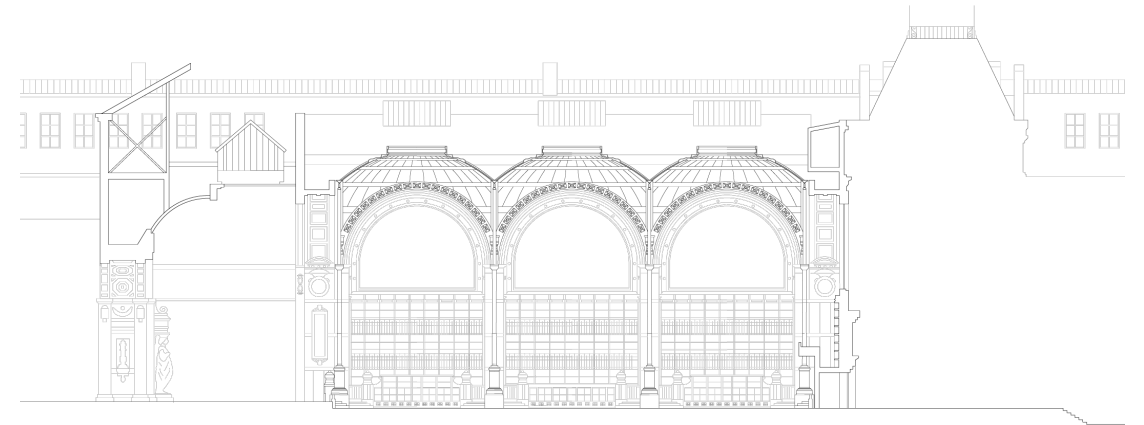
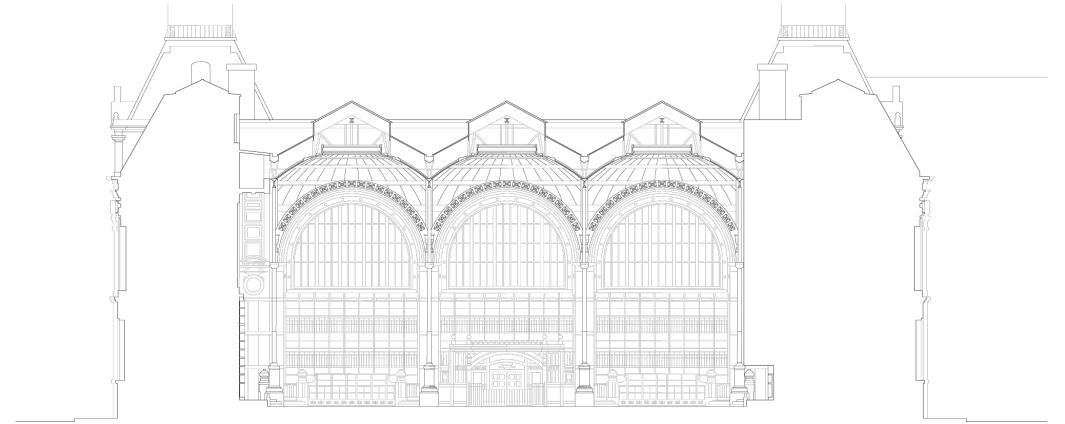
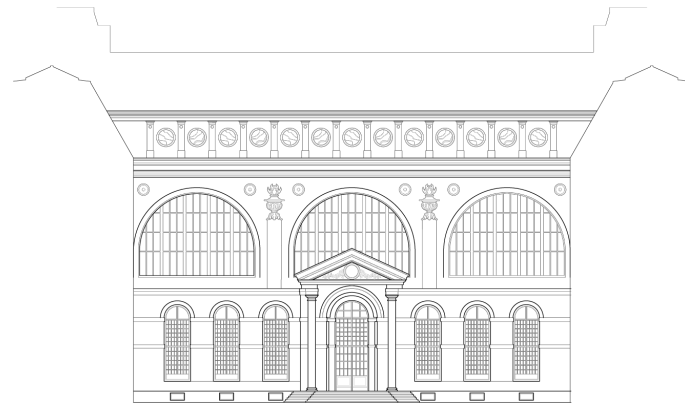


Fig. 98. Bibliothèque Nationale courtyard facade, 1:500

Fig. 99. Labrouste's reading room short section, 1:500

Fig. 100. Labrouste's reading room long section, 1:500



The Right to the City [Library]

Drawing inspiration from Lefebvre's book *The Right to the City*, this space within the library resonates with the communal urban atmosphere of Stockholm. The room is anchored in the city's inherently public nature, where all spaces are freely accessible for everyone. The interior facades mirror distinct scenes found on the streets of Stockholm. These facades now transform into temporary, inhabitable spaces for library visitors. Is it an awning or a desk? Perhaps both. The flooring pattern is designed to resemble a public square, embodying the idea that everyone has *the right* to be part of the momentary community inhabiting the library.





