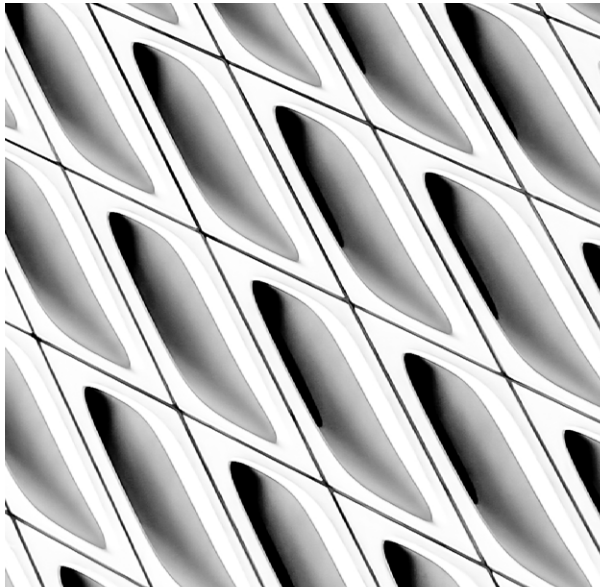


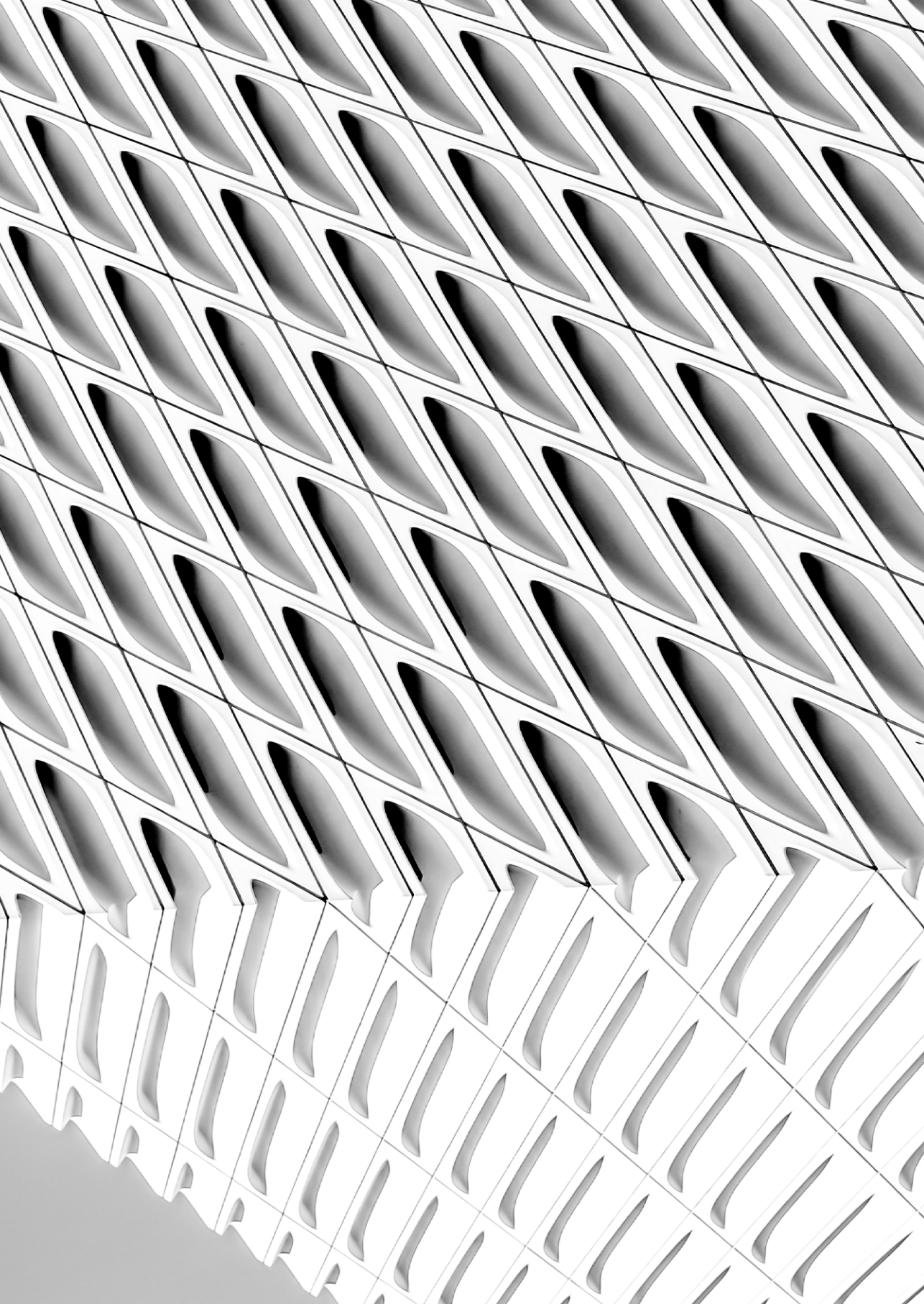
project journal

INTERIORS BUILDING CITIES



NICOLAS A. BUENO VEGA





An Architecture For Art

Graduation Project 2022-23



Joseph Beuys & Henning Christiansen, Eurasienstab, 1968 | film still | Courtesy Wide White Space Archive

Formation of a Museum

From its roots in the anti-museum of the ICC, via the 'kunsthalle with a collection' that is M HKA, this year's project addresses the programme for a new national museum for contemporary art in Antwerp. Proposed on a site that will recast it as a significant urban figure in Antwerp's ongoing development, the gallery is intended to become part of a museum ensemble in the South of the city that includes both the Photo Museum (FOMU) and the recently transformed and reopened Museum of Fine Arts (KMSKA); establishing a new cultural focus for both Antwerp and Flanders, while also speaking to a network of regional museums and seeking to take its place within a global context.

The layers of critique inherent in this trajectory are evident in the counterpoints established in the clients brief for the proposed museum: questions of material, abstraction, scale and scenography underpin an oscillation between what it describes as anti-museum fascinations and technical museum requirements. Underpinning this are fundamental questions about contemporary art's history and its relation to wider questions of culture, society and the world of art and artistic practice, embodied in its attitude to the very idea of the museum.

(The) art which emerged in the 1950s or 1960s, which might be regarded as the beginnings of what is framed as contemporary art, was concerned with its effects, settings, relations with environments, audiences, and

viewers' experience. Rather than being made for the context of either the collector's home (a private matter, concerning ownership, connoisseurship, private pleasure, power) or the museum (removed from the world), both minimal and conceptual art took art to be in, of and about the world, incorporating criticality. It either engaged with or commented upon the conditions of its own visibility, or moved out of the enclosed environment entirely to address and engage with society, the city, and its territories.

Mark Pimlott, *Museum, image and agency, Oase 111 Staging the Museum*

How then does one think about the setting of a contemporary art museum in a way that respects this critical history? More immediately, how does one register the foundations of this museum in the work of the American artist, Gordon Matta-Clarke, whose artistic position expressed a deep antagonism to both architecture and the museum as a construct, and whose practice was built upon the radical reimagining of existing structures, exemplified in his project for Antwerp, *Office Baroque*?

As a response to their own reflections on such questions, M HKA propose a future museum whose collection is ordered through four themes: image, action, society and praxis and

Interiors
Buildings
Cities

Palace

The focal point of this graduation project revolves around the design and implementation of a new structure for the Museum van Hedendaagse Kunst Antwerp (MHKA) in the Flemish region of Belgium. Founded in 1985, this public institution is set for relocation to the site of the forthcoming demolition of the Court of Appeal in the Zuid district of the city, situated adjacent to the historic docks. Aligned to its multifaceted role as a publicly funded institution the project has to bridge the governmental desire to establish it as an international flemish museum without losing its identity and origins in the ICC. The brief presents a complex array of contrasting notions that demand careful consideration and thoughtful resolution in a physical embodiment that will transform the city's skyline

Thus, the new building investigates an approach that challenges the common formality and rigidity of art institutions without neglecting the required technical specifications of a museum. As a result, it questions how social, cultural and economical dynamics can interlace the principles of the modern museum that cater to the handling of art, in order to cater to the contemporary art museum and foster public spaces for social interaction.

VMHK

Construction of the
flemish museum of
contemporary art

The first section of this Journal is a compilation of reference material, reading reflections, and personal impressions on the contemporary museum. It represents the process of getting acquainted with the complex dynamics of conservation and display of art and understanding its relationship to the interior. This process leads to the P1.

contemporary
art
museum



The Eight Precedent Studies | interior vs. exterior

MASP



Centre Pompidou



Ablett Museum



Kunsthhaus Zurich





Tate Modern



FRAC Dunkerque



New Museum



Kunsthaus Zürich

Looking inwards

Recreating a space from
a photograph

The semester begins with the careful examination of interior photographs from the eight precedent studies. These images have been selected by each architect as visual representation of the particular project, and as such can be understood as a representation of the architectural approach and desired atmospheres that drove these designs. Thus, a great deal of information is communicated, even in the most seemingly insignificant details. For this one has to take time, and dissect each element, to later recompose them in a physical model.



Forum Expo. in FRAC Dunkerque. Photograph by Philippe Rouault.

The Roles of a Museum

"The role of the filter. *One must consider the institutional capacity of a museum to define what is considered art. We should acknowledge its role as an arbiter in which voices and stories are given a platform through the pieces displayed in gallery spaces, and, at the same time, which stories or narratives are being silenced. Contemporary museums have agency in dictating what later on becomes relevant (art) history.*

The role as a public entity. *While art is at the front stage of the institution, the backstage is embodied in a multiplicity of disciplines. The gallery spaces are reliant, to various degrees, on education programs, events, gift shops and cafes. This might suggest that in recent years, regardless of the nature of the museum's funding, the role it holds within a city is not only about art but also about leisure. In some ways, the boundaries of what the museum can be have been blurred just as much as the boundaries of what art can be.*

The role of the stage. *The concept of the modernist white box creates an illusion of simplicity and neutrality. It portrays a profession of clean walls and muted tones with a façade that almost makes you think the politics of art are as simple as walking in and hanging something on the wall. As we have seen in the De Pont museum, this can even be evidenced in the floor plan of museums where you can clearly see offices completely separated from galleries and a clear contrast in scale, these little spaces shoved to the back end."*

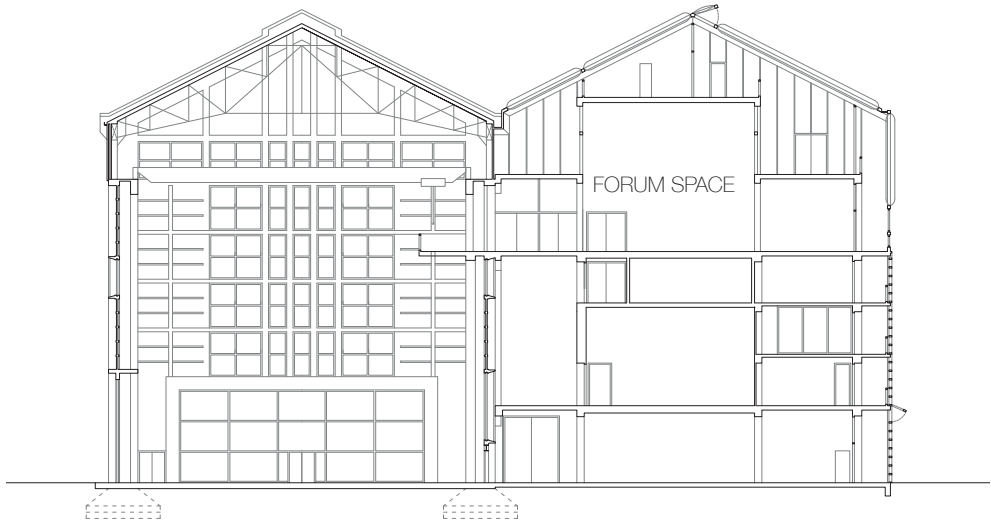


The leading idea for the design of this contemporary museum comes from an addition to the old boat depot. Lacaton and Vassal create an adjacent volume of the same proportions to highlight the heritage value of the old structure. The picture to recreate depicts the forum space on the 2013 construction. It is clear how the juxtaposition of old and new comes across in the materiality of the intervention. The white walls represent the white cube gallery, contrasted with the weathered concrete of a brutalist structure. The space acquires an image of informality and the sense of being art storage. The ceiling installations and the display of the ventilation duct emphasize the industrial approach. Furthermore, natural light comes flooding the space from multiple directions.

Initially, the space comes across as simple due to the vast open forum, as if the photograph depicted mainly an empty room. However, progressively the complexities of the seemingly simple industrial quality of the materials are revealed as you understand the predominant role of natural light in this building.

FRAC Dunkerque

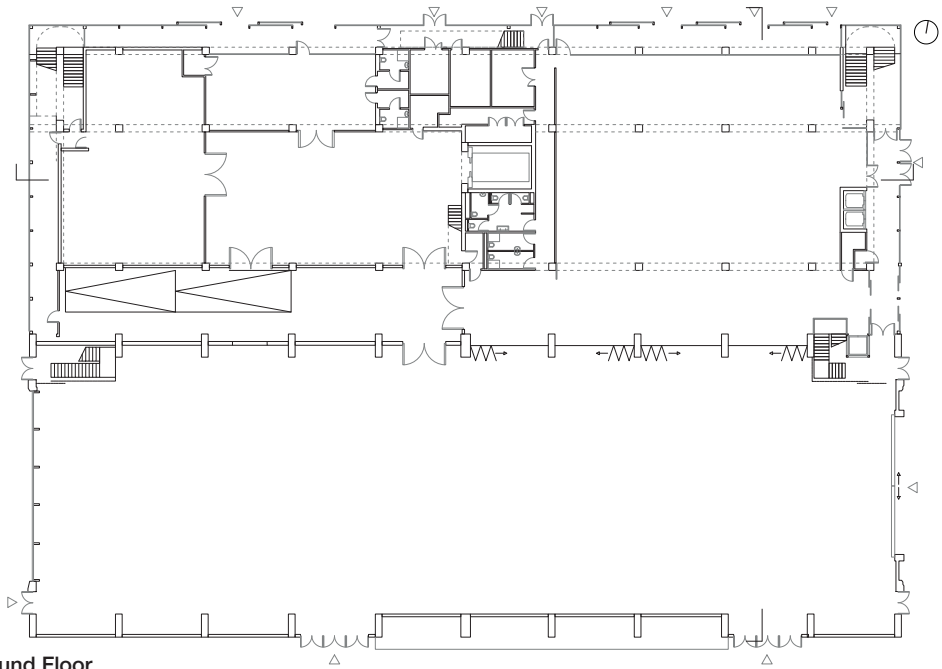
Recreating a space from a photograph



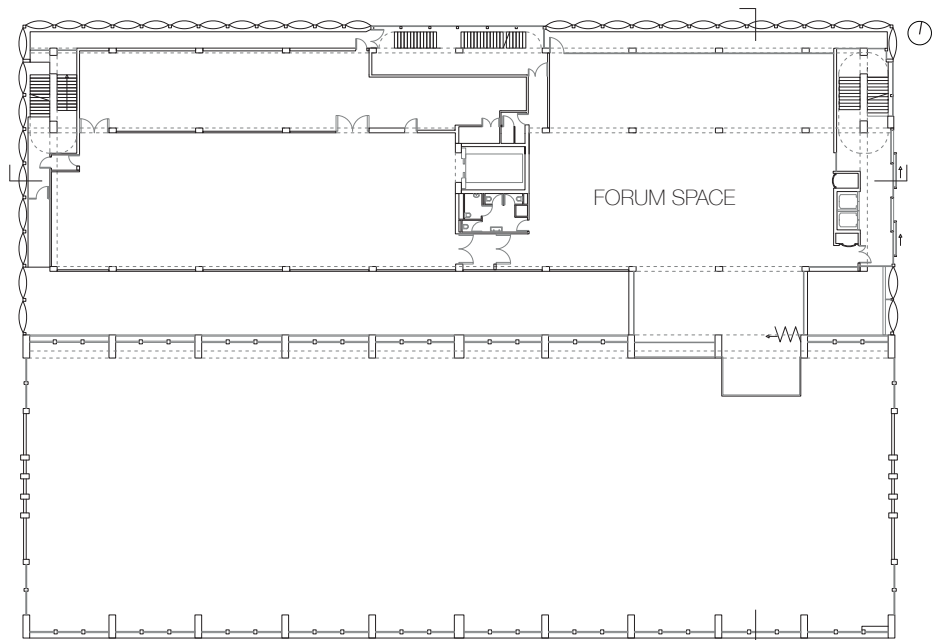
Cross Section



Front Facade

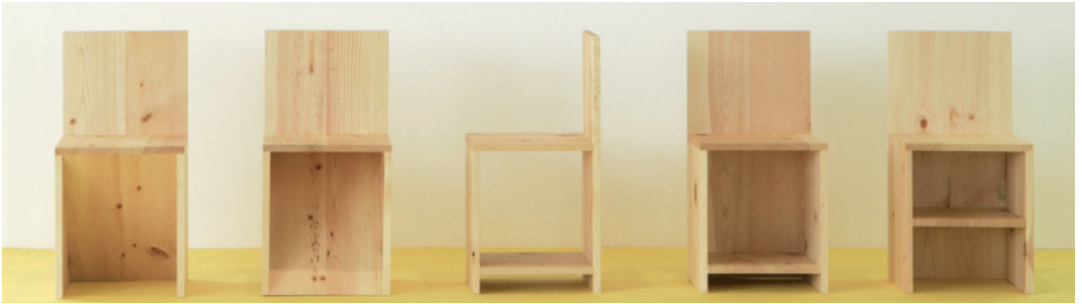
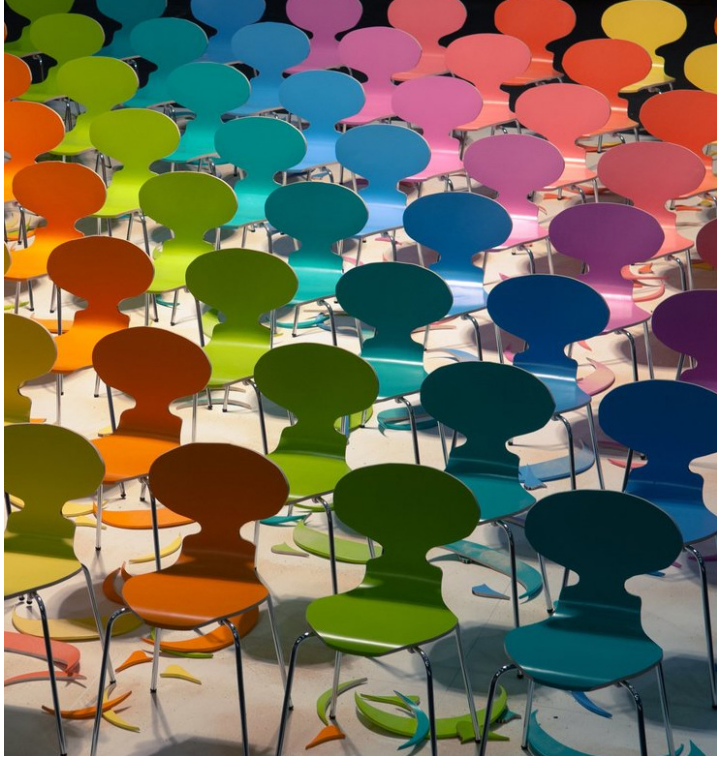


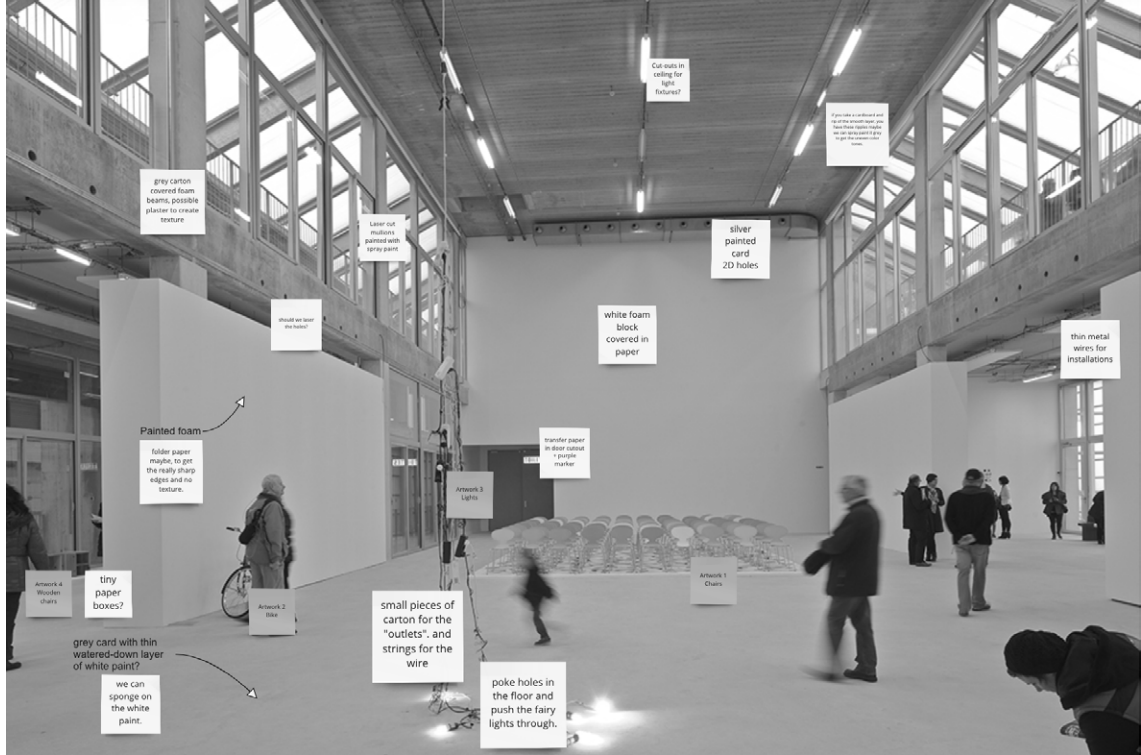
Ground Floor



Fourth Floor

Art pieces shown in picture to be recreated of the Forum space in FRAC.



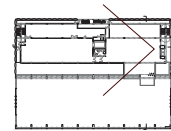


A glance might make you think that the picture shows no artwork.

The art portrayed in the photograph of the FRAC is free-standing and independent from the walls. Additionally, they collectively represent everyday life-like objects. The scale of the white walls ratifies the lack of art on them. Consequently, the wall acquires multiple roles. Sectioning and dividing space renders the wall as an element that contains exhibitions and may even suggest circulation.

The grouping of objects within a “room” contextualizes the work. In the case of multiple artists, it can highlight similarities in style, a common theme, materiality, temporality, and more. Additionally, they serve as backdrops for the pieces.

In the case of the FRAC, even though the pieces are not touching the wall, they are subtly related to them as they anchor them to the space and emphasize the artwork quality of something otherwise mundane as a bike. Furthermore, in this building, they represent the new intervention from 2013. They contrast with the concrete columns, beams, and sealing and create visual space for the artwork to exist free from the potentially overpowering presence of the brutalist structure.



Photograph point of view.
Diagram by author.