Fig. 103. interior facade I
Fig. 104. interior facade II

Fig. 105. interior facade III
Fig. 106. interior facade IV



Fig. 107. interior scene I

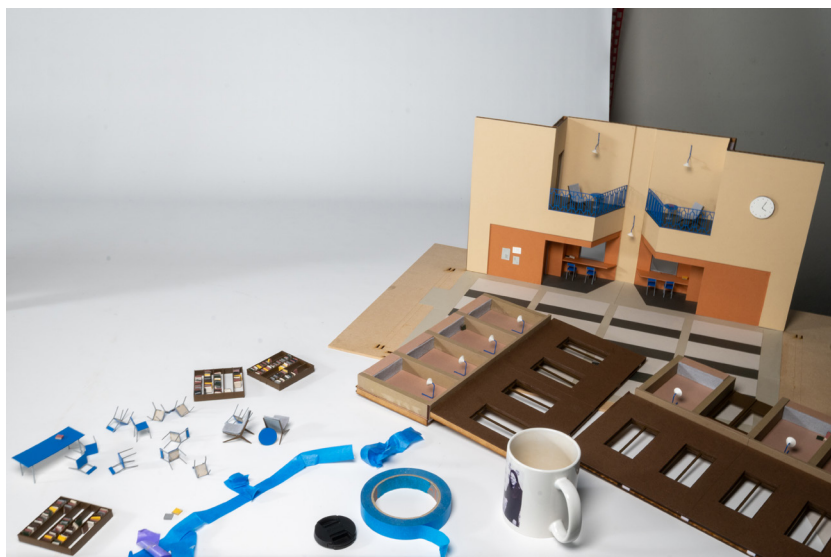


Fig. 108. interior scene II



Fig. 109. interior scene III

Fig. 110. interior scene IV



Susanne: Which part do you like most?

Julia: The part where I started off, the balconies.

Daniel: It could be more wiggly..

Daniel: It is very interior for an urban square, which is interesting. Your colour judgement is very beautiful and the floor is very elegant.

Sam: I wonder if anyone will ever move the bookcase.

Julia: I do too, it was my very last decision last night and I am also not convinced yet.

Mark: It is a real public interior, there is no question about that. It has a kind of urbanity to the interior, there are suggestions of forms that could be on the outsides of buildings. Including the figures of light. It reminds me of Maison de Peuples in Brussels, the cafe. It really is a believable public realm.

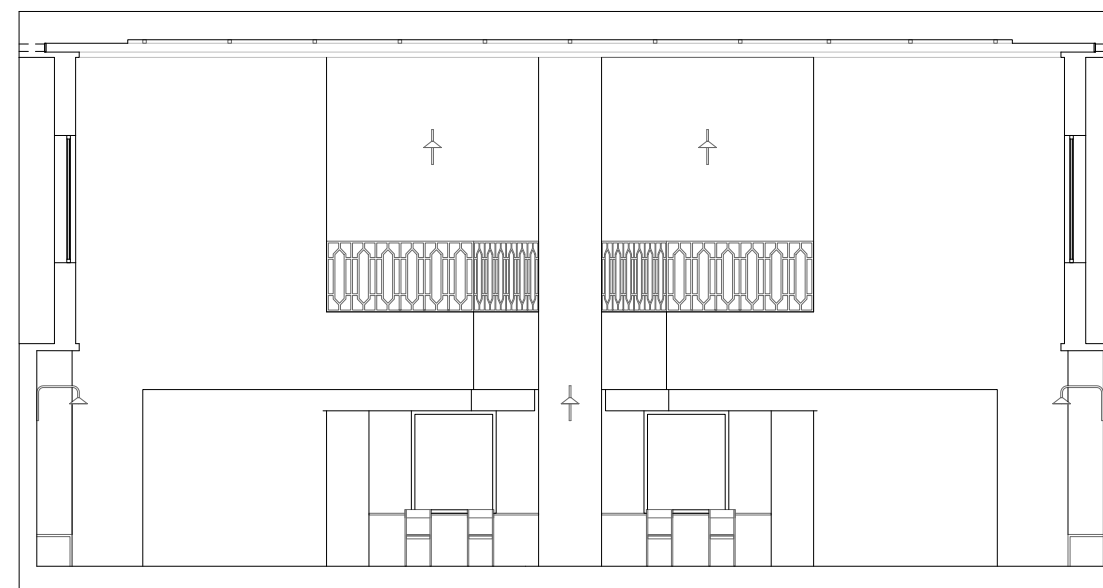
Daniel: What I really enjoy is that it started as this room with brick walls and I am really

glad that it now is not. Things have come inside and have rescaled themselves to be an interior, rather than pretend it is an exterior. I think it is really nice that it is not so literal, but it is still absolutely readable.

Susanne: I could also imagine it as a bigger ongoing room, that you could walk on for quite a bit.

Sam: I enjoy the humor of the awnings as a repetition of the tables and I also wonder if the awnings could be turned around and actually hanging.

Daniel: I think the bookshelves are the wrong colour.



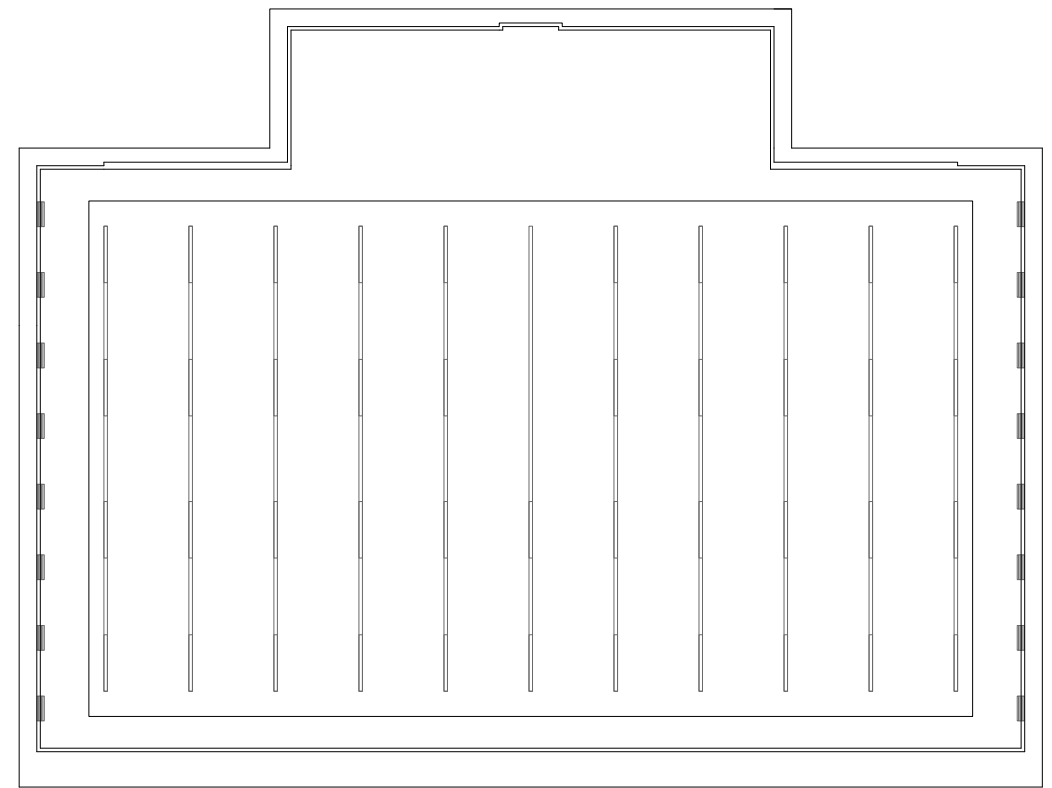
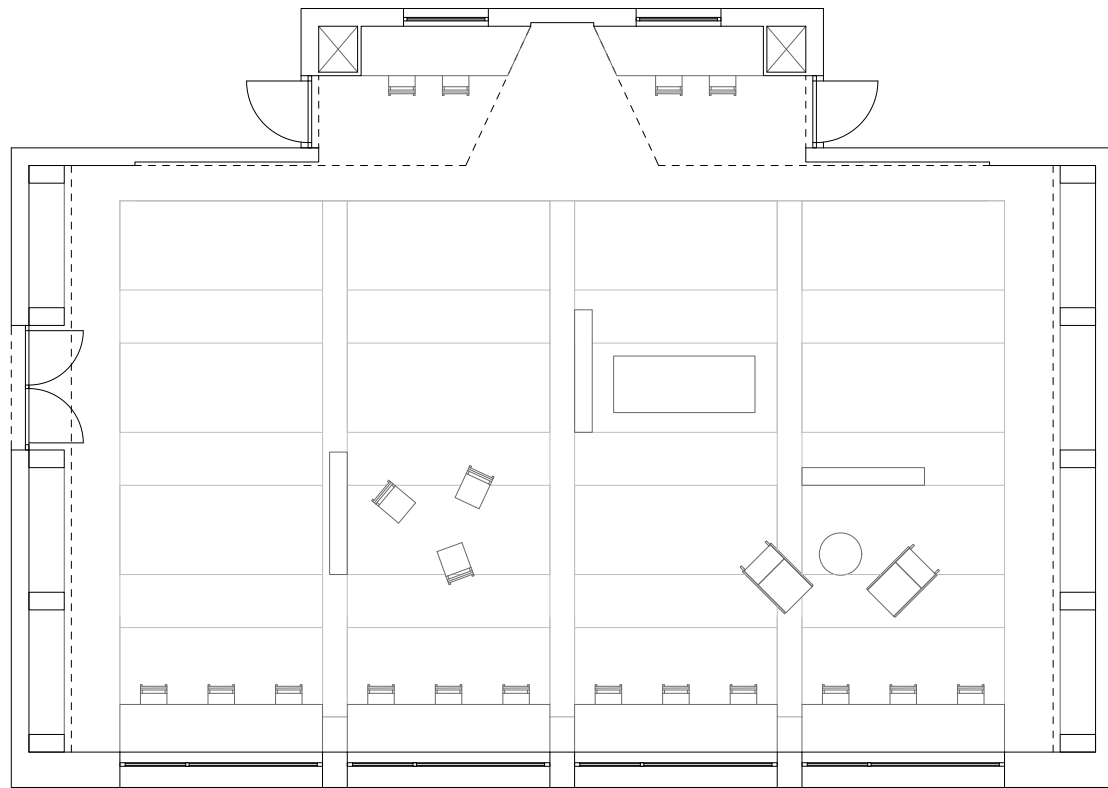