Walls are not architectural, they're curatorial



Forum Expo. in FRAC
Dunkerque. Photograph by
Philippe Ruault.



Recreated photograph
of Forum space in FRAC

The second section investigates the role of the architect in the creation of spaces for the display of art. It takes a look at the architectural language of galleries and investigates where is the division between architecture and curation. This process culminates in a gallery space proposed for the display of Marlene Dumas' work.

art display
and curation



Curating an experience

In 'The Dilemma of a Modern Art Museum' Charlotte Klonk reflects on the changes and challenges in the display of modern art in the post-war period. Through the case of the documenta, she explores the ways in which curatorship and spaces of the display of art can also reflect larger changes in culture and society.

Bringing curatorship to the foreground, the documenta played an important role in the curator as hero approach to displaying art. (...) Often compared to Bode's retail projects, the spaces of the documenta softened the borders between art and the ideas of modern living, creating this sense of familiarity and focus on user experience. (...) A white box seems to be marketed as a type of space closest to those of art production, and therefore closest to the artists' intentions. While meaningful curatorship only appears to make sense in close collaboration between a curator and an artist, there is tension between the pure white box, the curator and the artist. Once a power struggle between curators and artists both wanting to fill and transform museum spaces, now the focus has shifted towards the architecture of the museum (the shell) and the inside of the museum (the display and its content), as illustrated by the podcast on the Guggenheim Bilbao. If the architecture of a museum is flashy (especially compared to its urban setting), just like a 'celebrity artwork' it can attract multiple people. This experience, however, remains only superficial if the main attraction of a museum is its landmark statute; people only need a picture with it from the outside without experiencing what is on the inside.

Bibliography:

Extract from Reading reflection 1.3



Typical Installation Arnold Bodes
with works by Raoul Dufy.
Photograph by Gunther Becker,
1965.

With temporary art exhibitions, such as documenta, curation took on space and importance in the display of art. This play of power led artists to explore immersive art as a way to regain control over how people interacted with the work. Despite their efforts, the role of the curator shifted indefinitely. A similar power dynamic emerged in the second half of the 20th century, with emphasis on the architecture of museums taking center stage in projects like The Guggenheim in Bilbao. The museum's image became a shell containing the white box, and attention to movement and experience throughout the building became integral to the character of these institutions. Consequently, the division between curation and architectural design became blurred.

A visit to De Pont and Van Abbemuseum exemplified the different approaches museums can take in terms of visitors' experience.



The portrait gallery of the artists exhibited in the entrance of the first documenta. Photo by Gunther Becker, 1955.

The site visit to De Pont museum in Tilburg and Van Abbemuseum in Eindhoven highlighted two completely different approaches to the visitor's experience and the didactic role of the institution. De Pont takes a step back and approaches art display similarly to the principles of the white box. Meanwhile, Van Abbemuseum blurs the boundary between room and scenography. In both cases, these intentions determine the nature of circulation.

The Hallway

The hallway then becomes representative of the experience offered to the visitor. De Pont museum provides an undefined sequence and allows the visitor to wander. The main space is arranged through self-standing walls that create a sequence of rooms but provide no fixed order for the experience. As a result, the surrounding corridor, despite being directional, has multiple doors and spaces along its route that prevent it from guiding the visitor to circulate in a particular way. Furthermore, the brick and concrete in the corridor contrast beautifully with the whiteness of the main space and provide visual cues for orientation.

On the contrary, Van Abbemuseum takes a didactic approach and provides an educational experience for the public. Intended to be explored in a particular manner, the building results in an overpowering experience and a confusing circulation. The hallways reinforce the complicated sequence of spaces. Additionally, the contrast of black and white materials creates an uneasy feeling and discourages exploration of what lies beyond.



Photograph of circulation at Du Pont Museum in Tilburg.



Photograph of circulation
at Van Abbemuseum
Museum in Eindhoven



Above
Photograph of
Marlene Dumas'
Studio

To the right
Photograph of
current MHKA's
display of
Marlene's work

Ensembles

Intricacies of gallery space
design

A design exercise was introduced as a way to understand and explore the dynamic between architecture and curation, as well as the intricacies of creating a space for the display of art. An artist was selected from the MHKA's collection with the intention to design a gallery space for them. In my case, the artist was Marlene Dumas, the Dutch artist famous for her expressive and intimate portraits.

The current M HKA displays Marlene's work in a big room with other artists, in a corner with the ceiling lights out. Beyond of the curatorial choices and the physical constrains of the building, and despite the lack of light Marlene's work manages to pull you in and look at it.



Marlene Dumas

"(...) questioning whether meaning resides in origin or destination. In Dumas's work, meaning is, at best, suspended unreachably between the two: the enduring subject of her art lies within the very gap between them."

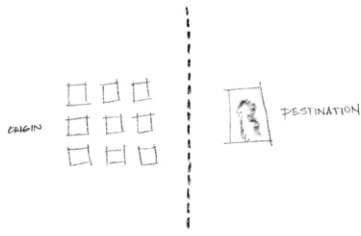
Designing a space for Marlene Dumas inevitably involves engaging with her distinctive artistic style. Inspired by both media and personal photographic material, her work is characterized by portraits crafted using soft and textured paint. Despite the frequently washed appearance of her brush strokes, the paintings evoke powerful emotions. Interpretation remains open to the viewer, and clear messages are intentionally blurred. Marlene aims to create a sense of duality and provide spectators with the opportunity to establish an intimate relationship with her art.

Consequently, the central focus of the space revolves around the non-spatial closeness between the viewer and the artwork. The primary objective is to explore the feeling of intimacy and how it can confront visitors as they wander through the exhibition space.

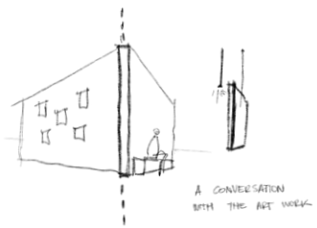
The challenge lies in creating an environment where, within a collective setting, the notion of intimacy guides the visitors. Key elements to be incorporated include the lightness of the paper, the textures, and the somewhat fluid and rapid painting process that characterizes Dumas's work.



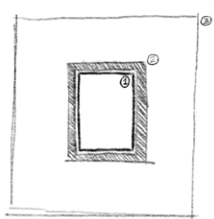
Marlene Dumas displayed at
Du Pont Museum in Tiburg.
Own photograph



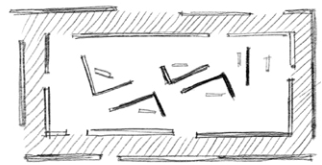
not a dead end room, a part of a sequence



moments where you encounter the art

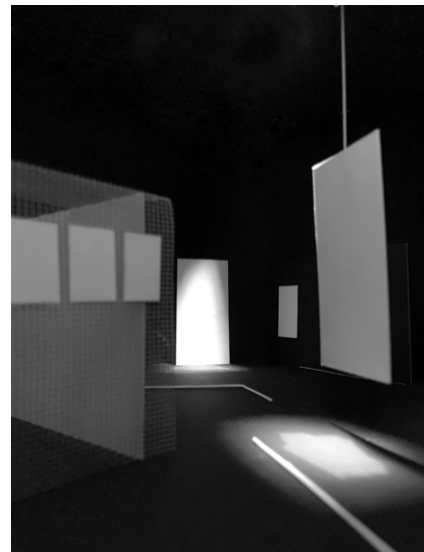
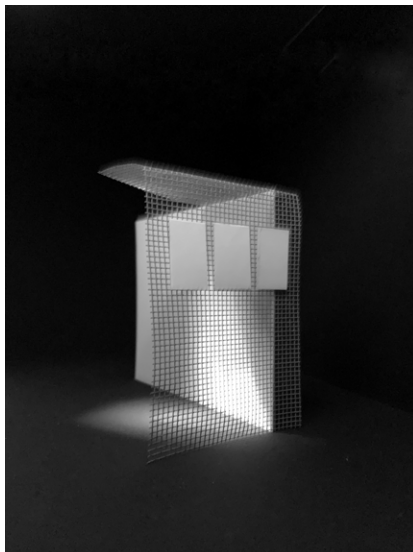
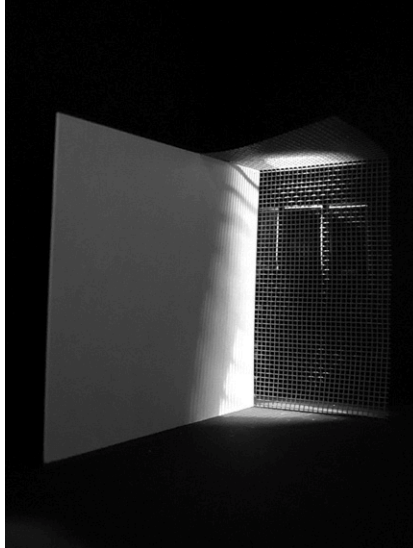
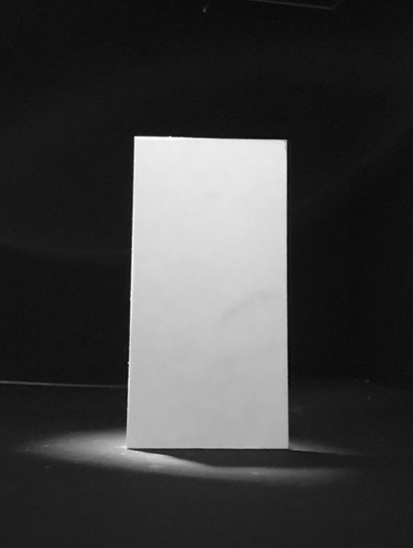


the wall is also a frame



buffer space when walking in the room

initial ideas for my design proposal



Photograph of working
model.
Conceptual ideas for
displaying Marlene's art.

Based on the idea of treating the paintings as individuals, the first step becomes an exercise of different ways to display the art. The idea of individual ways of exhibiting the pieces is accompanied by overall darkness and the punctual illumination of the work as an attempt to create intimacy. The darkness has the purpose of letting people have whatever reaction the work might spark without feeling watched by other visitors.

However, Mark points out that a dark room brings a level of spectacle that Marlene's work could spare. Such a degree of scenography would need to get the artist's involvement.

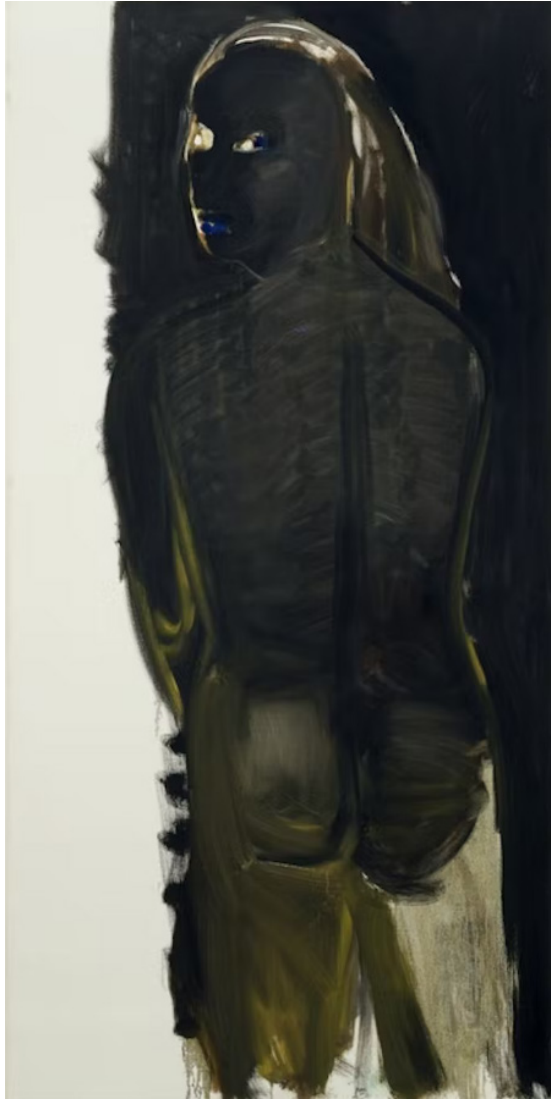


Photography of the Nord
Gallery in the Prada
foundation, Italy.



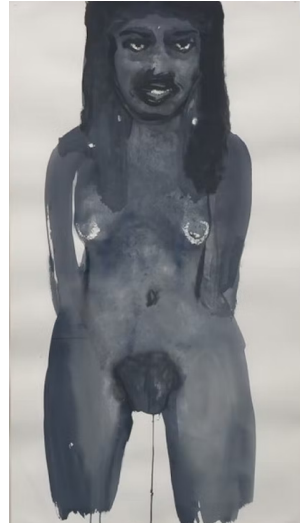
Each work treated as an individual plane, parallel and off centered. The idea explores how the visitor will progressively be confronted by the work. One by one, yet conscious of them as a group of work inside the bigger room.

Photograph of working model for the gallery space.



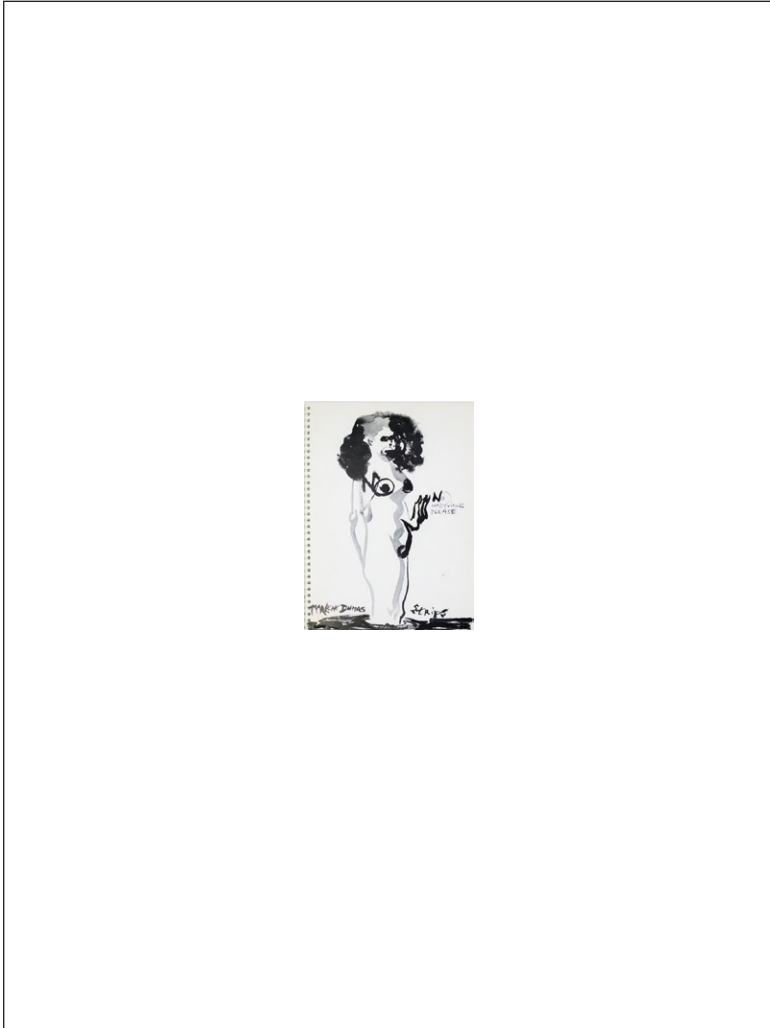
Magdalena
Oil on canvas work by
Marlene Dumas

The first work to be displayed is Magdalena (200 x 100 cm). The scale of this artwork makes it the biggest of the installation and confronts the viewer as soon as they walk into the room.



Pin Up Series by
Marlene Dumas

The following section of the exhibition is the Pin up series for which Marlene based her work on polaroid taken in a strip club in Amsterdam. They showcase individuality and uniqueness while being part of a community.



Strips/No interviews
Please.
Book showcasing a
collection by Dumas.
1987

As a closing piece, the space displays a collection of ink drawings by Marlene. The cover displays the message "No Interviews Please". As such the book is meant to remain closed. Hang on the wall, for the visitor to observe but not open.

The scale of the book vs. the scale of the wall makes this piece confrontational.



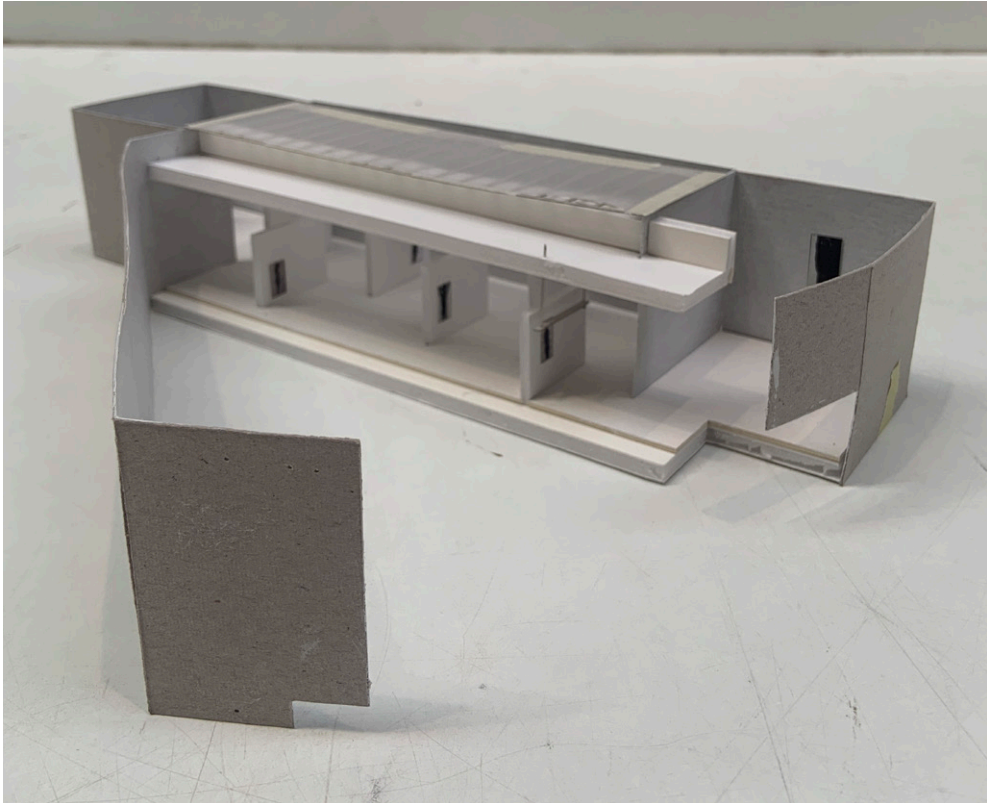
Photograph of working model for the interior space of the gallery.



Photograph of working model for the interior space of the gallery.



Render materiality test
for the interior space
of the gallery.



Photograph of working model for the interior space of the gallery.

positioning between curation and architecture

The art space exercise becomes in the end an exploration between the art of curating and the architectural interventions. The line between gallery construction and scenography setting becomes clearly blurred. Realizing where one starts and the other one ends is an exercise of give and take.

1. Marlene Dumas

- A > process of repurposing images
- ~~opening~~ opportunity for interpretat.
- B. > aims to represent a specific person, not a symbol
- C. > confronted by emotions

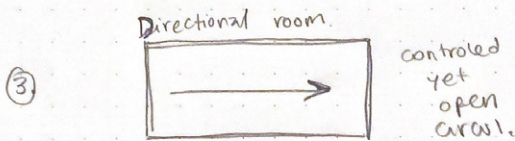
2. How can art confront the user?

notions: ambiguity

↓

frontality — texture

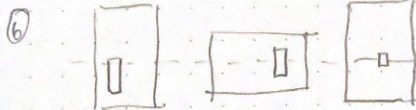
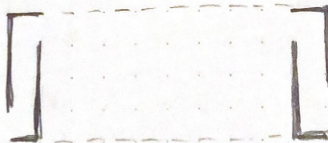
~~intimacy~~



⑤ Art as planes / detached from wall.



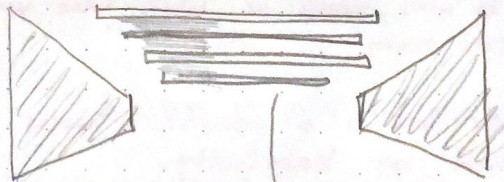
④ transition spaces / narrow - dark



confrontation related to scale + placement
(one side to planes)

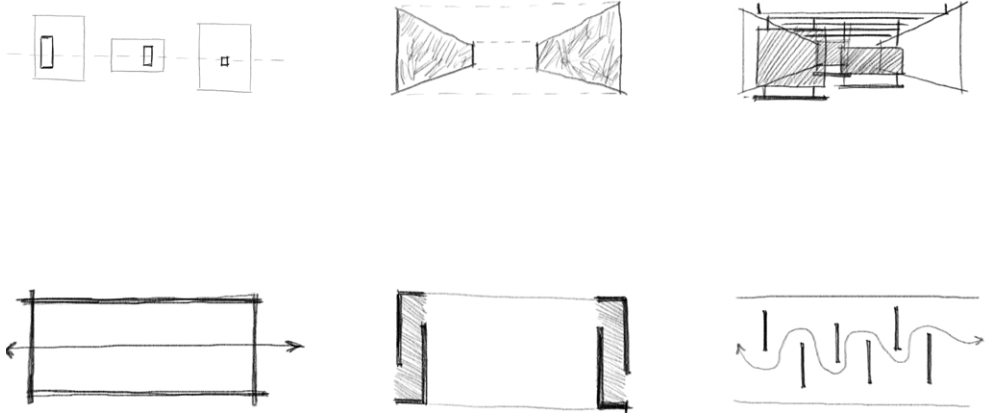
③. ~~But~~ Hanging System for flexibility
+

MD ~~connecting~~
↳ Lightness of her
power represented



rough side
walls to
emphasise
the detachment
of art.
(traditional
system)
+
emphasis in
light

Rhythm
+
directionality
+
hidden
services
├── lights
├── zur
└── ~~security~~
safety



In the endeavor to establish a gallery space for Marlene Dumas, the project evolves into an investigation of how an architecture with a distinct identity can be expressed within the principles of modern gallery's flexibility and subtlety. Drawing inspiration from Dumas's artistic process and technique, the space aims to explore how the arrangement of artworks can engage the viewer and generate an experience that is clear yet not overwhelming, accomplished through the thoughtful integration of rhythm, scale, placement, and textures.

The concept revolves around the notion of presenting each artwork individually, ensuring that the viewer encounters them one at a time. Simultaneously, the ability to perceive multiple planes within the room allows for the understanding that all the artworks are part of a cohesive ensemble.

Marlene Dumas

The paper is covered, torn, stained and scratched. Dumas allows events from her own life to come together with stories and images from films and books, but there is always the possibility of interpretation by the viewer.

Dumas is looking for the specific person instead of the general, a time-bound person instead of a symbol. Her paintings consciously deal with the properties of the photographic source material such as frontality, loss of detail, overexposure, lack of sharpness in depth and distortions in proportion.

Photograph of model of the interior space of the gallery space.



Photograph of model of the interior space of the gallery space.



Photograph of model
of the interior space of
the gallery space.



Photograph of model
of the interior space of
the gallery space.

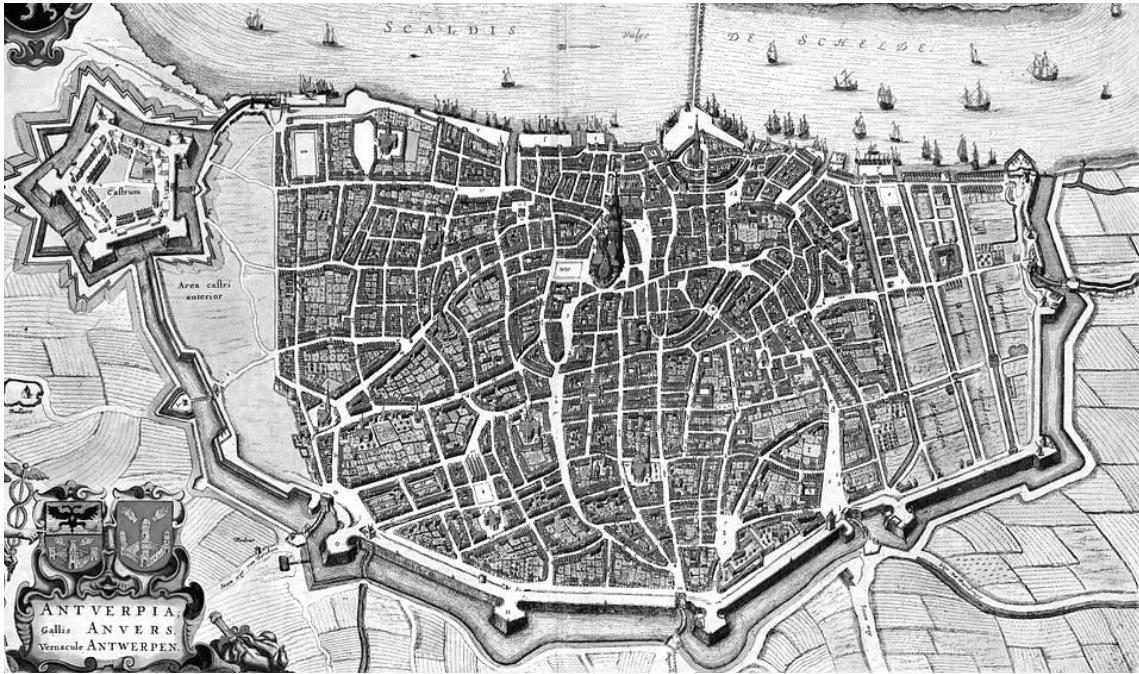
This section introduces Antwerp and how the new MHKA would fit into the Zuid of the city..

Antwerp and
the M HKA





Porous City map on A
Territory of New Modernity.
By Bernardo Secchi and
Paola Vgano



Map of Antwerp's Zuid area before the medieval fortress was taken down.

To gain a comprehensive understanding of the city and to observe both the current MHKA and the proposed site, a group visit was organized to document various aspects of the city.

In "A Territory of New Modernity, Structural Plan for Antwerp" by Bernardo Secchi and Paola Viganò, multiple facets of the urban condition are explored. One of these aspects is the porosity of urban density, emphasizing the value of empty and residual spaces within the city. According to their analysis, these spaces not only present opportunities for new developments but also play a significant role in creating public spaces for the residents.

The proposed site for MHKA is part of the compact city, a result of the medieval ring. It is possible that the building itself can respond to this density, offering a design that takes into account the surrounding urban fabric and contributes to the overall urban context.

Site Visit

A city of different densities



Personal Photograph taken
on group excursion to
Antwerp



Personal Photograph taken
on group excursion to
Antwerp



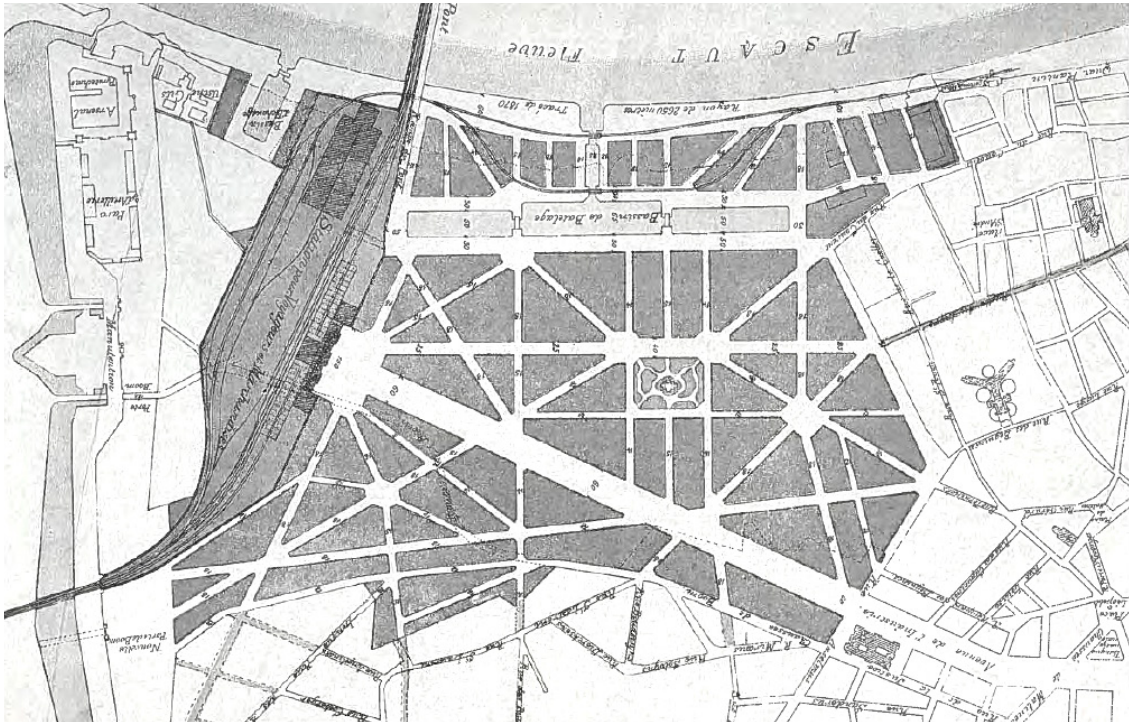
Personal Photograph taken
on group excursion to
Antwerp



Personal Photograph taken
on group excursion to
Antwerp



Photograph of interior space of Antwerp's central station.



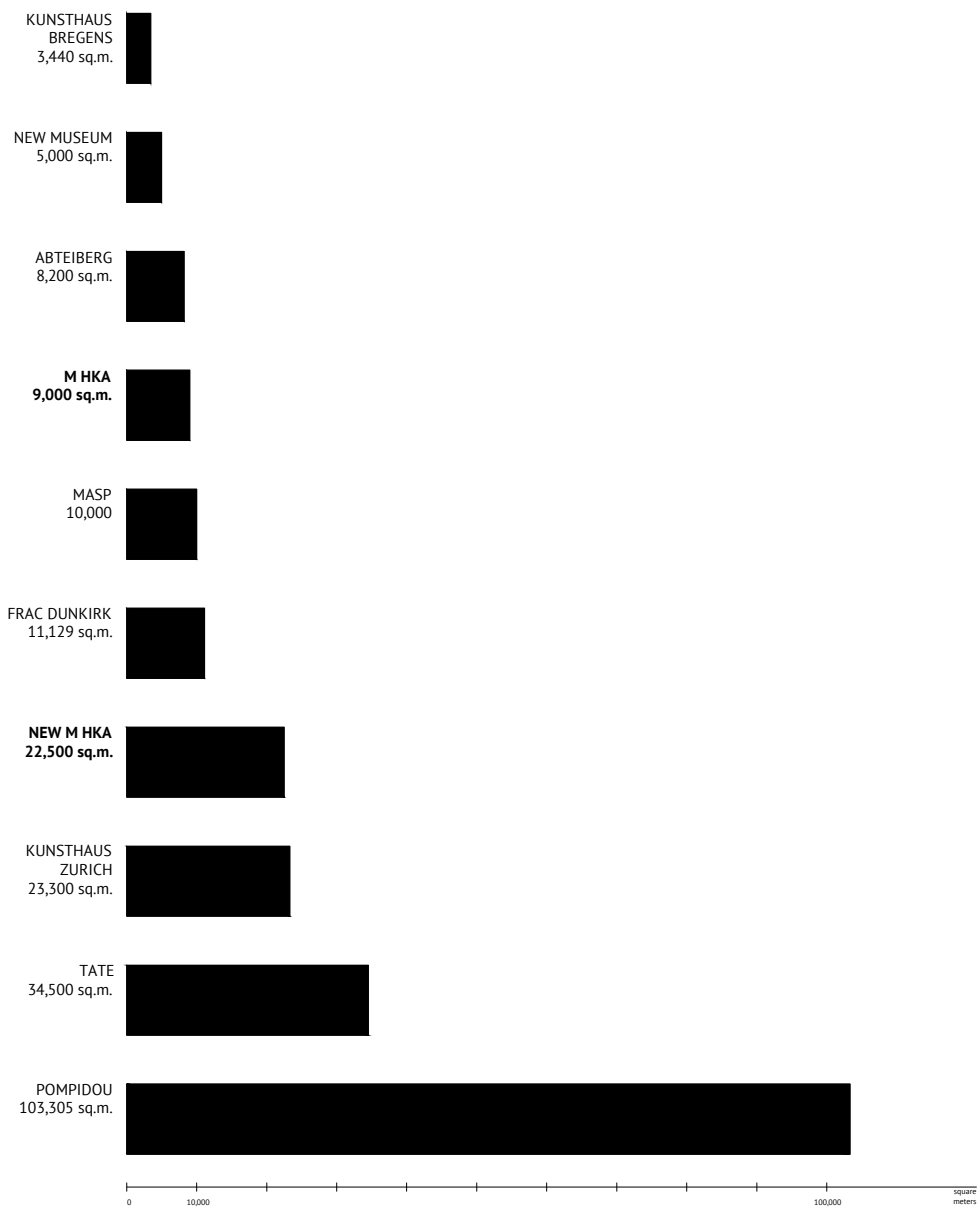
Map of Antwerp's Zuid area after the medieval fortress was taken down.

In the 19th century, with the dismantling of the fortress walls, the Zuid district began to develop, and a radial grid system was implemented. During this period, the city of Antwerp made a conscious decision to construct several new public buildings that not only showcased opulent materials but also aimed to demonstrate the city's power and establish its status as an international harbor.

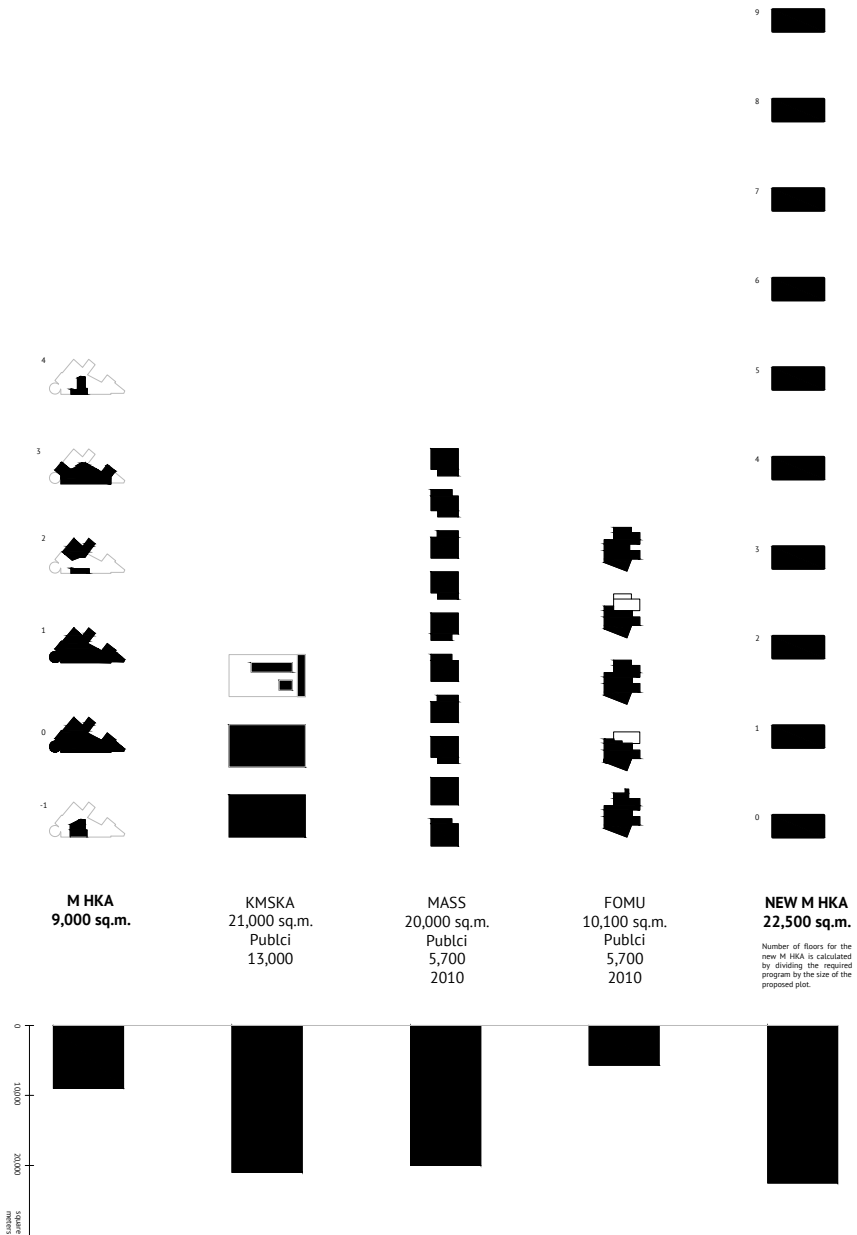
New Zuid

Getting to know Antwerp and the MHKA

When examining the program requirements for the new MHKA, which aims to almost triple the size of the current building, the scale increase may appear drastic. However, the reasons for this expansion and the specific dimensions become clearer when considering other museums in the Flemish region. This growth can be interpreted as an effort to catch up with other prominent museums in Antwerp, such as the MAS and KMSKA. But perhaps more evidently, the project brief explicitly mentions an ambition to position the new Flemish institution. More importantly, it serves as a strategic move to position the MHKA as an internationally renowned institution among other popular establishments.



Program Area Comparison
to the Eight Precedents



Program Area Comparison to MAS and KMSKA

The geometry of the plot, combined with the desired size of the new project, inevitably suggests the idea of a vertical museum. In the immediate context, the surrounding buildings are predominantly low-rise structures that do not exceed the 30-meter mark.

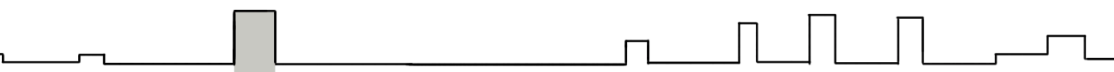
At first glance, the typology of a tower may seem out of place; however, when considering the larger picture, it becomes apparent. Antwerp's skyline, viewed from across the river, reveals taller structures punctuating specific points. On the left, within the medieval city, and on the right, towards the new developments in the south. Thus, the site becomes a logical location for a tall tower, effectively bridging and articulating these two distinctively dense parts of the city and connecting this urban pattern.



Current Skyline



New MHKA in the current Skyline



This section explores
MHKA as an institution,
and how it relates to the
origins of the museum
in relation to publicness.
It sets the scene for
the conceptual idea to
develop.

M HKA
the institution



Publicness in the contemporary museum

The illusion of simplicity in the interior space of the modern museum is representative of the complex economical, social and cultural dynamics that exist beneath the surface. Inevitable questions about race, community, social outreach, public space, and diversity find their way into the allegedly impartial white cube. The premise of inclusion by neutrality is challenged by the contemporary gallery and the debate of what art can be is then parallel to the discussion of what the museum could be. Perhaps, even more importantly, what it could do.

The in-material quality and minimalistic character of the white cube's interior is a response to the technical requirements of art display and conservation. Such practicalities can not be dismissed, but as a generic white wall it can definitely be challenged. The primary challenge for M HKA lies within the articulation of a multiplicity of socio-cultural layers and how they could materialize in physical spaces of the institution. Thus, the new building investigates an approach that challenges the common formality and rigidity of art institutions without neglecting the required technical specifications. As a result, it questions how social, cultural and economical dynamics can interlace the principles of the white cube that cater to the handling of art, within a permeable structure that simultaneously fosters public spaces for interaction.

The institution's desire to make art and their collection accessible to the public is demonstrated both programmatically and tangibly. This is achieved through various means, such as providing access to the entire collection via touch screens in the lobby, offering art publications, organizing events within the galleries, and showcasing free exhibitions with artworks dispersed throughout the building. These efforts clearly showcase their commitment to social outreach and community building, fostering social interaction and facilitating discussions about art. This approach aligns seamlessly with contemporary art and its emphasis on message-driven creation.



Anti museum notions

MHKA'S approach to curation and preservation

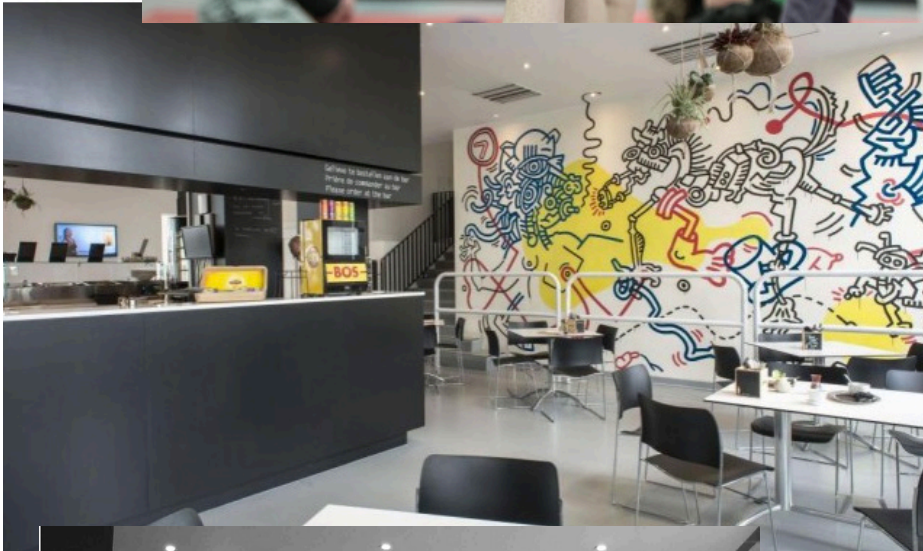
MHKA Wall
Images of entrance to the current MHKA.
Touch screen displaying the museums collection designed by LAB 101.

Yoga sessions at M HKA

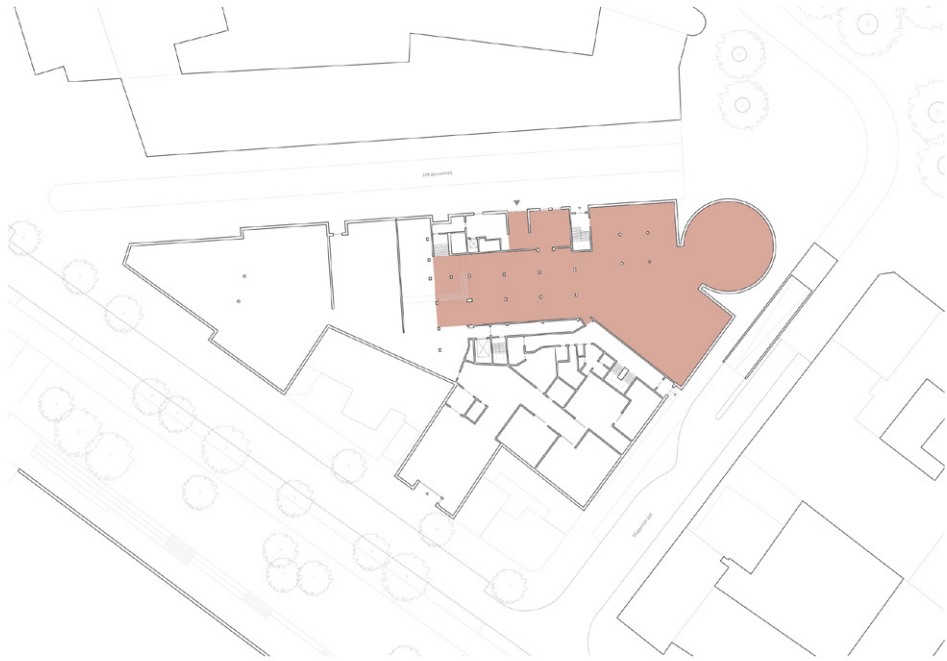
2 Oct 2022 - 3 Sep 2023



Above
Promotional Image
of M-HKA's Yoga in
the Museum.



Middle and below.
Images of Mhkafe
with Keith Haring's
untitled piece in the
background.



Ground floor of current MHA showing free access galleries.

Part of the gallery spaces in the museum are freely accessible to the public, without the restriction of a pay wall. As a result, half of the current building's ground floor is dedicated to publicly accessible areas for displaying art. Among the current exhibitions are "Museum in Motion" showcasing Matta Clark's work and an immersive artwork by Laure Prouvost in the library. For the institution, the forum and art display are intertwined, with the primary goal of fostering social interaction.

It appears that the museum aims to expand the utilization of its space. The objective is to transform into an extension of public space, where art serves as a backdrop for everyday activities. In this regard, the forum spaces within the museum could be conceptualized as flexible and somewhat undefined areas that can seamlessly connect with the art spaces, allowing for a fluid integration between the two.