Fig. 113. floorplan 1:100

Fig. 114. reflected ceiling plan 1:100

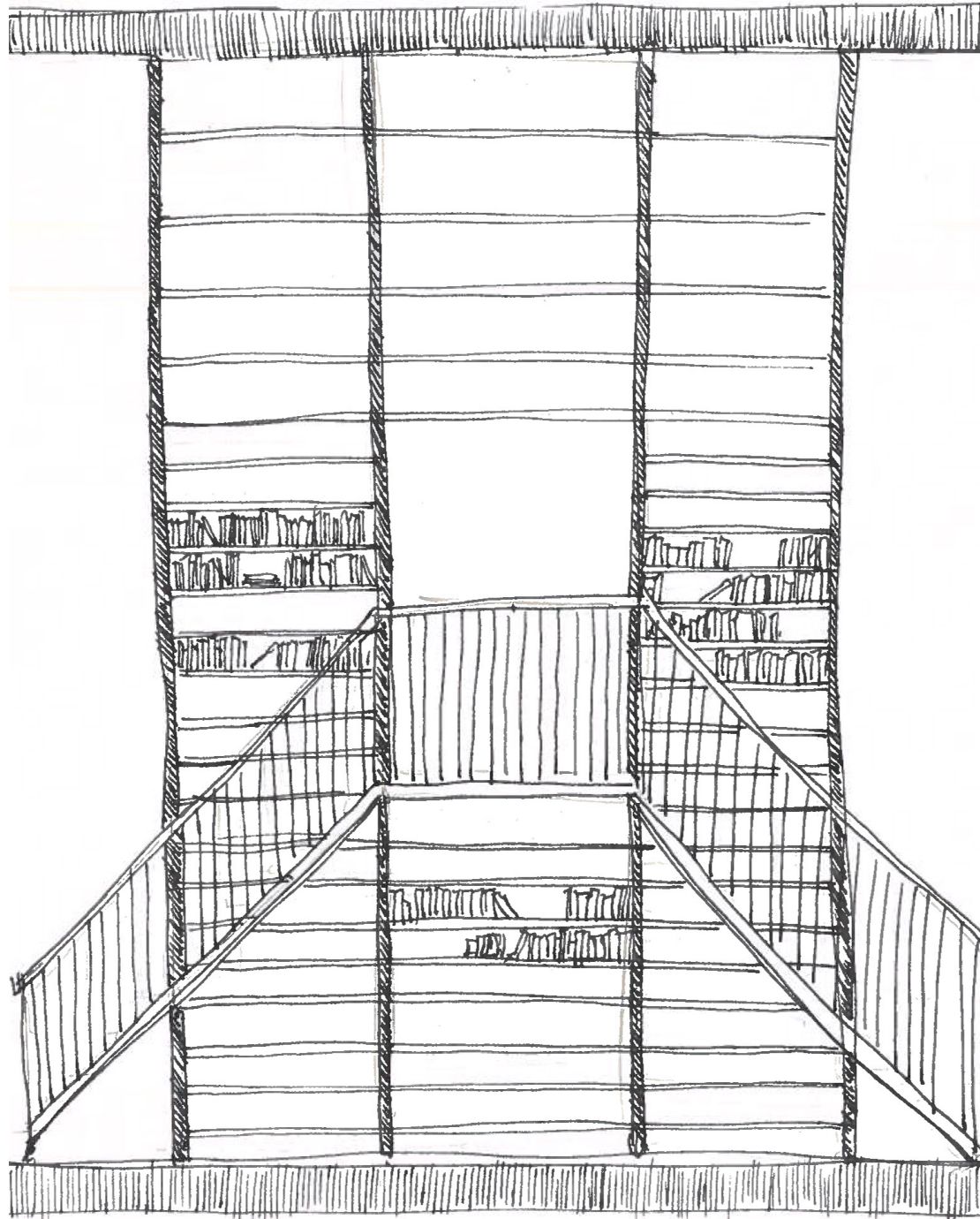


Fig. 115. a porch in the library

After several weeks of intensive research into the works of Gunnar Asplund and the modern library, my evolving conception of the nature and function of a library is taking shape. The library is initially a space open for everyone without having to consume, aligning with the ethos of the 20th-century Swedish Social Democrats. However, in hindsight, I wonder whether the metaphorical door of the library is genuinely open for everyone. Given that activities such as reading and studying are often associated with the educated segment of society. How do individuals who lack a formal education regard the library? How would it feel to be surrounded by an abundance of books, but you are not able to read a single one of them?

Asplund's building for the Stockholm public library emanates a certain grandeur that I would not consider welcoming to all residents of Stockholm. This is manifested by the imposing rotunda atop of a raised plinth and big Egyptian doors leading to the library. This monumentality is reoccurring in Asplund's Lister county courthouse, where the grand entrance and absence of windows insinuates that important activities are progressing on the ground floor. Fostering the library's fundamentals, intellectual development, asks for a more humble approach. An interior world less dominated by books, more focused on the variety of people in the city.

If architecture is a design language, a city can be regarded as a collection of stories. From this perspective, the library and the city can be considered equivalent. Given the inherently public nature of the city, where everyone can freely access its spaces, it is reasonable to consider a library design

echoing the communal atmosphere found in urban settings. Akin to Labrouste's approach with the Bibliothèque Nationale's reading room, where a forest-like atmosphere was created by painted panels, slender columns and natural light.