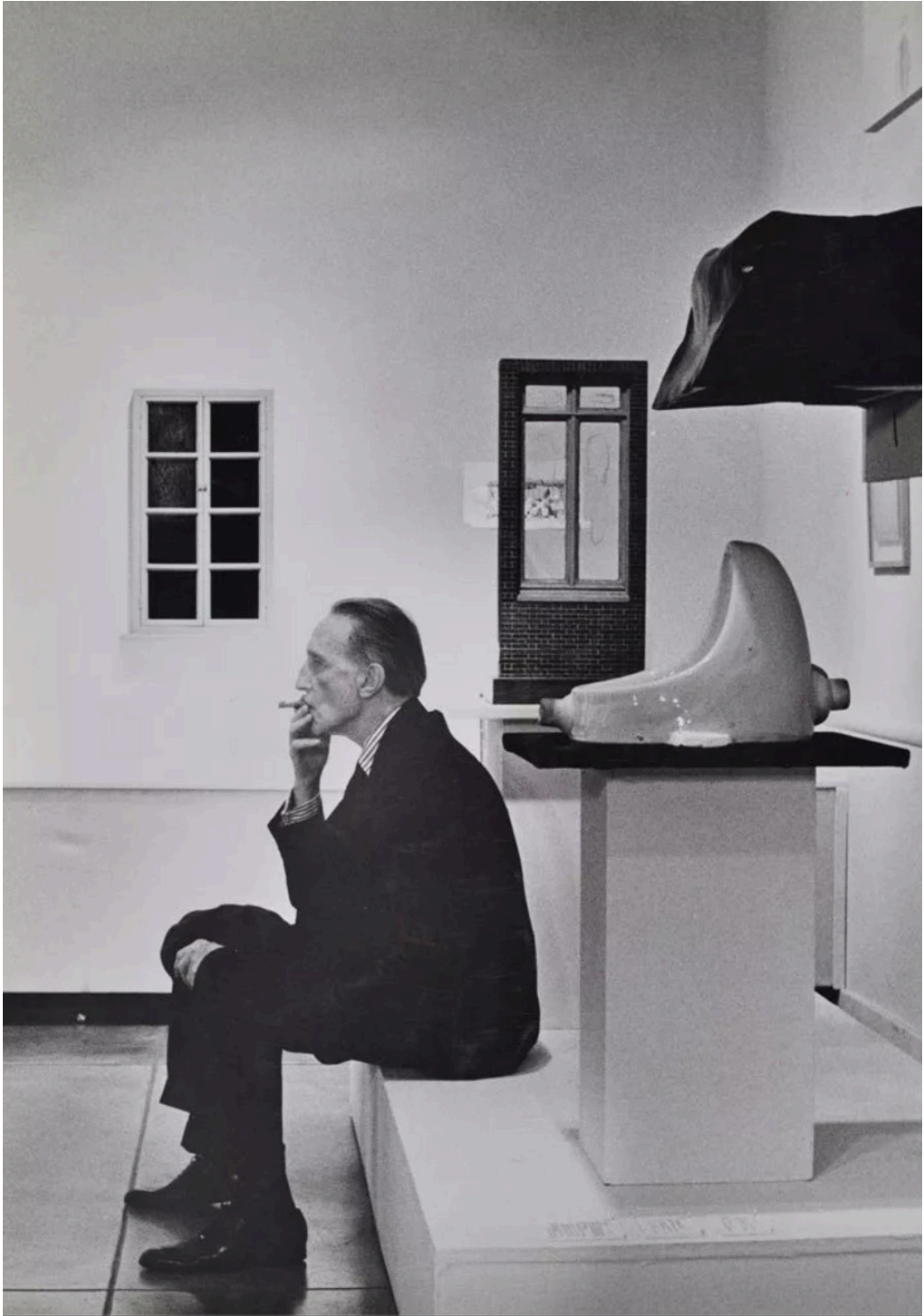
the forum of the new museum



Photograph of Round room in current MHKA inside the old silo.



Photograph of paid access galleries in the ground floor of the current M+KA.



Marcel Duchamp
sitting in front of his
work Fountain.

The development toward surpassing the institution of the museum already begins with the Dadaism of the 1920s, with Duchamp's anti-art, which tacitly—but logically—implies the anti-museum. In the same way, however, as the concept of anti-art only makes sense in opposition to that which has previously been considered art, the anti-museum can only be

understood in relation to that which has previously been the museum. It was the fate of anti-art that it had to remain art—and the anti-museum, too, will stay a museum. The most consequent foray into the future was made as early as 1959 by Willem

Johannes Cladders,
1968. *The anti Museum:*
Thoughts on Art
Cultivation

Anti-art, as a response to conventional notions of art, parallels the concept of the anti-museum, which challenges the traditional idea of what a museum should be. However, despite its intentions, anti-art ultimately falls within the realm of art itself. Therefore, the attempts to deny the museum-like qualities of MHKA seem illogical. This can be exemplified by the case of Duchamp and his urinal, which initially served as a critique and opposition to the art establishment but is still displayed within a museum.

Instead of striving to create an anti-museum that rejects established ideals such as found space and the white cube, it is essential to consider the future institution's needs. Rather than opposing the qualities of physical space, the focus is shifted towards fostering discussions around art, which characterizes the avant-garde movement of the mid-20th century. The emphasis lies in facilitating communication and allowing contemporary art, inherently political, to illuminate dynamics of power, narrative control, and messaging, rather than ignoring them.

anti museum and the
contemporary museum

What is the origin of the institution?

How does it relate to publicness and power?

The first known illustration of a natural history cabinet can be found in an engraving from Ferrante Imperato's book "Dell'Historia Naturale" dating back to 1599. Just like others, wealthy individuals sought to express their personalities through the acquisition of valuable items that served as tangible symbols of their knowledge, wealth, and refined taste. In this context, the wunderkammer can be seen as a representation of wealth and power, often intertwined with the process of colonization.

While these spaces initially had a private nature, they were occasionally opened to the public for periodic visits. Eventually, extensive collections were permanently made public, giving rise to the first museums. Despite the transition to public institutions, the notion of power remains ever-present. Art, in many cases, becomes a financial investment. Furthermore, the power of owning artifacts and the authority to dictate discourse and exposure for artists creates a framework that glorifies both the artworks and the "official" institutions that determine what is deemed worthy of inclusion in their collections.



Ferrante Imperato,
Room of Curiosities
(Wunderkammer),
1559, Naples, Italy



Francesco I de' Medici's studiolo with vaulted ceiling. Italy, 1572.

On the Italian Peninsula, the area housing these artifacts was known as a stanzino, a studiolo, or more frequently a museo, while north of the Alpine ranges these storage rooms were known as Kunstkammer or Wunderkammer. It was occasionally even referred to as a "gallery," a term more commonly used to refer to collections of paintings and other works of art that could also include oddities, such as the Medici Galleria. Grand Duke of Tuscany Francesco I de' Medici owned the one of the most known studiolo. Between 1570 and 1572, several artists worked in this little vaulted space that was used as a cabinet of curiosities, an office, a lab, and a place to hide.

Furthermore, a Wunderkammer's contents were a representation of the owner's taste and individuality, and they were completely within their control in terms of organization and interpretation. The rise of science as a separate subject throughout the 18th century, however, meant that collections came to symbolize not simply the owner's wealth or knowledge but also their ambition to understand the world and inherently their power in accessing such artifacts.

Works of anti art, and later on contemporary art have reinterpreted these spaces. Such as Duchamp and Maurizio Catalan



Above
Cabinet of Curiosities
Oil painting by
Domenico Fempis
Italy, 1690.



Marcel Duchamp.
1935-41. Box in a
Valise



Maurizio Catalani's
Wunderkammer inspired
work in Guggenheim
New York.



Above
 Photograph Passage
 de l'Opera by Charles
 Marville, 1868

Underneath
 Charlie Brown's
 Treasures in The Railway
 Tavern, London 1920's.

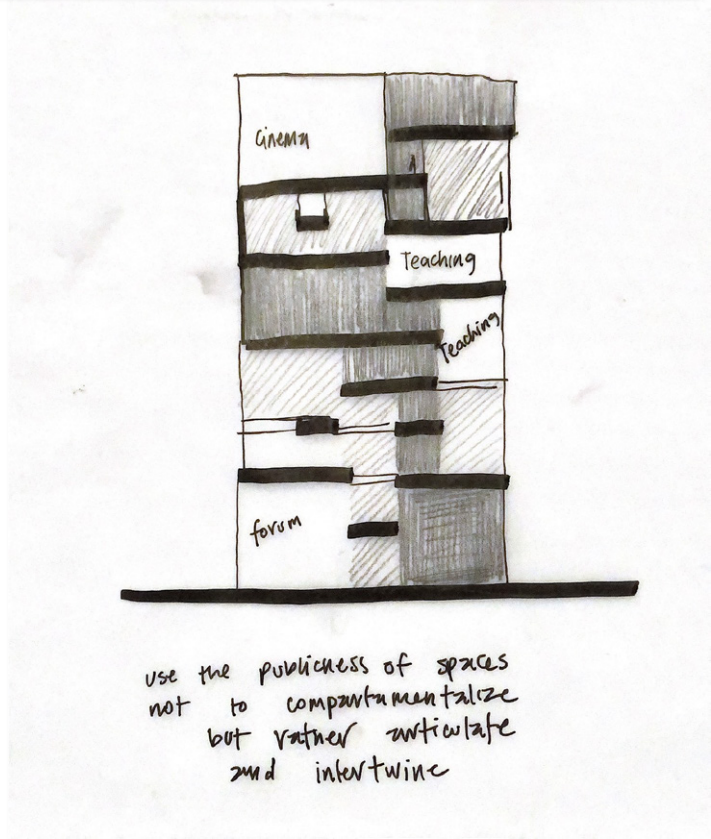


Some of the late CHARLIE BROWNS World Treasures
Railway Tavern *Limehouse*

The four basic components in the organization chart of the future museum of contemporary art are modelled on these ICOM tasks. **The request of the current minister of culture, Sven Gatz, to give the collection a more explicit place in the museum is one of the most important reasons for launching a project for a new construction.** The existing building with its characteristic floor plan, unequivocal circulation patterns and large open floors fails to support this permanent collection presentation, or does so only with great difficulty. The formulated commission therefore places new demands on the new museum building.

Above
Extract from the
competition brief for the
new M HKA.

Underneath
Conceptual sketch for
the building proposal.



On one hand, the main objective of MHKA is social outreach, aiming to engage with the local community. On the other hand, the Flemish government seeks to establish the collection's international presence and showcase it prominently in a single building.

To reconcile these principles and challenge the conventional notion of a publicly accessible contemporary museum, the project's concept revolves around interweaving different functions. Primarily driven by the permanent collection, the design creates a vertically integrated space that is both free and accessible. This allows people from all walks of life to experience the collection partially or in its entirety, either intentionally or as a quick stop while navigating through other spaces in the building.

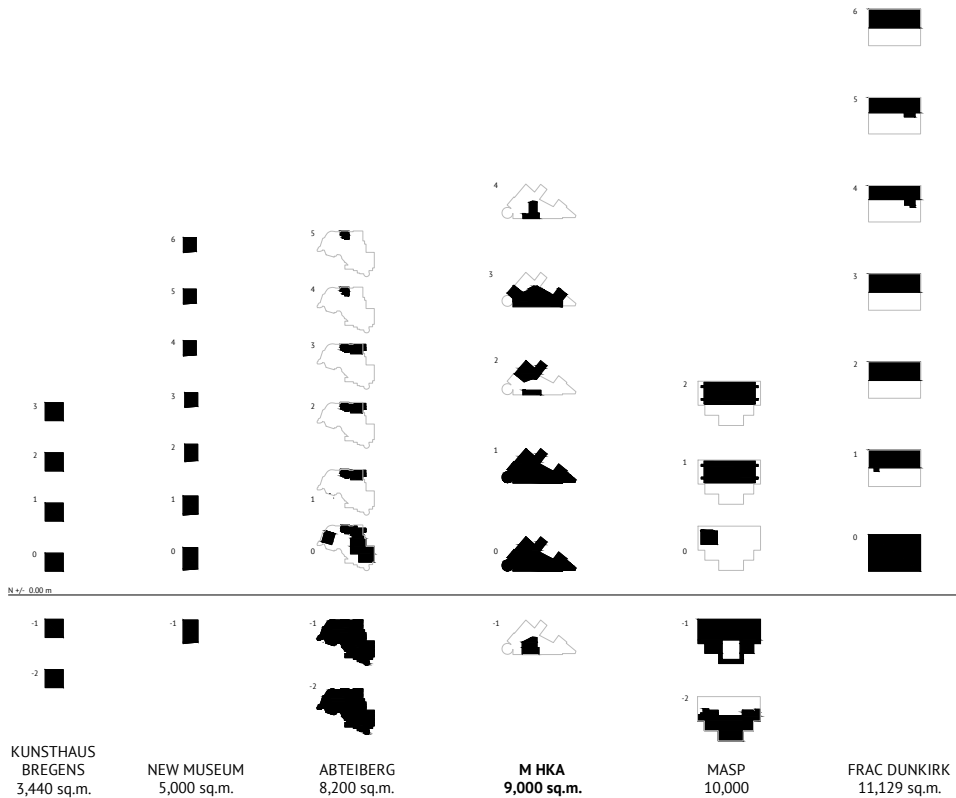
conceptual idea

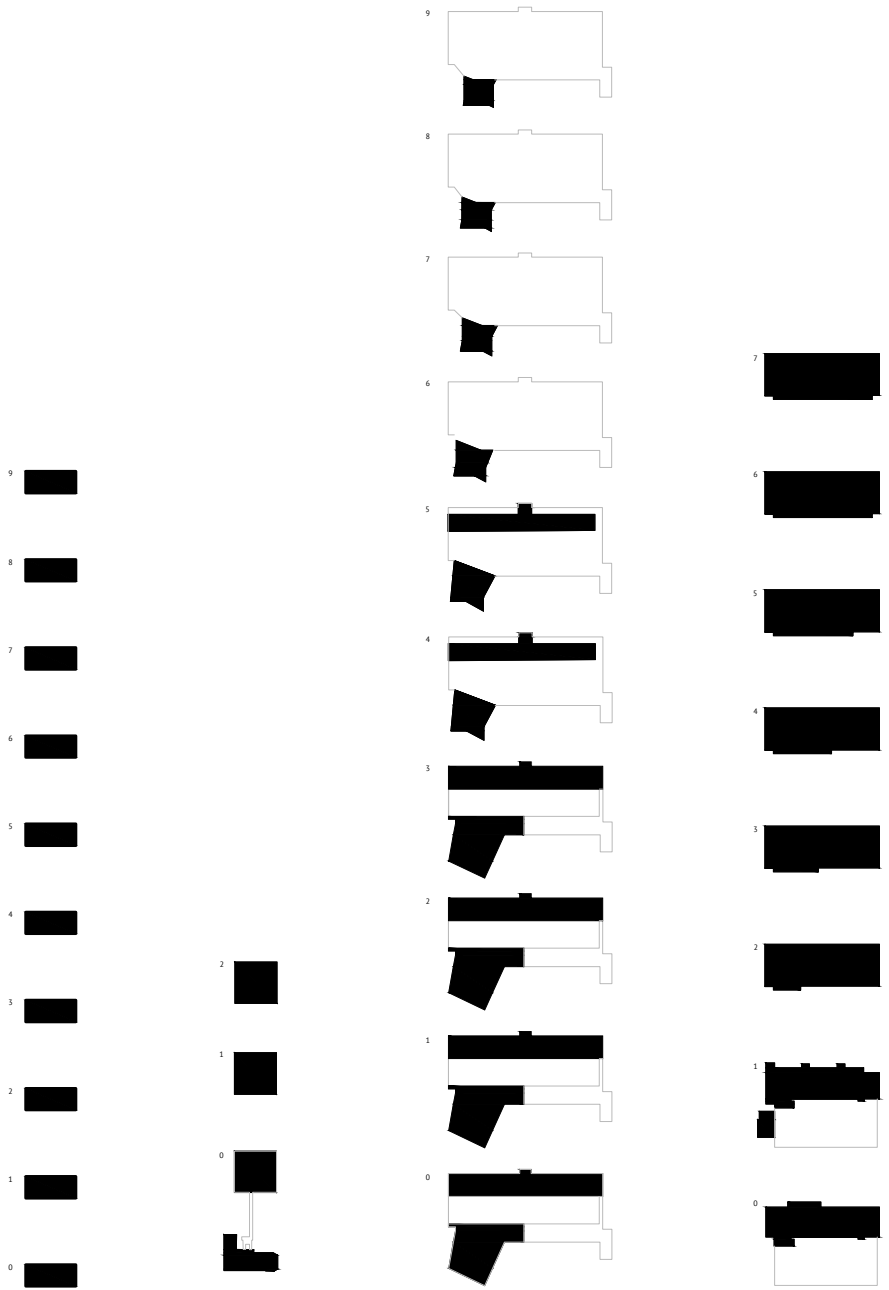
Area comparison

MHKA's area compared to eight precedent studies

What is the position of MHKA's ambition in an international context?

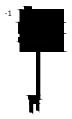
MHKA's leap in program size seems almost questionable when thinking of their intention of contextualizing Flemish art internationally.



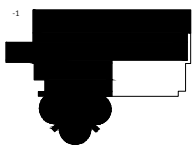


Number of floors for the new M HKA is calculated by dividing the required program by the size of the proposed plot.

NEW M HKA
22,500 sq.m.



KUNSTHAUS ZÜRICH
23,300 sq.m.



TATE
34,500 sq.m.



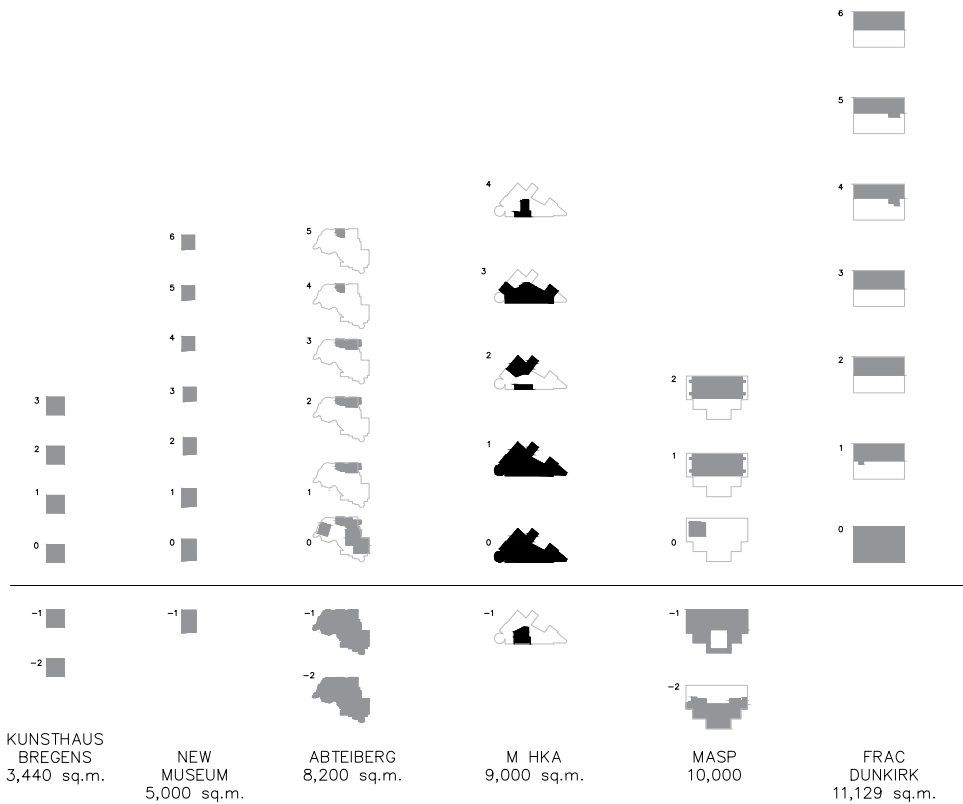
POMPIDOU
103,305 sq.m.

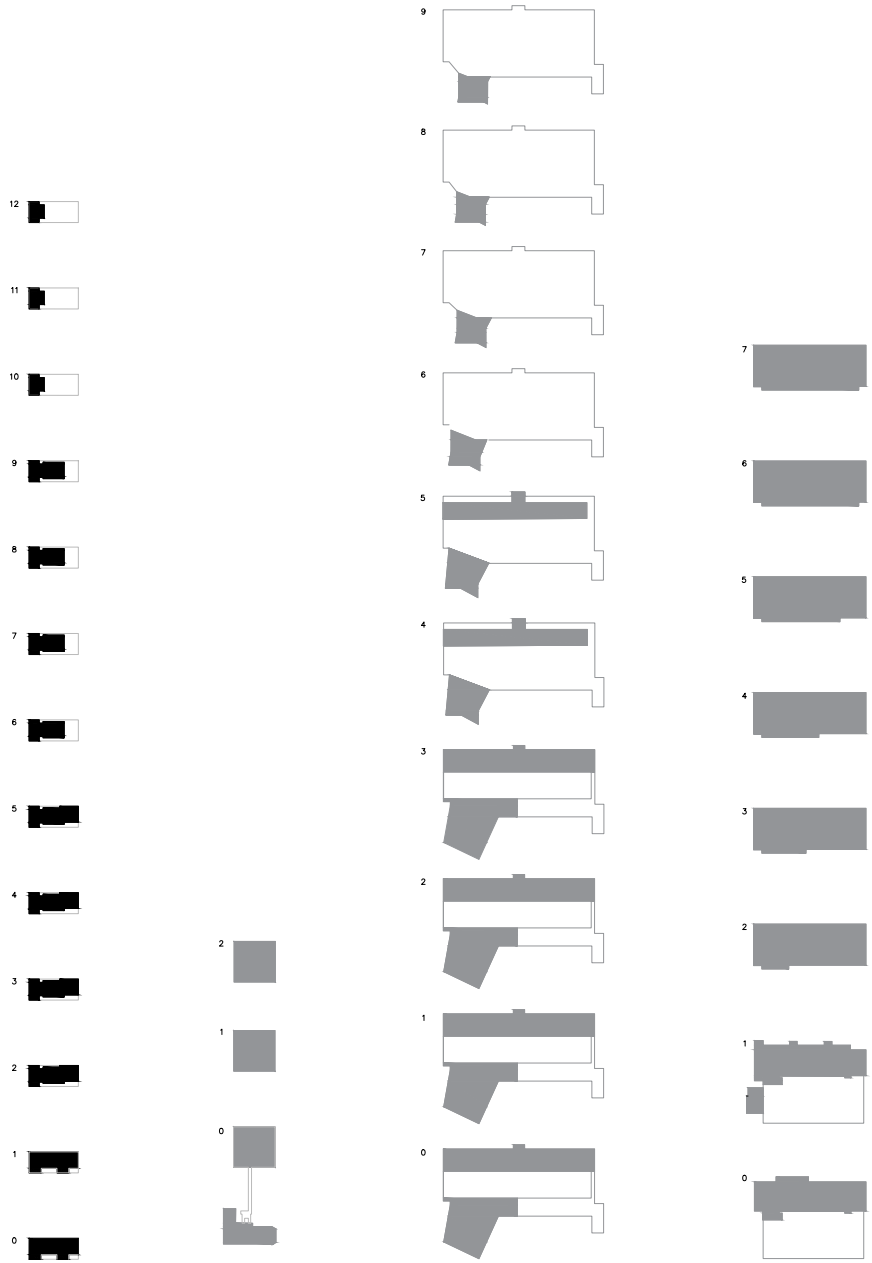
N.v.l. 0.00m

Area comparison

MHKA's area compared to eight precedent studies including proposal

Big part of the area required by the brief is due to a big increase factor from gross to net. By interpreting the brief as public forum oriented building the proposal reduces the square meters.





NEW M HKA
15,800
sq.m.

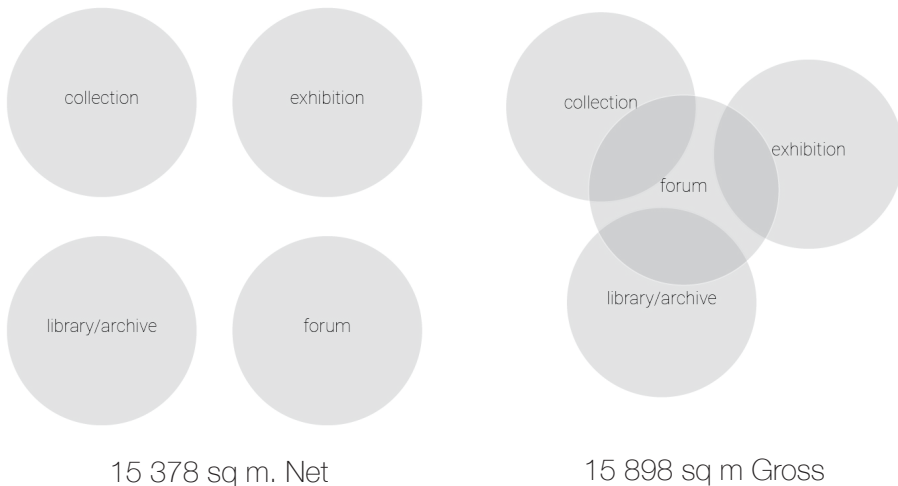
KUNSTHAUS
ZURICH
23,300
sq.m.

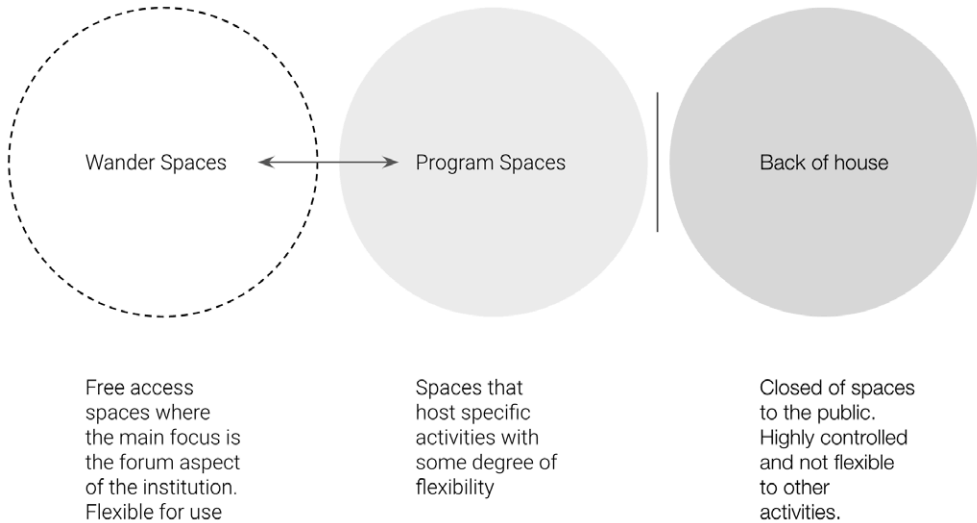
TATE
34,500
sq.m.

POMPIDOU
103,305

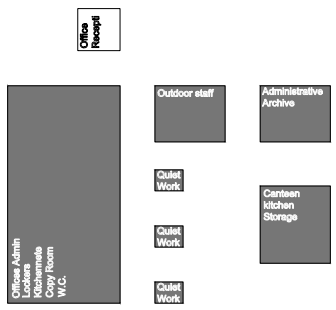
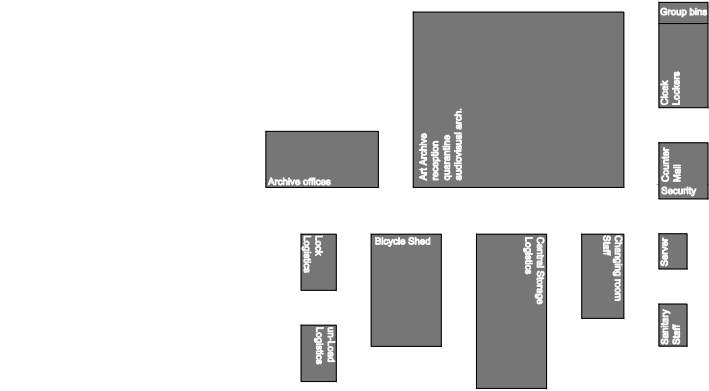
As a Cultural Heritage Institution of the Flemish Community, the museum's mission became more ambitious. Through the new construction project, with an estimated total surface area of maximum +/- 22 540 m2 (gross), Flanders wants to give a significant boost to cultural policy. **M HKA's mission is to further expand the Flemish Community's collection of contemporary art and to manage its collection, to show the collection in a permanent display, to present itself more explicitly as a research institute and to set up an archive department for the visual arts.**

Extract from the competition brief for the new M HKA.

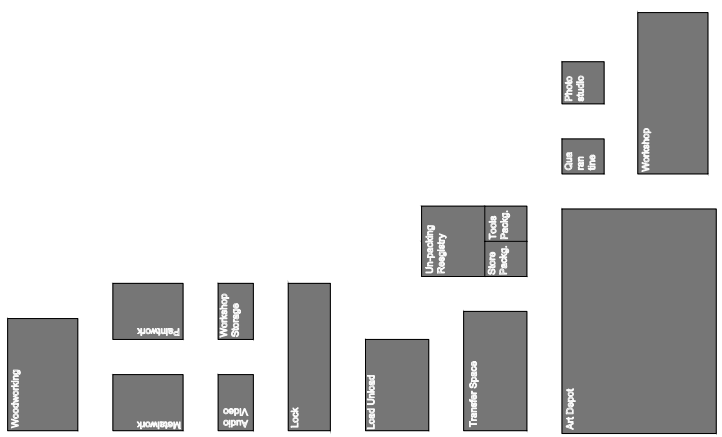


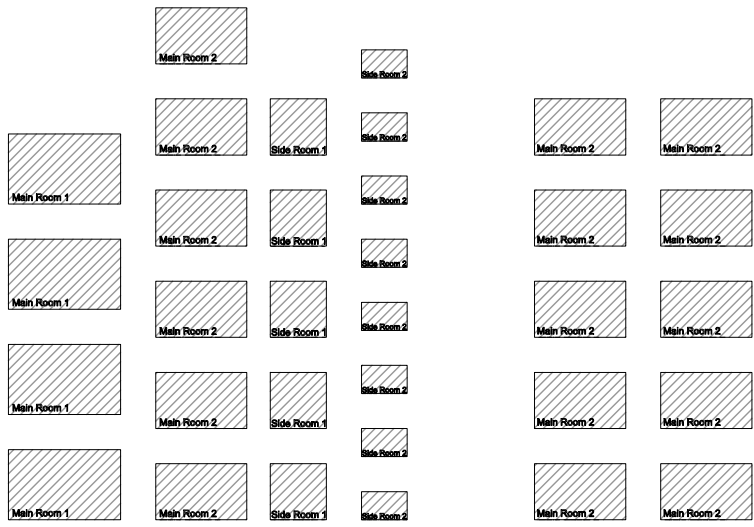


The competition brief proposes a clear separation of spaces for collection, exhibition, archive, and forum. However, this division may result in an unnecessary increase in the overall requirements and suggest an overly large building. By shifting the focus towards the forum and conceiving it as a space that overlaps with other functions, it is possible to optimize the net requirements and transform them into a gross area for the proposed design. This approach allows for a more efficient use of space and a better utilization of resources.

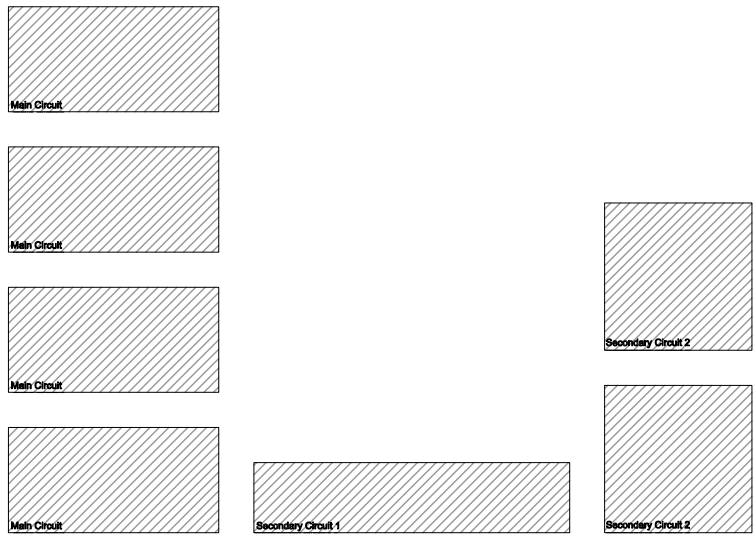
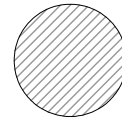


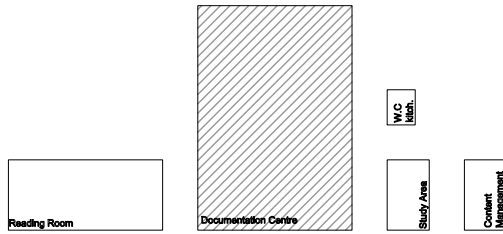
The back-of-house spaces follow a specific sequence that must be respected. Even though the building serves purposes beyond just being a museum, a poorly designed sequence for the art route would undermine the entire project. It is crucial to ensure that the flow of the art route is well-planned and organized to enhance the visitor experience and achieve the intended goals of the project.



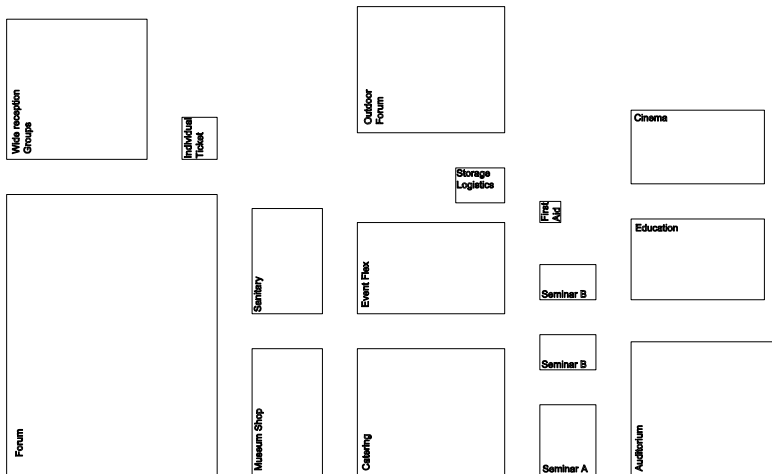


The high specificity of rooms within the collection spaces seems, on one hand, like an opportunity to give character and a sequence of space to the collection. Yet, on the other hand, dimensions and requirements come across as unguided decisions, which could end up being constraining rather than productive.



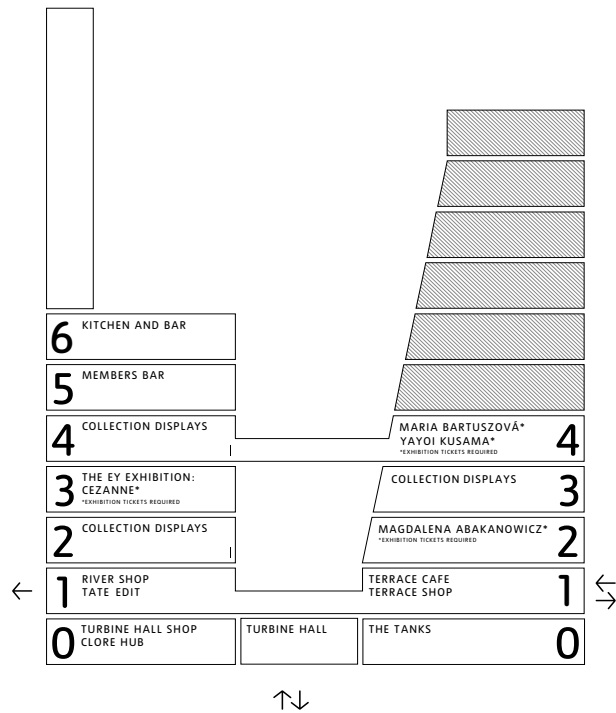


The forum requirement in the brief aligns with MHKAS's current intentions of creating and fostering spaces for discussion and social interaction. However, in the context of anti-museum origins and the current vision of the director, the forum becomes almost more important than the collection and exhibition spaces.

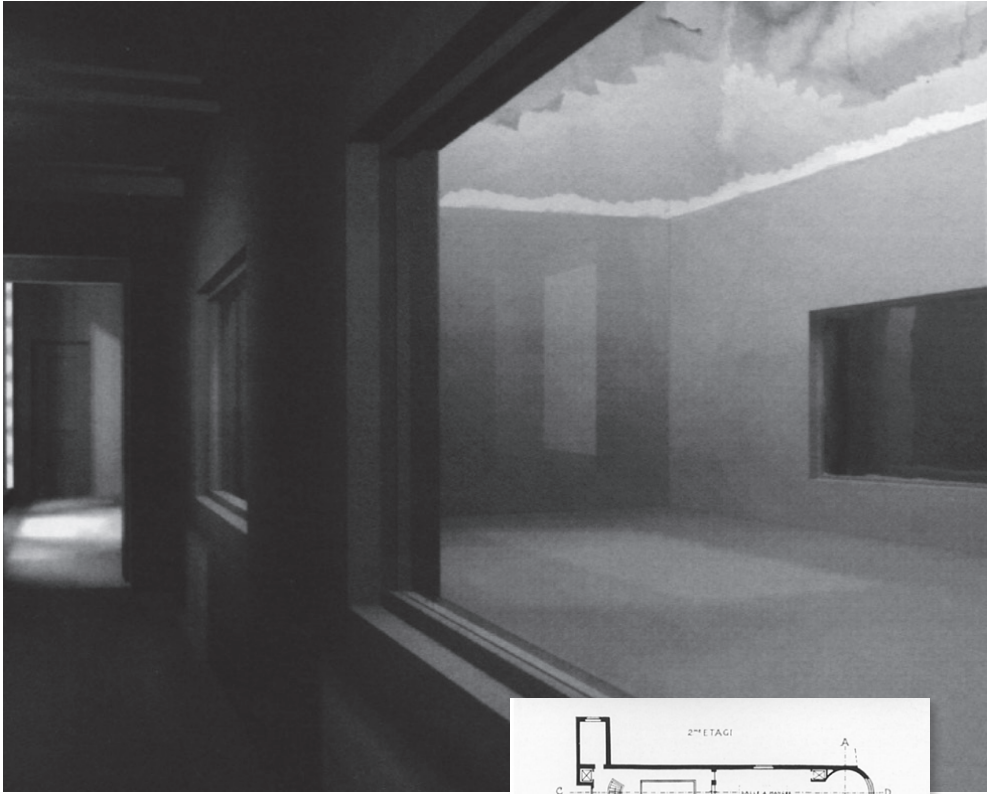


In new museum 'architecture' it is therefore preferable to have some margin built in: excess, undefined space, generic structures. New architecture must be prevented from getting in the way of the challenges of the future and it must be ensured that unforeseeable reorientations can take place.

Publiek Rapport Labo A pag. 146.

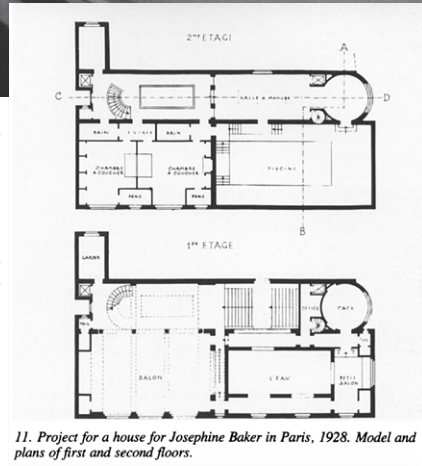


Accessibility to a permanent collection is not a completely new approach to museums. TATE introduced it and supports it with temporary exhibitions as paid events. In this case, both aspects are somewhat segmented and divided between the old structure and the new tower.



Above.
 Photograph of House for
 Josephine Baker House
 by Adolf Loos.

Undereath
 Floorplans of house for
 Josephine Baker



11. Project for a house for Josephine Baker in Paris, 1928. Model and plans of first and second floors.

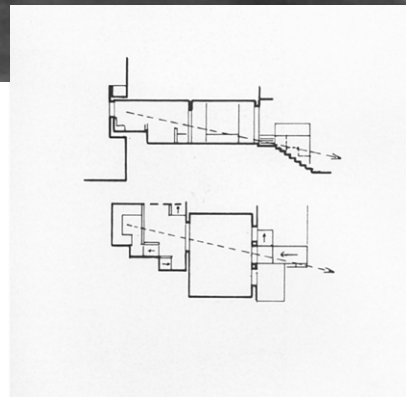
In the house for Josephine Baker, the power dynamics between the subject and the observer are made abundantly clear. The pool becomes a spectacle as the salon overlooks it, and there are several windows that provide underwater views. In doing so, the architect positions Josephine as the central figure of the show.

Subject vs. Spectator



Above:
Photograph of Moller
House by Adolf Loos.

Underneath
Section and floor plan
diagram of Moller House



Adolf Loos becomes a reference when considering the desired feeling that the spaces within the building should provide. Villa Moller and the application of his raumplan theory result in a house that evokes a sense of haltedness throughout its interior. As you move through the space, you encounter a series of framed views, capturing both the spaces you have just left and the spaces you are approaching. This design creates a sense of progressive build-up without a significant release, or rather, it offers a multitude of different releases.



Photograph of The new
Art Gallery Walsall by
Caruso St John



Photograph of The new
Art Gallery Walsall by
Caruso St John



First Floor | Permanent Collection

The permanent collection is conceived as gallery spaces with a domestic scale and arrangement. There is no specific circulation route through the building; the intention is for visitors to explore and discover it organically.

The progressive scale change in spaces ranges from 1 to 3. The big hall represents 1, while the small rooms organized around it represent 3.



Second Floor | Permanent Collection

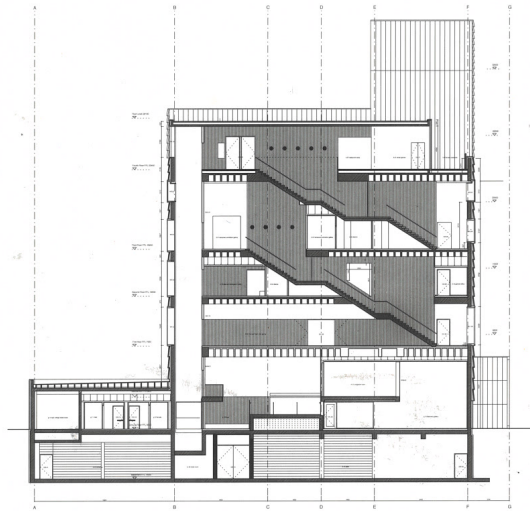
The house-like arrangement is achieved through a double-height space that centers the layout and accommodates the staircase. This vertical circulation becomes key to the domestic quality of the gallery.



Third Floor | Temporal Galleries

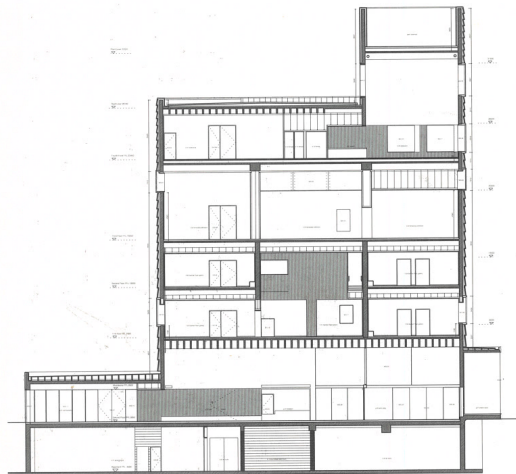
The temporary galleries don't implement the domestic scale and instead aim at a more flexible floor plan.

Even in vertical orientation, one can observe the variety of spaces in terms of scale and understand how the smaller-scale spaces are arranged around the larger room. This arrangement creates distinct groups, each with its own center, that come together as a cohesive whole.



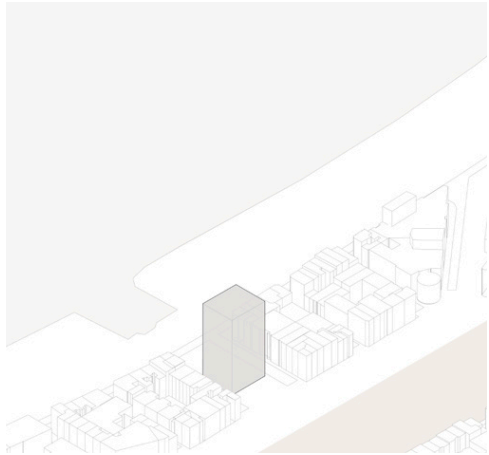
Section C-C'

Even vertically, you can observe the variety of spaces in terms of scale and understand how the smaller-scale spaces are arranged around the larger room. This arrangement creates different groups, each with its own center, that come together as a cohesive whole.

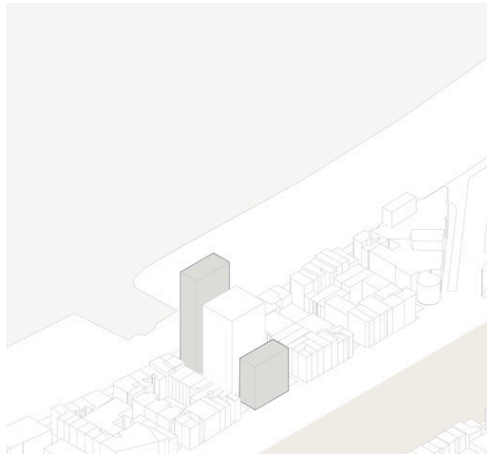


Section E-E'

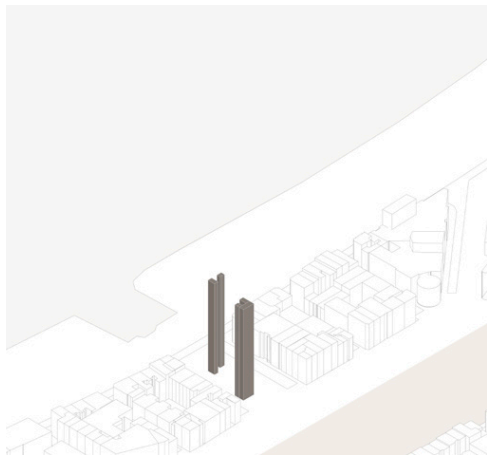
A central volume destined for the permanent collection and the forum related spaces.