The excursion to Stockholm proved to be essential for my understanding of the Stockholm public library, and the broader urban environment of Stockholm. The monumental and imposing architectural character of the city left an impression on me. There were interesting nuances and moments in the facades, but it lacked a sense of discernable human scale. The pervasive repetition of the elements resulted in an overall monotonous mass, leaving no room for individual explorations and manifestations. The city emerged as an anonymous metropolis, unlike my expectations before going to Stockholm. In my opinion, the library could be an improved extension of the city, offering a more domestic setting where visitors experience the city differently. By discarding monotonous repetition and embracing the city's qualities, we can create a space with human scale. Resulting in an interiors where the visitor is able to explore the space and simultaneously feel a sense of belonging within the temporary community that inhabits the library. This way people will be more at ease with engaging with and extending help to one another, which eventually is key for intellectual growth.

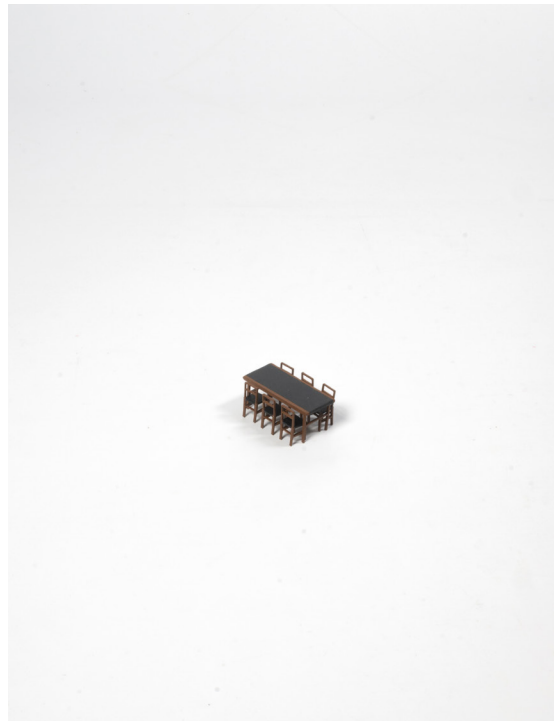
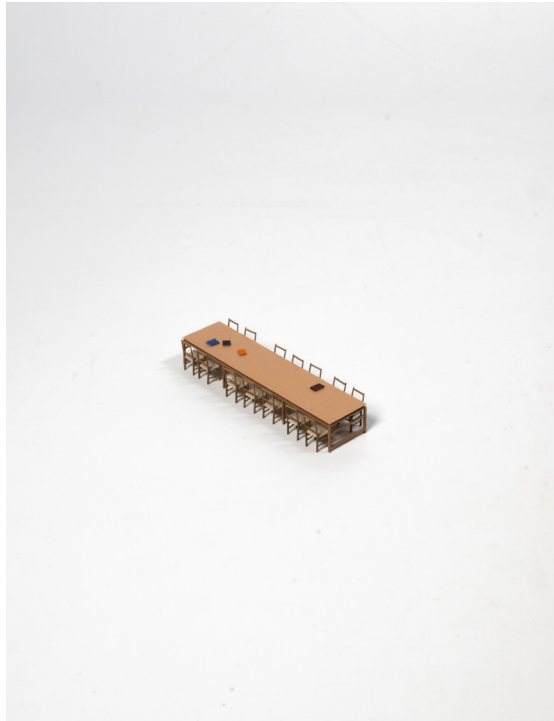


Fig. 116. children's library table
Fig. 117. west wing table

Fig. 118. north wing table
Fig. 119. rotunda table

Fig. 120. rotunda central desk
Fig. 121. rotunda furniture collection

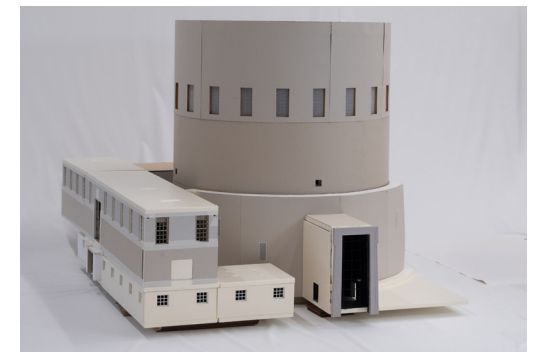
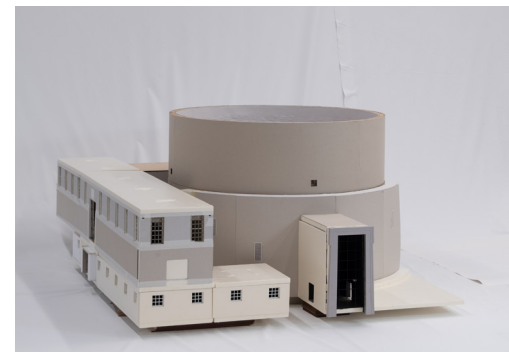
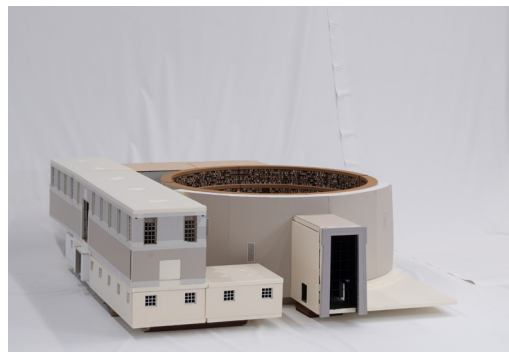
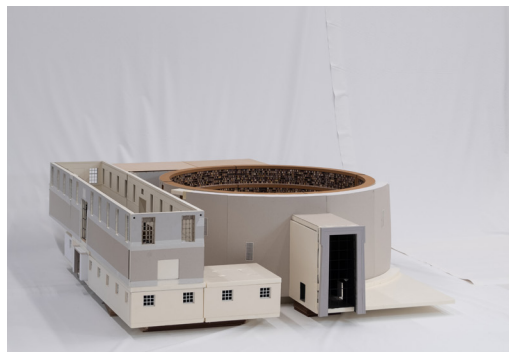
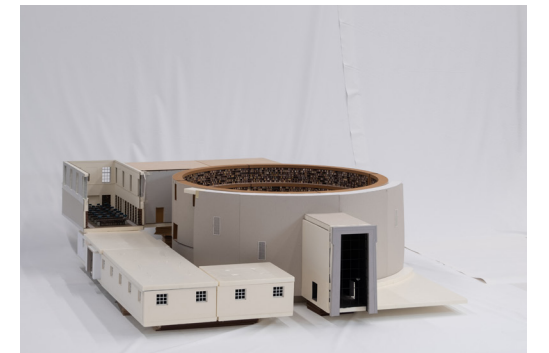
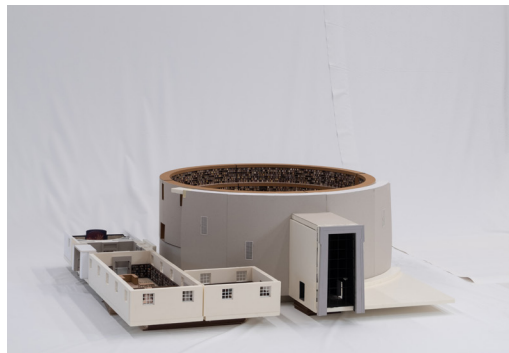
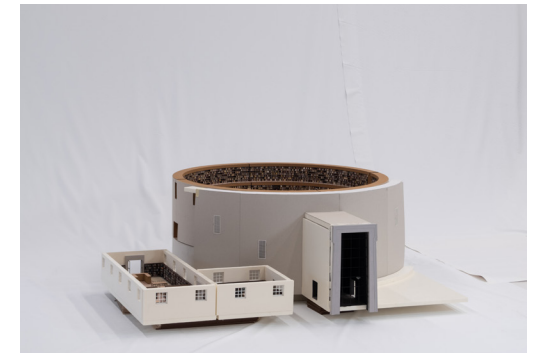
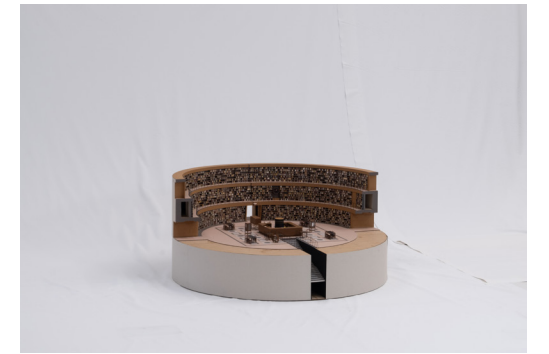
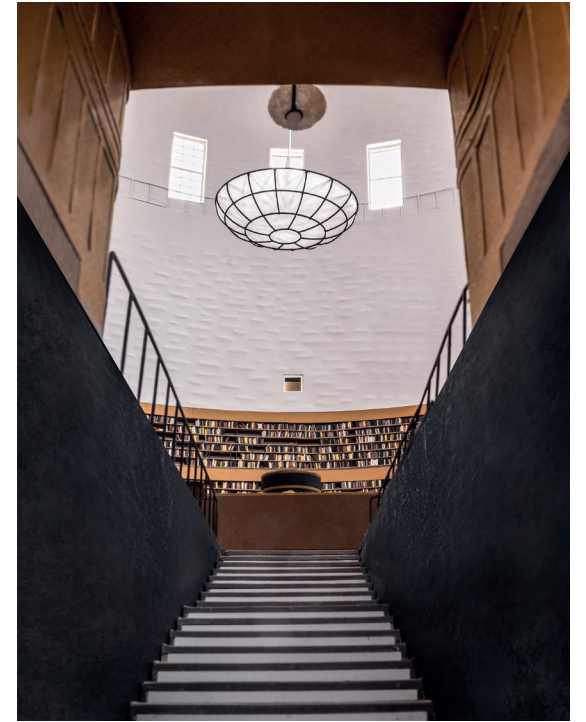
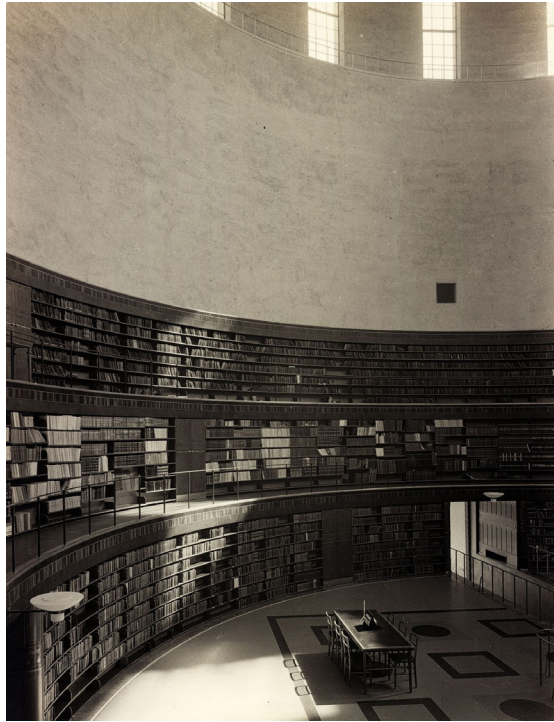