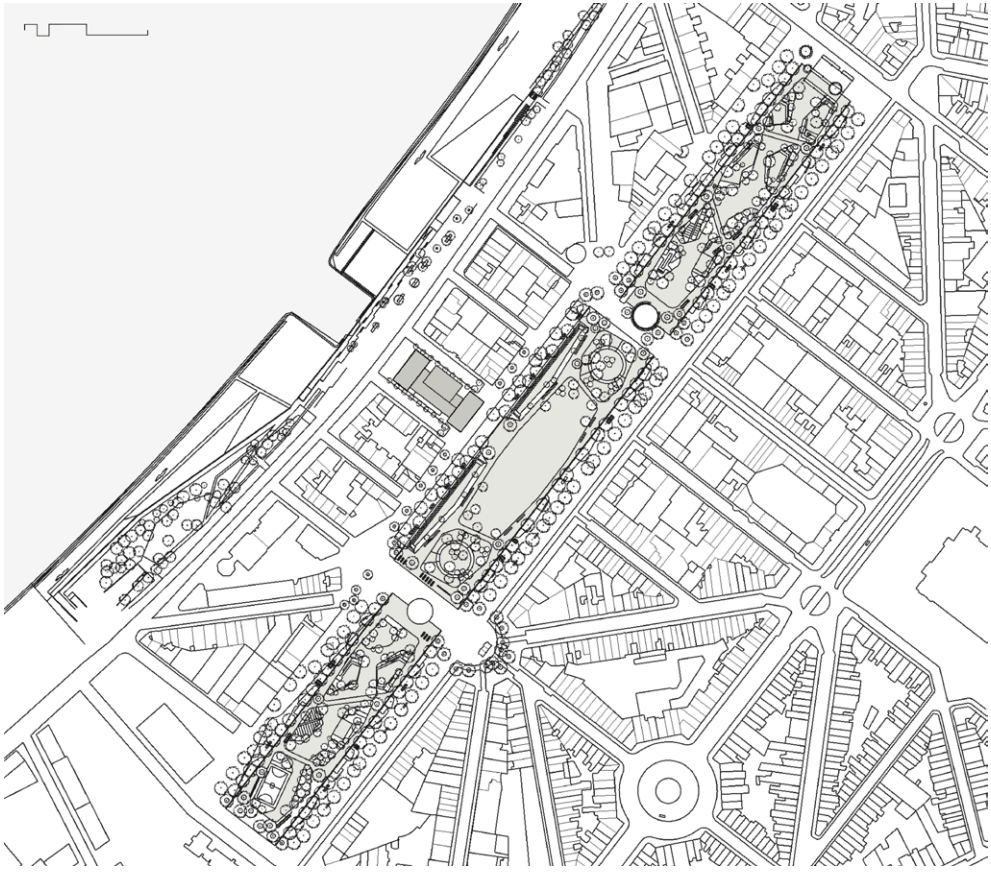


Two adjacent volumes. A taller one for back of the house and temporary exhibitions and a front one for public uses.

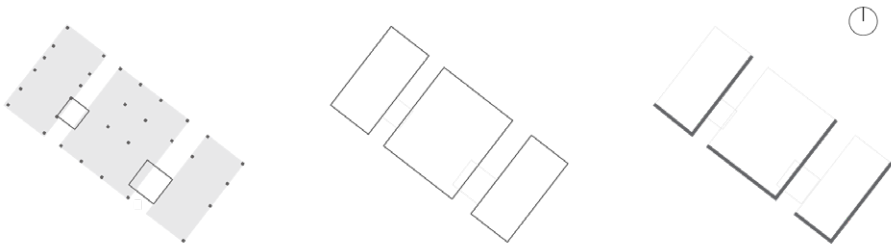


Two cores that articulate the three volumes and services the building.

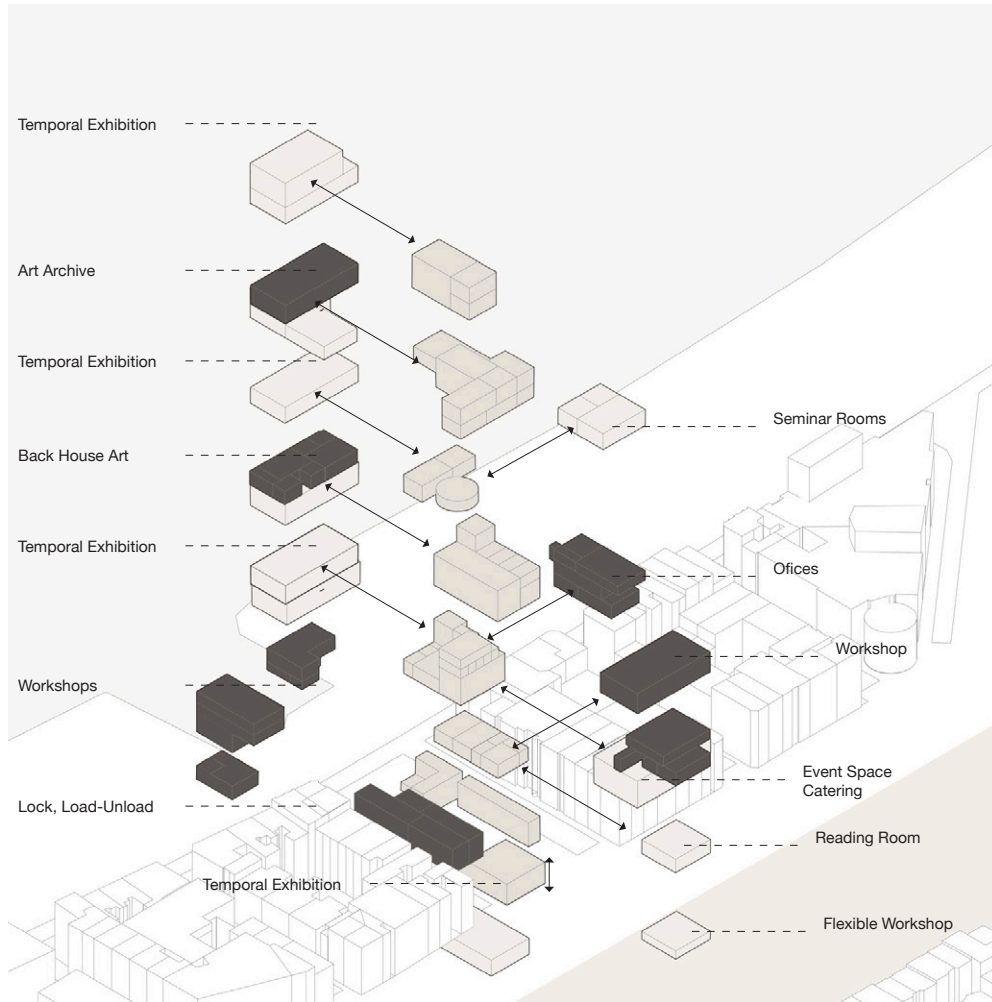




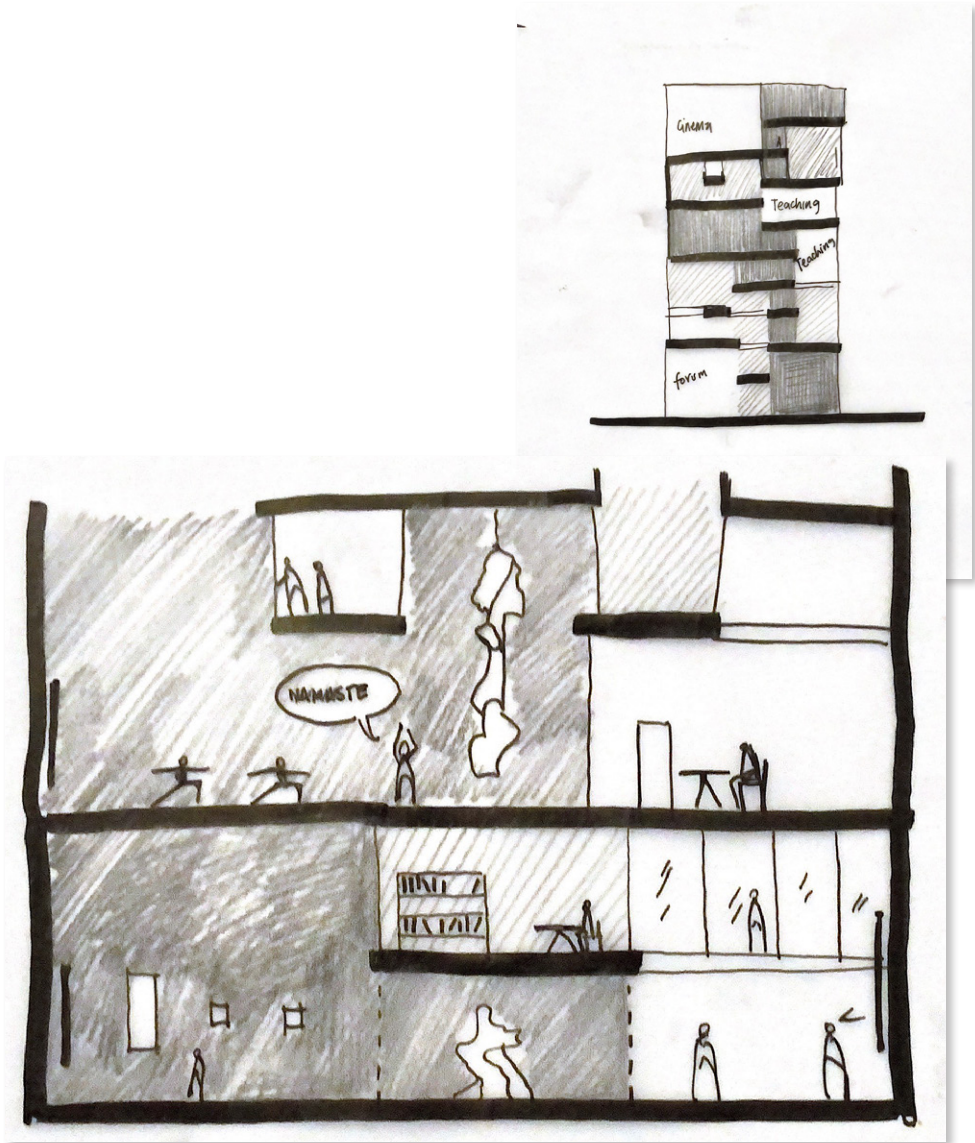
Site Plan 1:500



The idea behind three volumes comes from the principle of adaptability, focusing not only on the present but also on the long-term life of the building. Three volumes allow for easy segmentation of the building if necessary and efficient use of services and installations.



Organizational diagram
for proposed building



Conceptual sketch for the building proposal.

The vertical and continuous space housing the permanent collection becomes an extension of other spaces—a space you pass through to access other areas. It is organized into smaller clusters of stories that stack upon each other.

The institution

What does a contemporary anti museum look like?

The roots of the institution can be traced back to the anti-museum principles established by the ICC, inextricably linking it to the anti-art movement that emerged during the first half of the 20th century. While the term “anti-museum” may suggest a complete rejection of traditional museum qualities, it is essential to recognize that anti art only gains meaning in relation to what was previously considered art, just as the anti-museum finds its significance within the context of what

Was previously deemed a museum. As aptly expressed by Willem Sandberg¹, the inherent nature of anti art is to persist as art, thus rendering the inevitable nature of the anti-museum as its continuation as a museum. In this light, the New MHKA can be viewed as an opposition to the modern museum and its underlying principles, particularly those associated with the concept of the white cube.

At first glance, the minimalistic immaterial interior space of the modern museum are merely devoted to the technology of aesthetics². However this superficial simplicity conceals a complex interplay of economic, social, and cultural dynamics. Questions surrounding race, community, social

outreach, public space, and diversity inevitably find their way into the supposedly neutral white cube. The very premise of inclusion through neutrality, which has characterized the conceptualization of the white cube, is what is primarily challenged by the contemporary gallery and particularly by one rooted in the anti museum. The museum no longer caters primarily to art, it becomes an exploration of what the institution can accomplish in terms of its social agency and its role as a public space

MHKA's approach to art extends well beyond mere curation and preservation; it revolves around the notion of social outreach and the pivotal role it plays within the community. Consequently, the institution has endeavored to enhance accessibility to art through initiatives such as digital open archives, publication of materials, and the provision of free exhibition spaces. However, the current physical space of the museum lacks the necessary architectural flexibility to fully embody their profound aspiration to foster social interaction. This longing for enhanced social engagement is clearly evident in the programmatic demands outlined in the project brief, particularly the request for approximately 4,000 square meters of forum-based spaces.

This section investigates the potential materiality and facade design for the new museum. Taking into consideration how it relates back to the city and how it relates to the identity of the institution.

materiality
and facade



Public facades in Antwerp

During the 19th century, public buildings in Antwerp were constructed as a political gesture to establish the city as an international hub and assert its power. Concurrently, the Flemish Renaissance revival style experienced widespread usage throughout the region, becoming an integral part of the urban fabric's identity and character.

A significant aspect of this strong identity stems from the extensive production and use of bricks in the architectural style. The Flemish bond, in particular, became an iconic symbol for the Flemish region. Over time, styles from the 20th century were introduced, resulting in the city becoming a patchwork of different epochs.

Interestingly, there is now a common approach to expansions or interventions in public buildings. This can be observed in projects such as Zaha Hadid's Port House and Studio Libeskin's proposal for Boerentoren, where a clear division between old and new is implemented, often featuring the use of glass facades.



Above
Antwerp City Hall
Restoration by Bureau
Bouwtechniek, HUB, and
Origin Architecture and
Engineering.



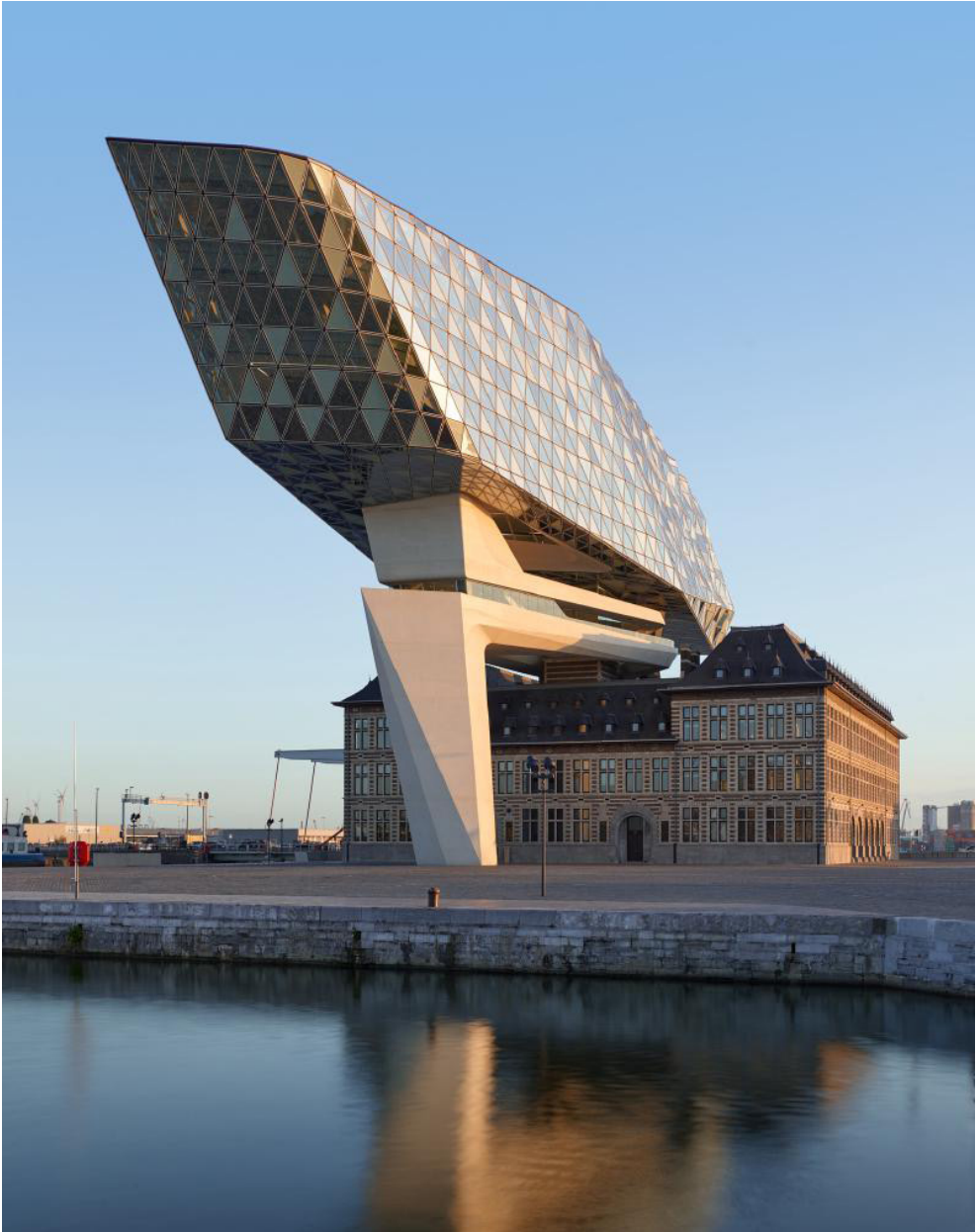
Underneath
Outside photograph
of Antwerp City Hall



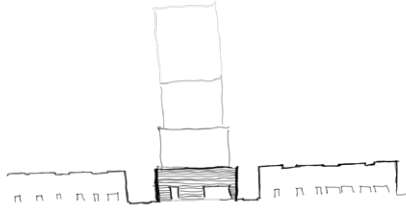
Interior photograph of Antwerp City Hall
Restoration by Bureau Bouwtechniek, HUB,
and Origin Architecture and Engineering.



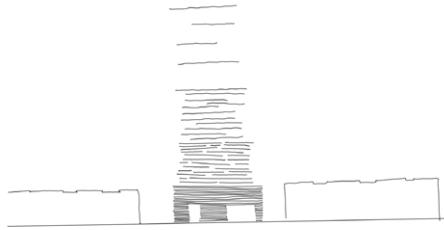
Studio Libeskind
Proposal for Boerentoren
Tower.
Antwerp



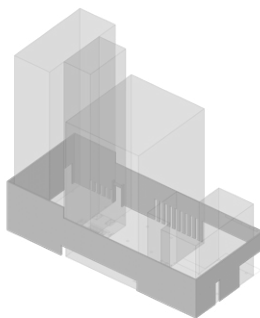
Zaha Hadid Architects
Port House.
Antwerp



Solid plinth that relates to immediate context



Less perceivable detail on the upper volume



Conceived as a skin wrapped around the mass

How do we perceive buildings?

When it comes to high towers, such as the new MHKA, our ability to perceive details on the facade diminishes as we go higher. This suggests to me that the treatment of the first floors should differ from the rest.

A plinth that corresponds to the medieval grid and the historical development of the area, as well as the Flemish revival style, can be implemented. The facade can be punctured to respond to and frame interior activities, connecting the building with the street. On the other hand, the upper body can adopt a more contemporary, minimalistic approach, enclosed in its design.

Buildings from the 19th century have often been adapted and modified in cities, and the distinctive character of their facades has remained visible throughout the years. As part of a small documentation, some photographs have been taken to showcase these types of interventions.

Where the walls meet
the ground.



Personal Photograph



Personal Photograph



Personal Photograph



Personal Photograph



Personal Photograph



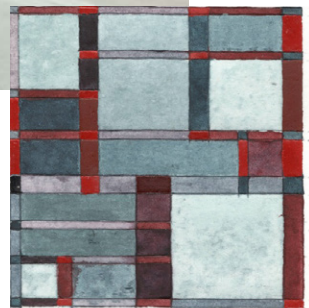
Personal Photograph

Photographs of Interstellar
Offices by Sanjay Puri.
Use of geometry for sun
protection and shading

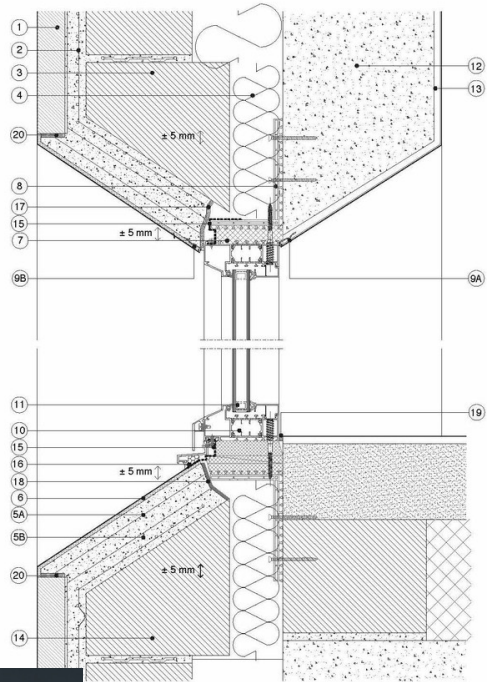




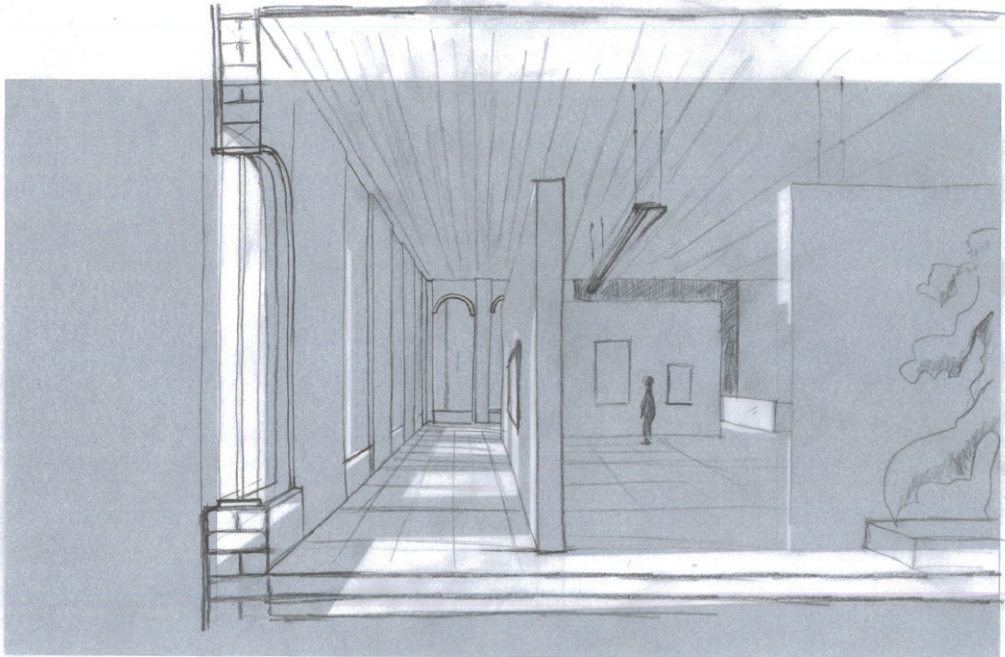
Photograph of Francesca Torzo's Museum in Haselt. Blending into the context in a simple abstract manner, hiding complexity inside.



- | | | |
|----|--|----------------|
| 1 | diamond-shaped brick | 130x200x37 mm |
| 2 | Knauf Omnicol reinforced bonding layer | 19+8+3 mm |
| 3 | reinforced lintel in perforated brick+bastard mortar (reinforcement Bekaert) | 190x10 mm |
| 4 | rockwool insulation sliding layer | 70-120 mm |
| 5A | bastard mortar | 20x15 mm |
| 5B | armed bastard mortar (reinforcement Bekaert) | 25 mm |
| 6 | pigmented plaster in three layers | 5 mm |
| 7 | Clearpag air seal | |
| 8 | plastic frames type EMW(calculation by C&S) | 97 x 147 mm |
| 9A | stopinox 6 textured finishing inside RAL 9010 | |
| 9B | stopinox 6 textured finishing outside RAL 3007 | |
| 10 | aluminium frame Reynars SL 38 with thermal cut finishing inside RAL 9010 finishing outsideRAL 3007 | |
| 11 | extra clear glass | |
| 12 | concrete construction wall | 200 mm |
| 13 | gips plaster + cross brushed white lime | 8+2 mm |
| 14 | perforated armed brick + bastard mortar | 138x138x290 mm |
| 15 | EPDM waterproof layer | 1 mm |
| 16 | sealant joint | |
| 17 | sliding tape + sealant joint | |
| 18 | sliding tape | |
| 19 | silicon joint "ton sur ton" | |
| 20 | foam elastic joint | |



Photograph of Francesca Torzo's Museum's window detail in Haselt. Subtle geometry that materializes through shadow.