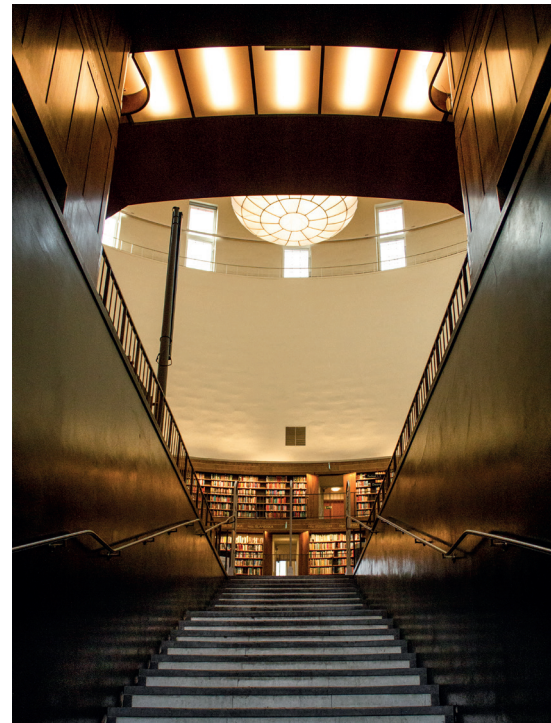
Fig. 122. building up the library



Fig. 123. the act of building the library



The natural light coming in from the windows at the top changes throughout the day. It gives a sense of time, even though you can't look out of the window and see your surroundings. The light also emphasizes the texture of the white walls, which could be interpreted as the clouds in the sky.



When ascending the stairs to the rotunda you will be greeted by the librarians behind the large square desk in the middle of the space. At the top of the stairs you will be guided by the balustrade to walk around the desk before you can go in different directions.

Two major differences are noticeable between the old and the new. The furniture, only the lamps are still the same, and the stairs leading to the first gallery, which was added in 1974.

Fig. 124. archive picture rotunda
Fig. 126. contemporary picture rotunda

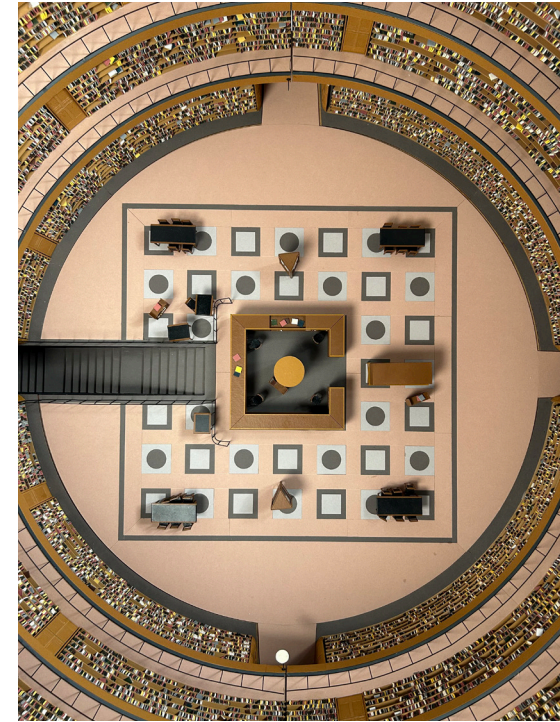
Fig. 125. model picture rotunda

Fig. 127. archive picture rotunda entrance
Fig. 128. contemporary picture rotunda entrance

Fig. 129. model picture rotunda entrance



Fig. 130. interior shot rotunda
Fig. 131. behind the scenes



Much like the Stockholm City Library itself, the 1:25 rotunda model was conceived as an object-in-the-round; the model's cylindrical form was carefully considered in terms of materiality and subdivision. The rotunda structure was divided into three drums at two datums that corresponded with the highest point of the rotunda bookshelves and the band of coving beneath the rotunda clerestory. The structure of the rotunda model is a system of robust MDF ribs and columns suitable to take compressive and lateral loads. The lower drum was segmented further into four quadrants for greater maneuverability and visual access. Carefully tested material swatches then clad the interior surfaces of the model to emulate timber paneling, linoleum flooring and plastered walls. Considerable labour was given to the cutting, painting and assembly of 31,000 scale books and their bookshelves so as to signify the function and atmosphere of the rotunda space. Finally, a series of meticulously researched and modeled furniture pieces imbue scale and life to the scene from a public library.