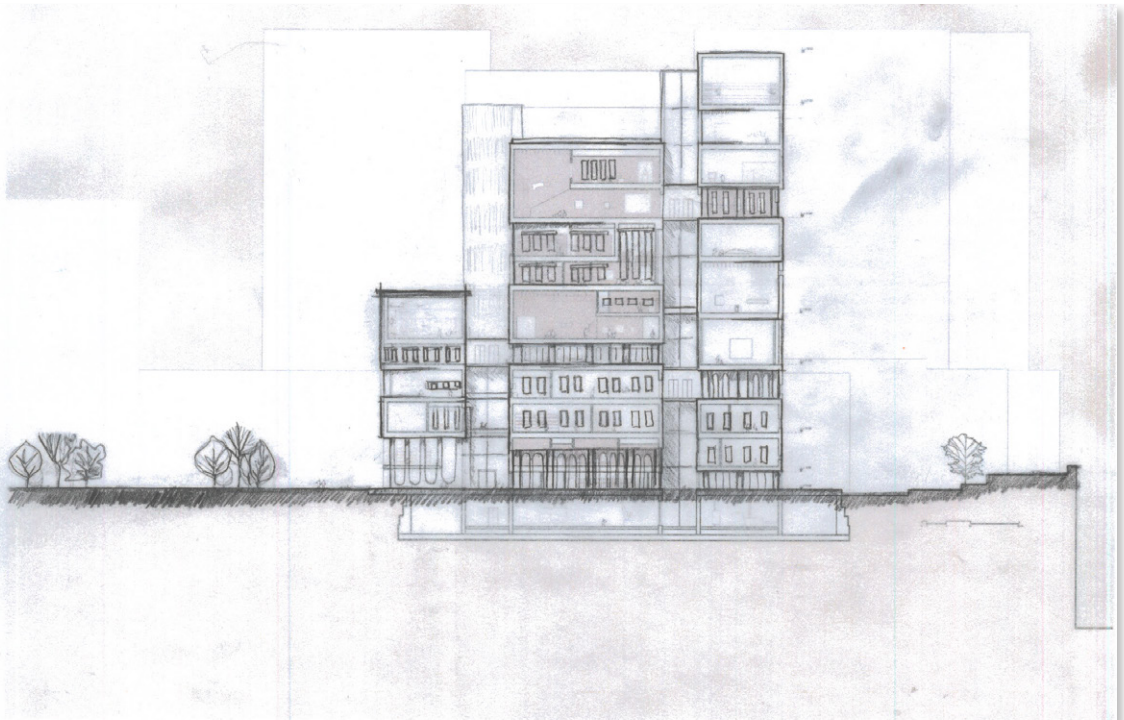


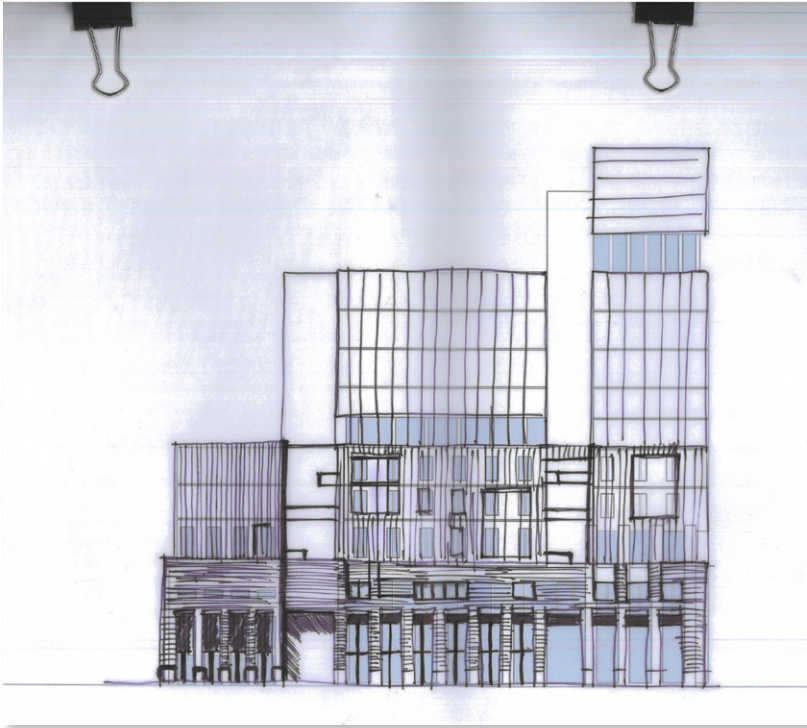
The use of daylight in exhibition spaces requires careful consideration and material technology to avoid damaging the art. What if you could perceive the change in daylight inside the exhibition spaces?

Facade studies

Bridging scale

A series of sketches was used as a means to investigate the facade and clarify personal opinions. The main conclusion drawn from this exercise was the interest in articulating the scale between horizontal and vertical elements. The objective became finding a balance between the grand scale of the tower, which engages in a dialogue with the city skyline, and the low-rise, densely packed immediate context of the neighborhood.

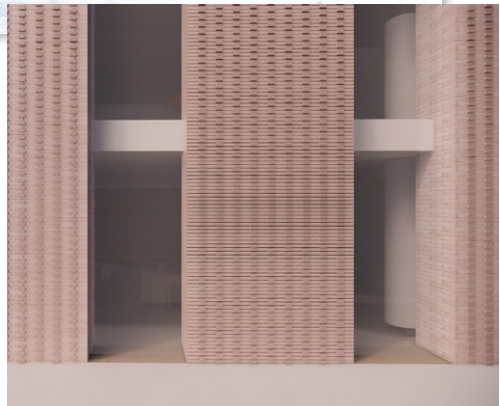




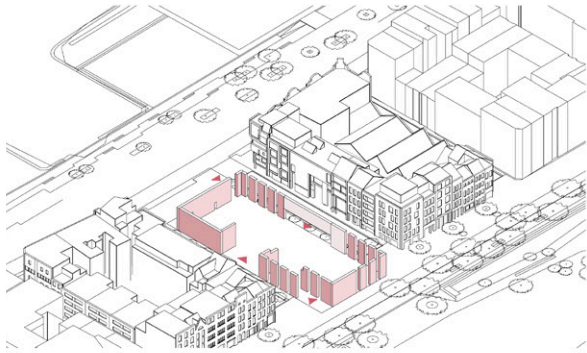
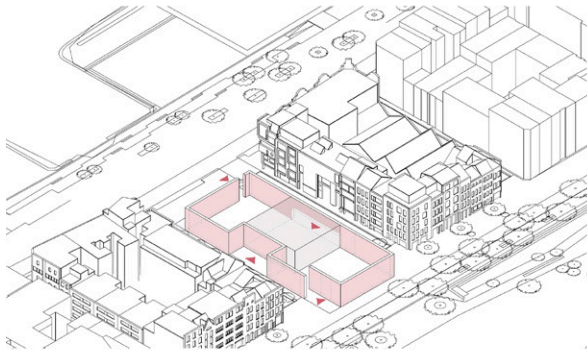
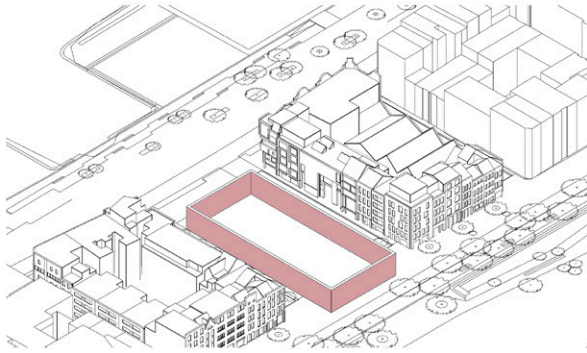
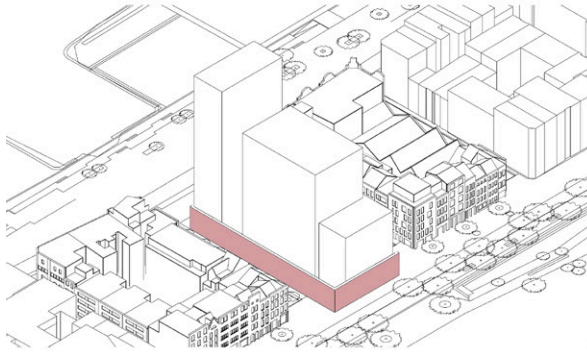


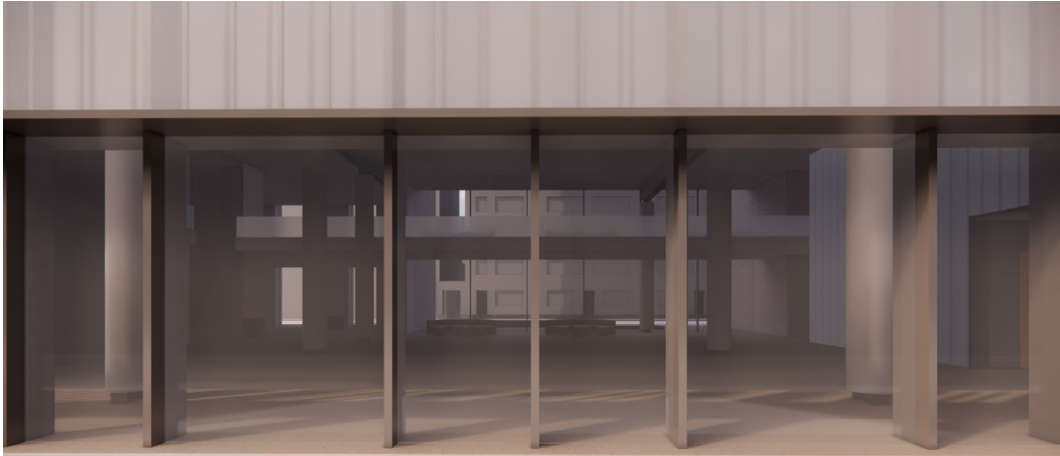
Above
Exploration sketch of the building showing a plinth that wraps around the first floors.

Underneath
Render exploring the tactile characteristic of the plinth using brick and a Flemish bond.

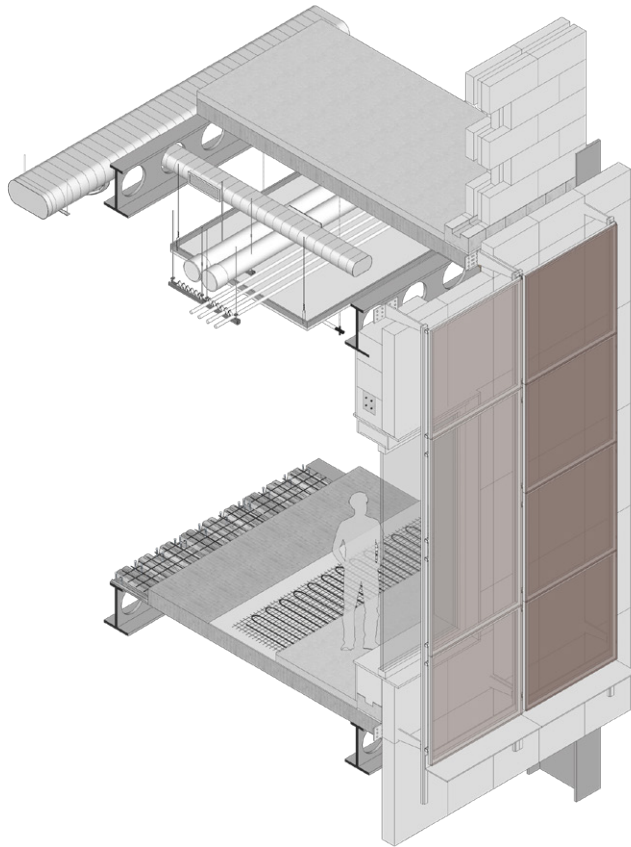


The key instrument for articulating the two scales is resolved through a plinth. This skin-like element distinguishes itself from the upper volumes in terms of materiality and detail. The base of the building is conceived in brick, serving as a reference to the Flemish relationship with the material. It is selectively perforated in certain sections to establish a direct relationship with the street and create entrance points to the building.

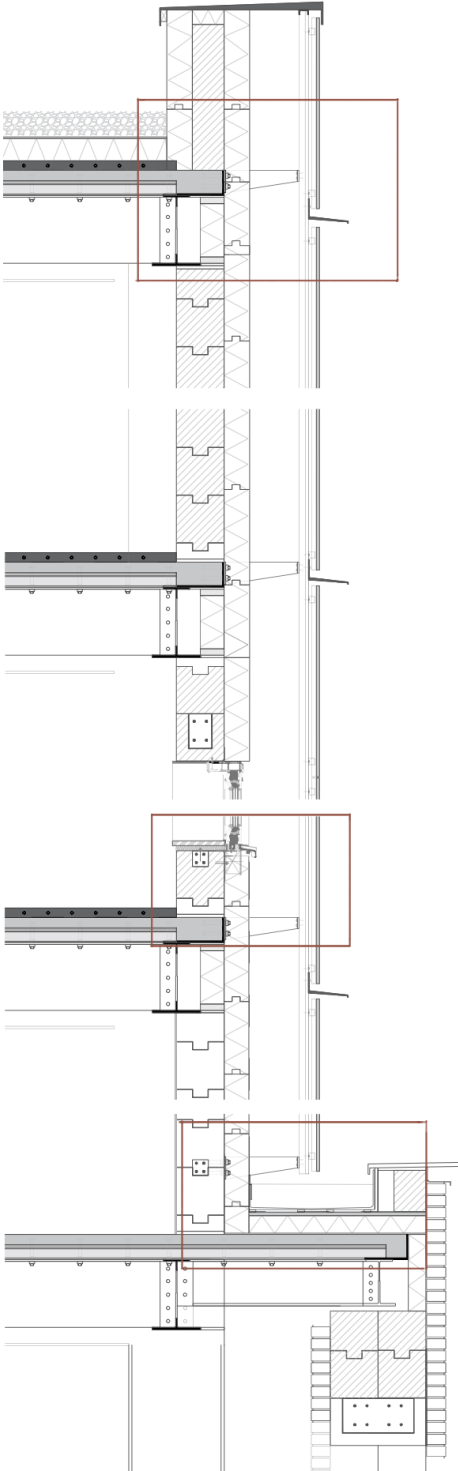




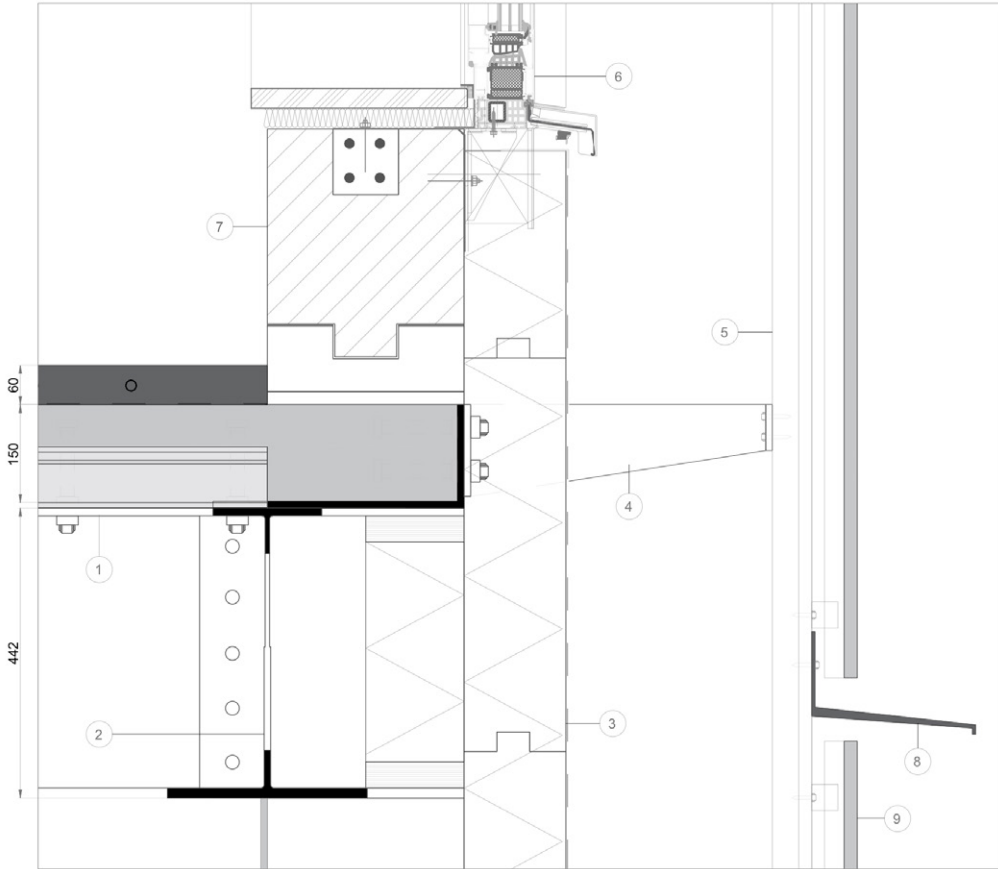
Photograph of P3 model



Axonometry of upper volumes
construction build up.

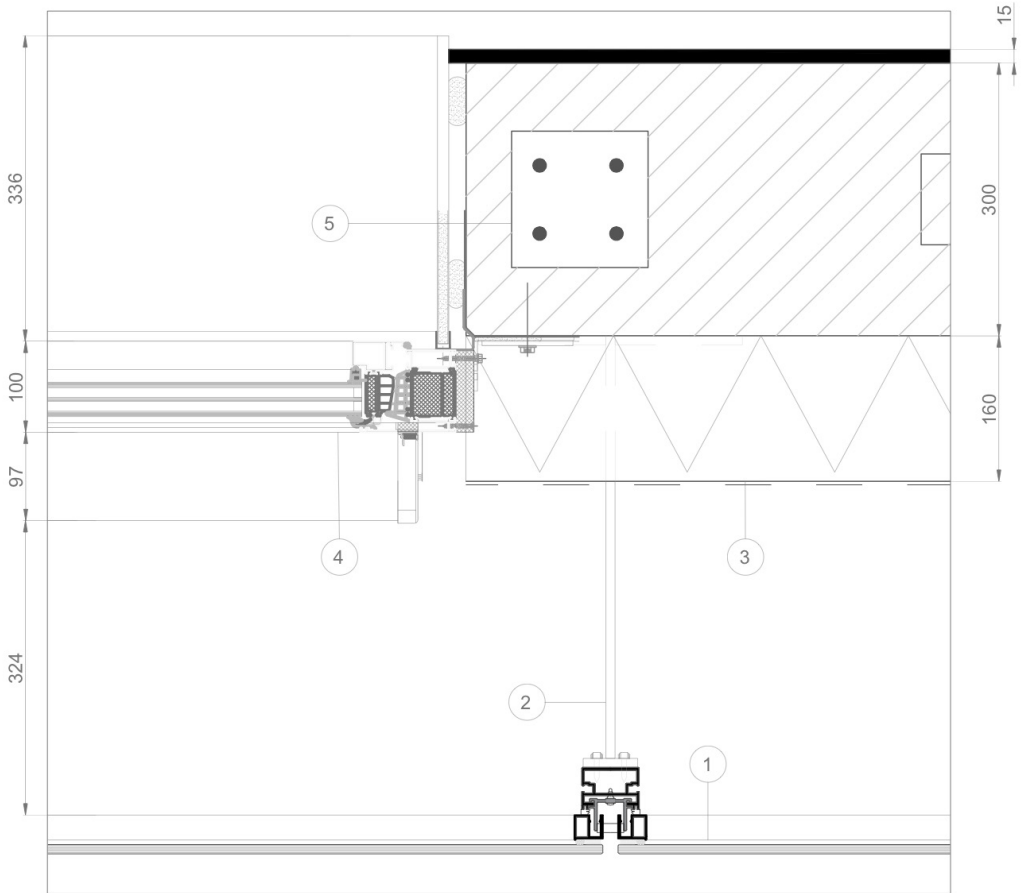


Vertical Facade Detail 1:20



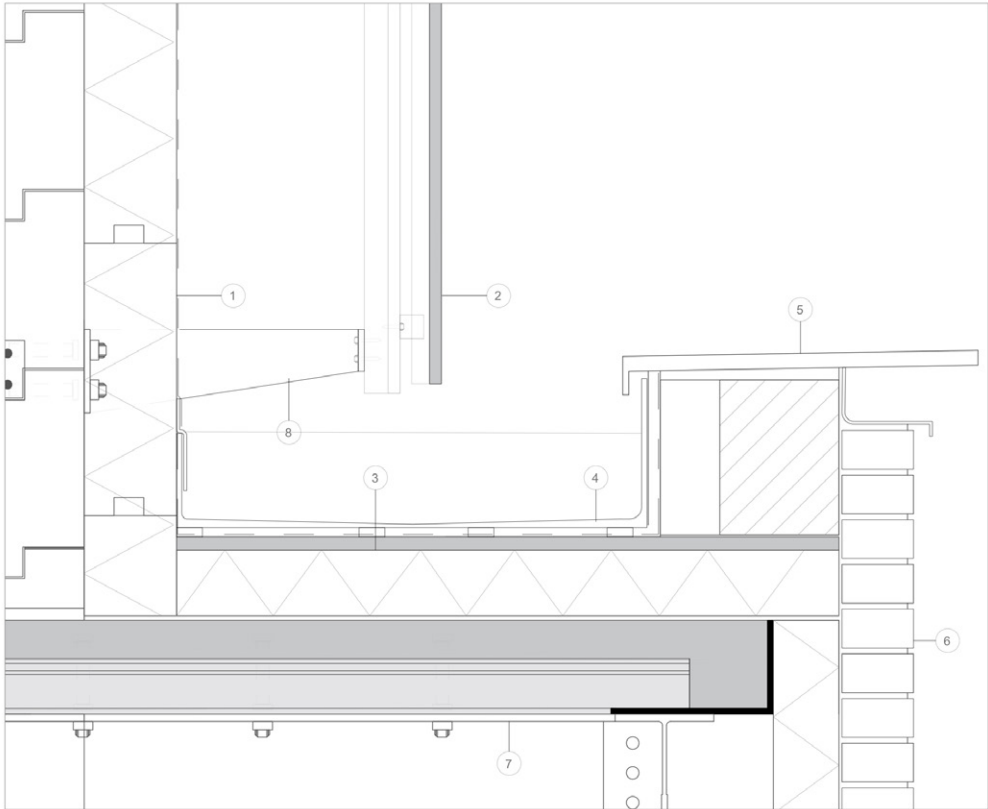
Vertical Facade Detail 1:5

1. composite floor slab
steel deck 8mm
in situ concrete 150mm
underfloor membrane
poured polished concrete with
integrated floor heating 60mm
2. structural cellular beam with 300mm
web openings.
3. weatherproof membrane
woodfiber insulation 160mm
4. steel support plate 15 mm
5. aluminium cladding profile 61mm
6. Schuco AWS 90+ window system
7. Hempblock masonry wall
water repellant mortar 20mm
concrete starter block
polythene damp course
hempblock LB 300 S 6000 x 300
in situ concrete reinforcement for
windows
8. aluminium trim profile
9. glass 15mm
aluminium frame 300 mm profile