Fig. 132. rotunda from above

- 1 Ahlberg, H. (1945). *Architect Gunnar Asplund: biografisch essay*.
- 2 Wölfflin, H. (1950). *Principles of Art History: The problem of the development of style in later art*. In Dover Publications eBooks. <http://ci.nii.ac.jp/ncid/BA10674864>
- 3 Strindberg, A. (1879). *Röda rummet: skildringar ur artist- och författarlifvet*.
- 4 Stenport, A. W. (2002). Imagining a New Stockholm: Strindberg's "Gamla Stockholm" and the Construction of Metropolitan Space. *Scandinavian Studies*, 74(4), 483–504. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40920402>
- 5 Storgaard, E. (2018). Domestic Monumentality in the Interwar Years. Gothenburg Courthouse Extension and Aarhus City Hall. *Microcosm. Searching for the City in Its Interiors, OASE*, (101), 22-29. Retrieved from <https://www.oasejournal.nl/en/Issues/101/DomesticMonumentalityintheInterwarYears>
- 6 Mies van der Rohe, L. (2007). On Architecture as Language (recorded in Chicago, 1956). In *Bauhaus Reviewed (1919–1933)*. Norfolk: LTM Recordings.
- 7 Deleu, J. (2008). *600 gedichten over leven, liefde en dood: nieuw groot verzenboek*.
- 8 Butler, C. (2012). *Henri Lefebvre: Spatial Politics, Everyday Life and the Right to the City*. Routledge.

- 9 Kostof, S. (1995). *A History of Architecture (2nd Edition)*. Oxford University Press.
- 10 Bélier, C., Bergdoll, B., Cœur, M. L., Bressani, M., Grignon, M., De La Mure, M. H., Lemoine, B., De Jong, S., Van Zanten, D., & Uniack, G. (2012). *Henri Labrouste: Structure Brought to Light*. The Museum of Modern Art.

- Fig. 1. Made by author. (2023). Looking into the rotunda during the tutorial. [photograph].
- Fig. 2. Made by author. (2023). Chair for rotunda designed by Asplund, 1:25. [photograph].
- Fig. 3. Made by author. (2023). Chair for rotunda designed by Asplund, 1:1. [photograph].
- Fig. 4. Made by author. (2023). Drinking fountain designed by Nils Sjögren. [photograph].
- Fig. 5. Made by author. (2023). Glueing a section of the rotunda. [photograph].
- Fig. 6. Made by author. (2023). Furnishing the rotunda, 1:25. [photograph].
- Fig. 7. Made by author. (2023). The rotunda, 1:1. [photograph].
- Fig. 8. Made by author. (2023). *John Blund* by Nils Dardel in the story telling room. [photograph].
- Fig. 9. Made by author. (2023). *The Dying Dandy* by Nils Dardel in the Moderna Museet. [photograph].
- Fig. 10. Made by author. (2023). Cutting books on the train from Rotterdam to Stockholm. [photograph].
- Fig. 11. Made by author. (2023). Hamburg station. [photograph].
- Fig. 12. Made by author. (2023). Waking up on the nighttrain from Hamburg to Stockholm. [photograph].
- Fig. 13. Rosenberg, C.G. (n.d.). The rotunda, 1927. [photograph]. Courtesy of Arkitektur-och designcentrum. Digitaltmuseum. <https://digitaltmuseum.se/011015023187/stadsbiblioteket-utlaningshallen>
- Fig. 14. Made by author. (2023). The rotunda, 2023. [photograph].
- Fig. 15. Made by author. (2023). The rotunda, 2023. [photograph].
- Fig. 16. Olsson, L. (n.d.). Lister county courthouse. [Photograph]. Lasse Olsson Photo. <https://app2.editnews.com/page/read.ashx?issueid=428720>
- Fig. 17. Made in collaboration with research group. (2023). Lister county courthouse first floor. [Digital drawing].
- Fig. 18. Made in collaboration with research group. (2023). Lister county courthouse ground floor. [Digital drawing].
- Fig. 19. Made in collaboration with research group. (2023). Lister county courthouse east facade. [Digital drawing].

- Fig. 20. Made in collaboration with research group. (2023). Lister county courthouse west facade. [Digital drawing].
- Fig. 21. Made in collaboration with research group. (2023). Lister county courthouse north facade. [Digital drawing].
- Fig. 22. Made in collaboration with research group. (2023). Lister county courthouse south facade. [Digital drawing].
- Fig. 23. Made in collaboration with research group. (2023). Lister county courthouse section. [Digital drawing].
- Fig. 24. Olsson, L. (n.d.). View on axis. [Photograph]. Lasse Olsson Photo. <https://app2.editnews.com/page/read.ashx?issueid=428720>
- Fig. 25. Made by the author. (2023). Axial road connecting the train station and the courthouse. [Sketch].
- Fig. 26. Made by author. (2023). Lister county courthouse facade analysis. [Sketch].
- Fig. 27. Made by author. (2023). Sölvesborg train station facade analysis. [Sketch].
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