Vertical Facade Detail 1:5

1. glass 15mm
2. aluminium frame 300 mm profile
3. steel support plate 15 mm
4. aluminium vertical profile 61mm
5. weather proof membrane
6. woodfiber insulation 160 mm
7. moisture barrier
8. hempblock masonry 300 mm
9. 160mm woodfiber thermo insulation
10. Schuco AWS 90+ window system
11. in situ concrete reinforced column 150 x 150mm

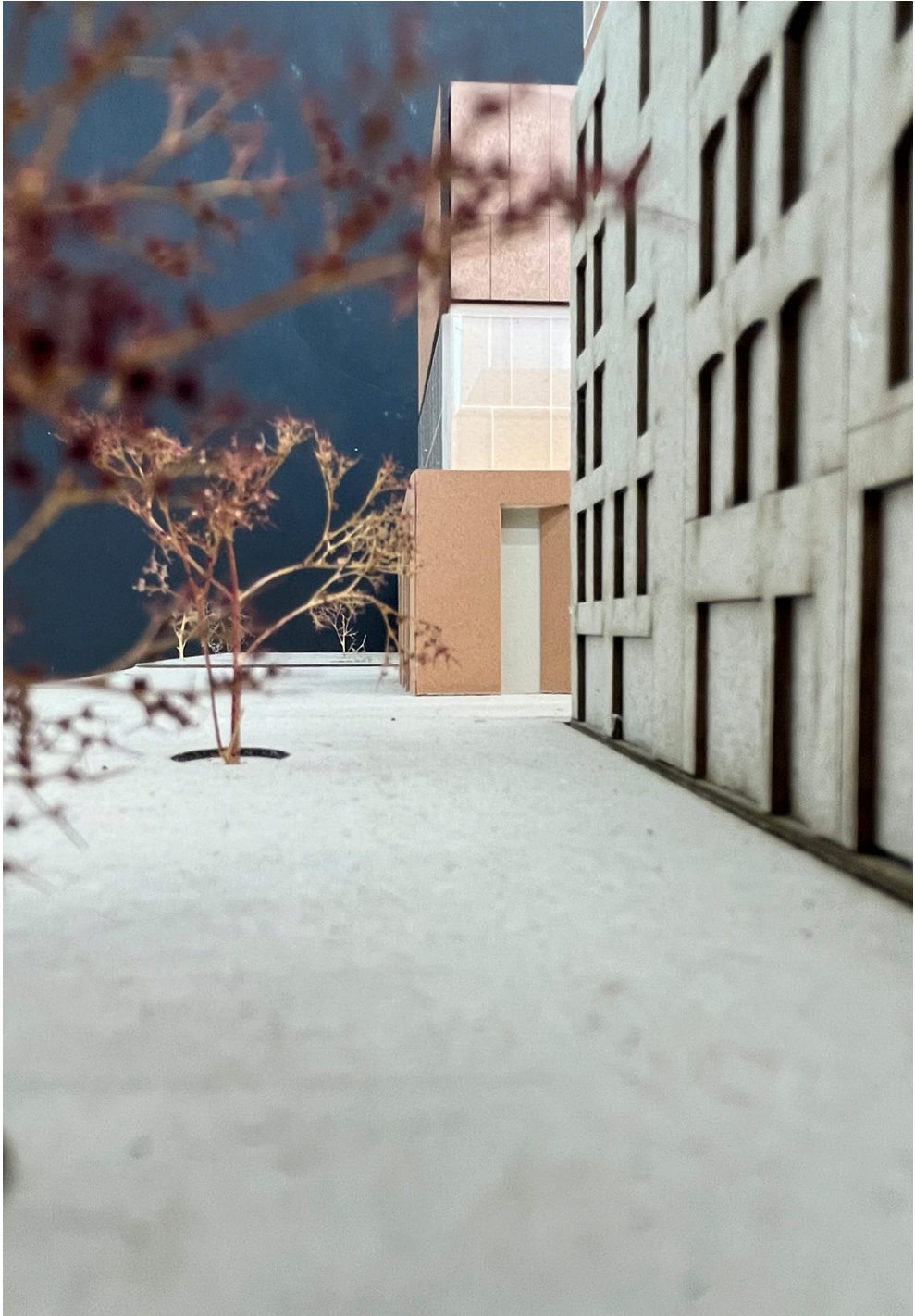


Horizontal Facade Detail 1:5

1. weatherproof membrane
woodfiber insulation 160mm
hempblock LB 300mm
2. glass 15mm
aluminium frame 300 mm
profile
aluminium cladding profile
61mm
3. waterproof mortar 20mm
weather proof membrane
4. aluminium rain collector
5. aluminium trim
6. Kolumba brick cladding
weather proof membrane
woodfiber insulation 160mm
7. composite floor slab
steel deck 8mm
in situ concrete 150mm
underfloor membrane
poured polished concrete with
integrated floor heating 60mm
8. steel support plate 15 mm



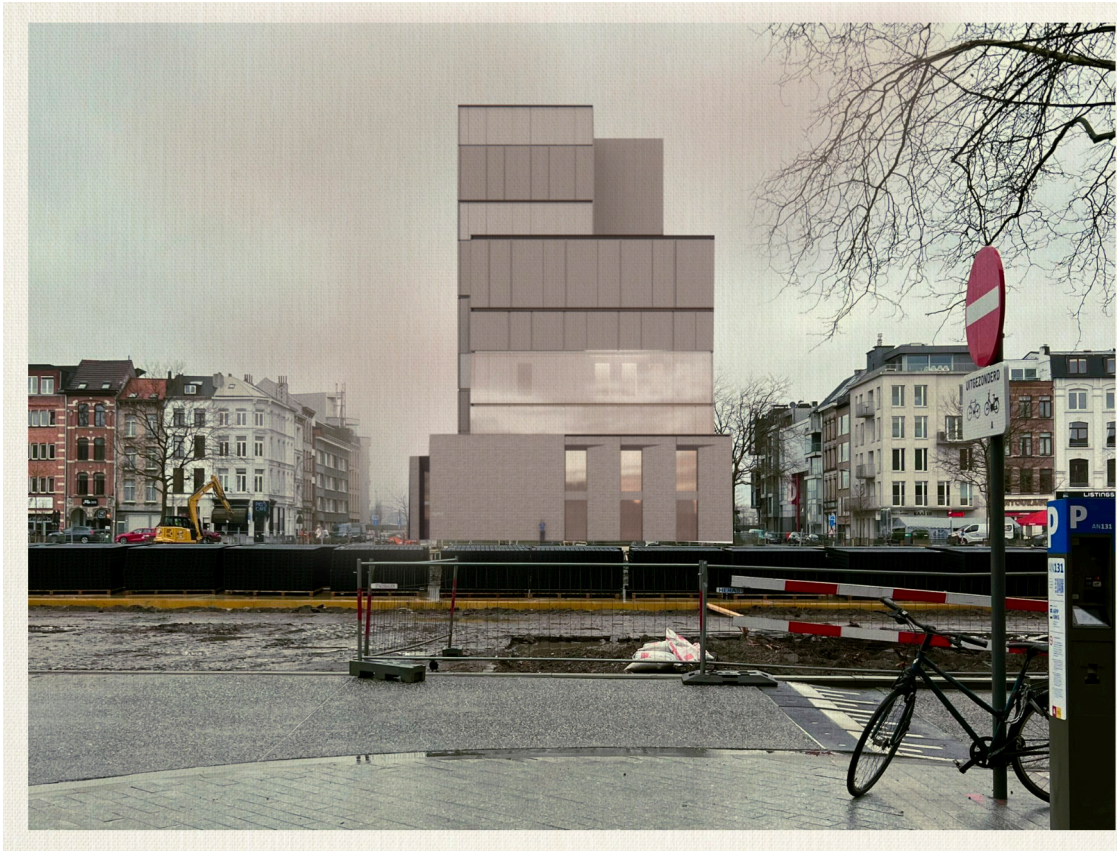
Photograph of P4 model



Photograph of P4 model



Photograph of P4 model



Render of facade from
the park side

This section investigates the forum and its relationship to the city as well as its reflection of the institution's standpoint to art collection.

Brief V
public
Forum



The VMHK and the forum

What do you go to a museum for?

Research into the ideology of the forum space within a museum was conducted through the physical recreation of eight precedent studies. Specifically, our group focused on reproducing the forum space from the 2013 FRAC in Dunkirk. This museum serves as an exemplar for merging the essential characteristics of the white cube for art display with a more public and industrial space, establishing an intriguing relationship with the city through the preservation and adaptability of the former boat warehouse. The existing structure provides a large open space that is not only part of the museum but also integrates with the public spaces of the city. It accommodates art installations and public events, and as such, it can be physically connected to or separated from the gallery spaces while maintaining visual continuity. The forum space within this heritage structure can be seen as a replication of its concept. With its double height and visual connection to the upper levels, it embodies the qualities that a contemporary art museum should strive for: flexibility, accessibility, and opportunities for the public to engage with art in a manner distinct from the white cube ideology.

Likewise, the proposed forum space for the VMHK (Virtual Museum of Contemporary Art) aims to serve as both an area for art display and social interaction. Positioned on the ground floor, the main forum space establishes a strong connection to the surrounding streets of the site. It is a double-height area that features a reading room with publications from MHKA (Museum of Contemporary Art Antwerp) and a café, alongside a dedicated room for art display in its vicinity. This space is envisioned as an extension of the exhibition areas, offering flexibility to host events, public functions, and



FRAC's Forum Space
By Lacaton & Vassal
Dunkirk

large-scale art installations. Additionally, the project challenges the distinct separation suggested by the brief between the collection, exhibition, and forum. Instead, it conceives the collection as an integral element of the forum and vice versa.

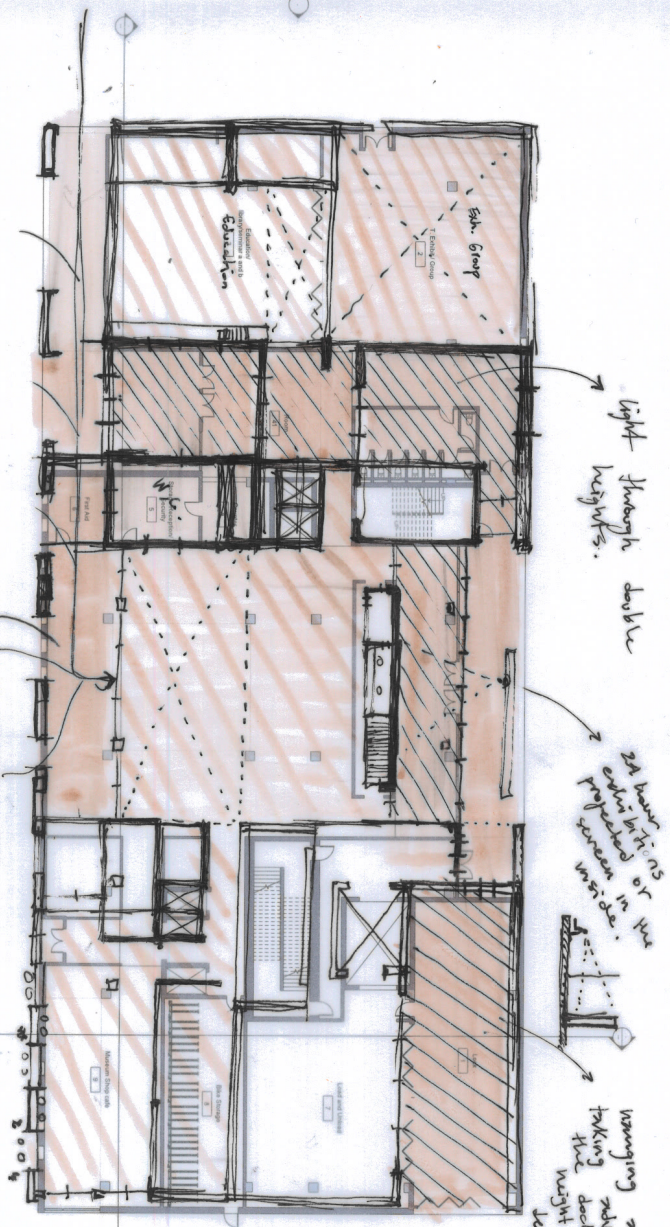
Consequently, the permanent collection is made accessible and free within the new building, playing a pivotal role in visitors' vertical movement. It becomes a destination in itself or a space one can pass through while en route to other public areas such as the library, café, or temporary exhibitions. This approach aims to align with MHKA's curatorial philosophy while simultaneously reinforcing the significance of the Flemish museum's collection throughout the entirety of the building.

The visitors' experience is intricately tied to the movement through the building, as the design embraces a carefully balanced interplay of axiality and obliqueness. This deliberate combination engenders a captivating tension between the inclination to dwell within a particular space and the alluring invitation to continue exploring the building's unfolding possibilities. It is within this narrative that a harmonious fusion of domestic scale and materiality intertwines with a raw industriality, resulting in an environment that is both inviting and stimulating.

The incorporation of flexible systems for art display further enhances the dynamic nature of the museum. Notably, the exploration of a gallery space by the esteemed artist Marlene Dumas has contributed to the development of one such system. This integration of innovative display mechanisms creates an environment that not only accommodates the evolving needs of the artworks but also establishes an engaging and transformative encounter for the visitors.

GROUND FLOOR

The entrance to the museum working like a sort of arcade by itself, as a threshold for the building.



light through double

24 hour... or the... in the... inside.

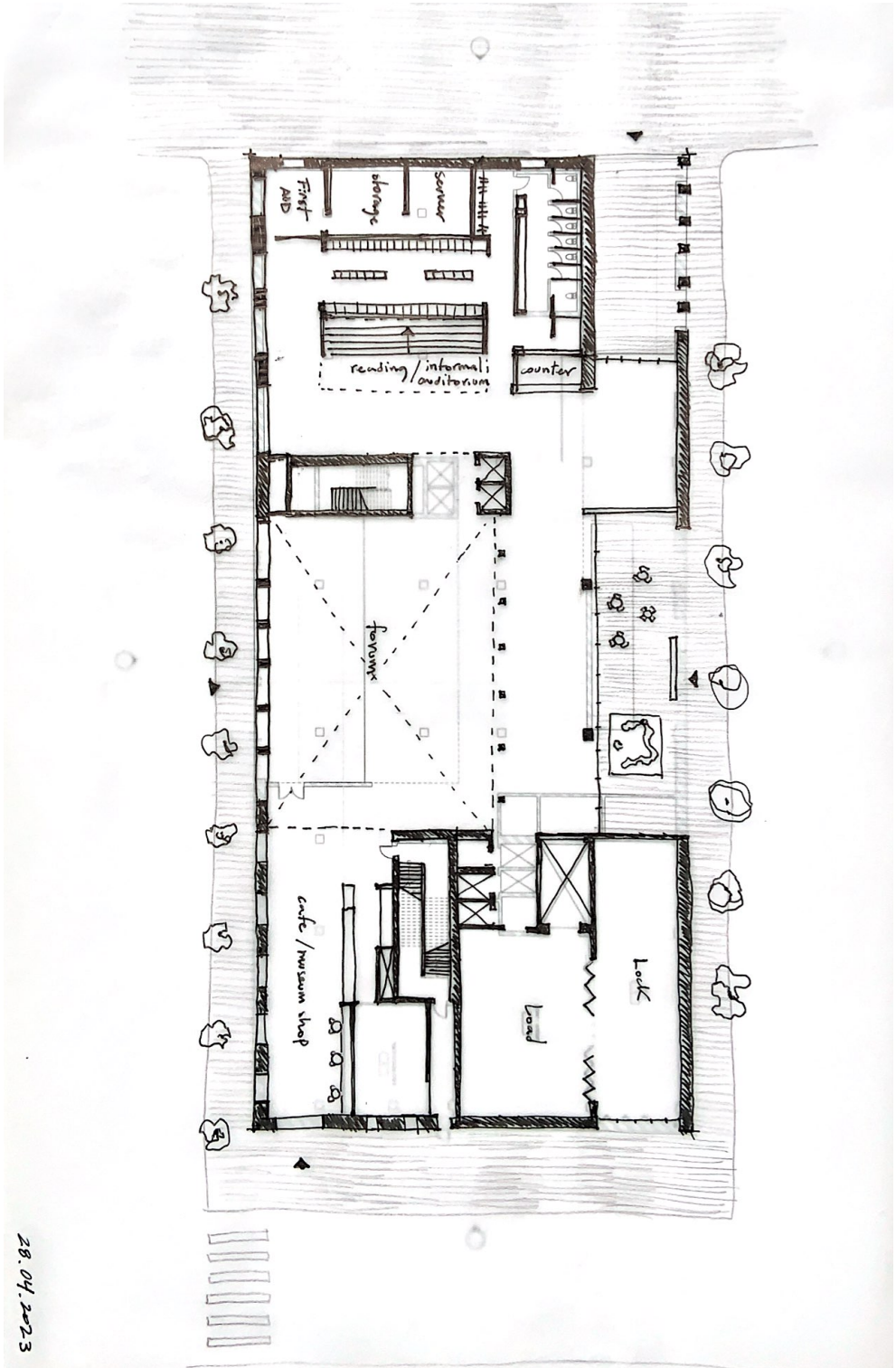
varying art taking advantage of the height, to turn a dead space into exhibition.



* find examples in the modern collection, but also could be a place for new artist, or things beside art.

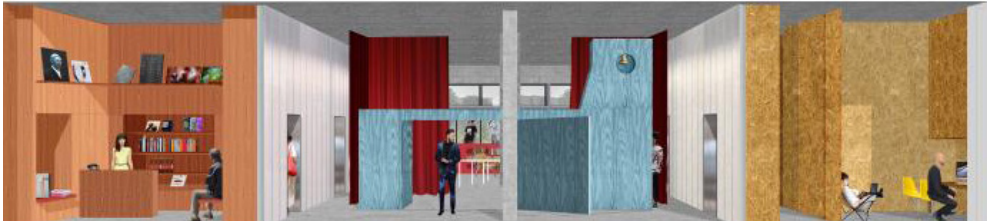
* show different configurations of the floorplan.

Personal working sketch of the building's Ground Floor

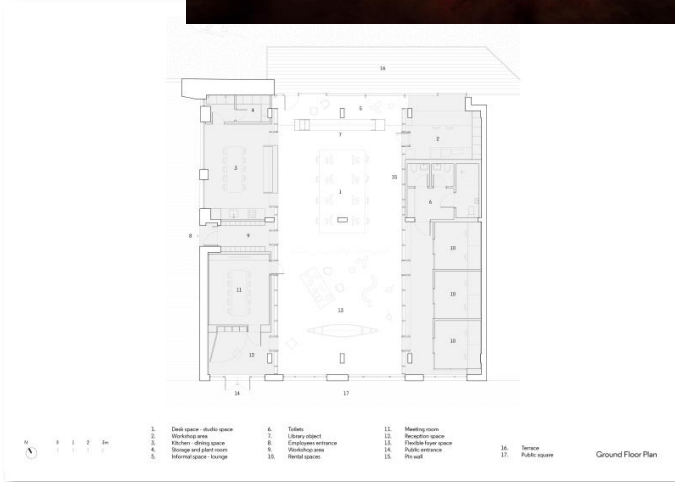


28.04.2023

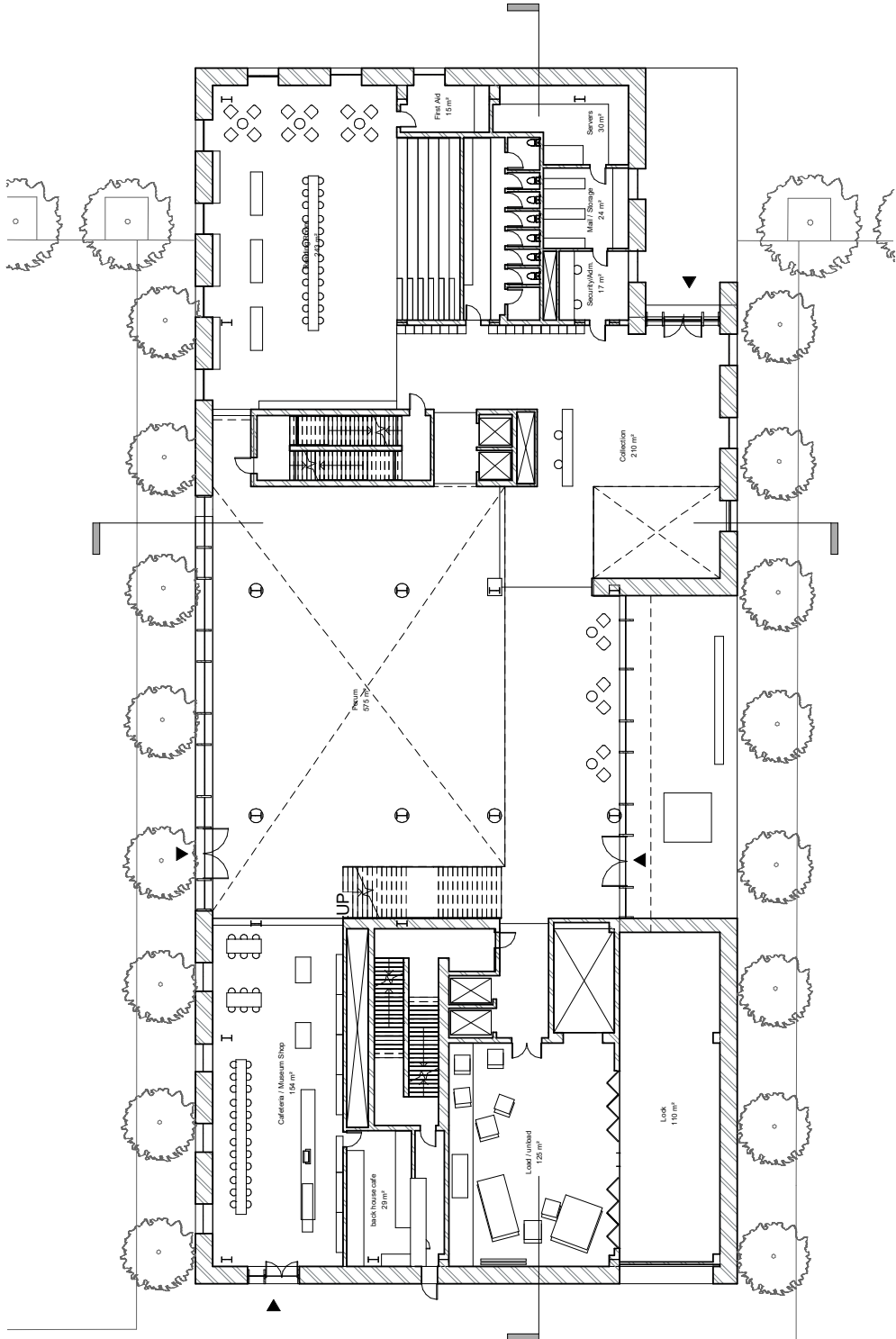
Personal working sketch of the building's Ground Floor



Images of
Teatum + Teatum
Testone Factory
Sheffield, UK



Half of the square footage on the project is left unprogrammed. The project places the serviced spaces on the east and west wings and leaves the center as a flexible blank canvas where a multitude of things can be arranged. The multitude of possibilities encourages speculation and stimulates creativity.



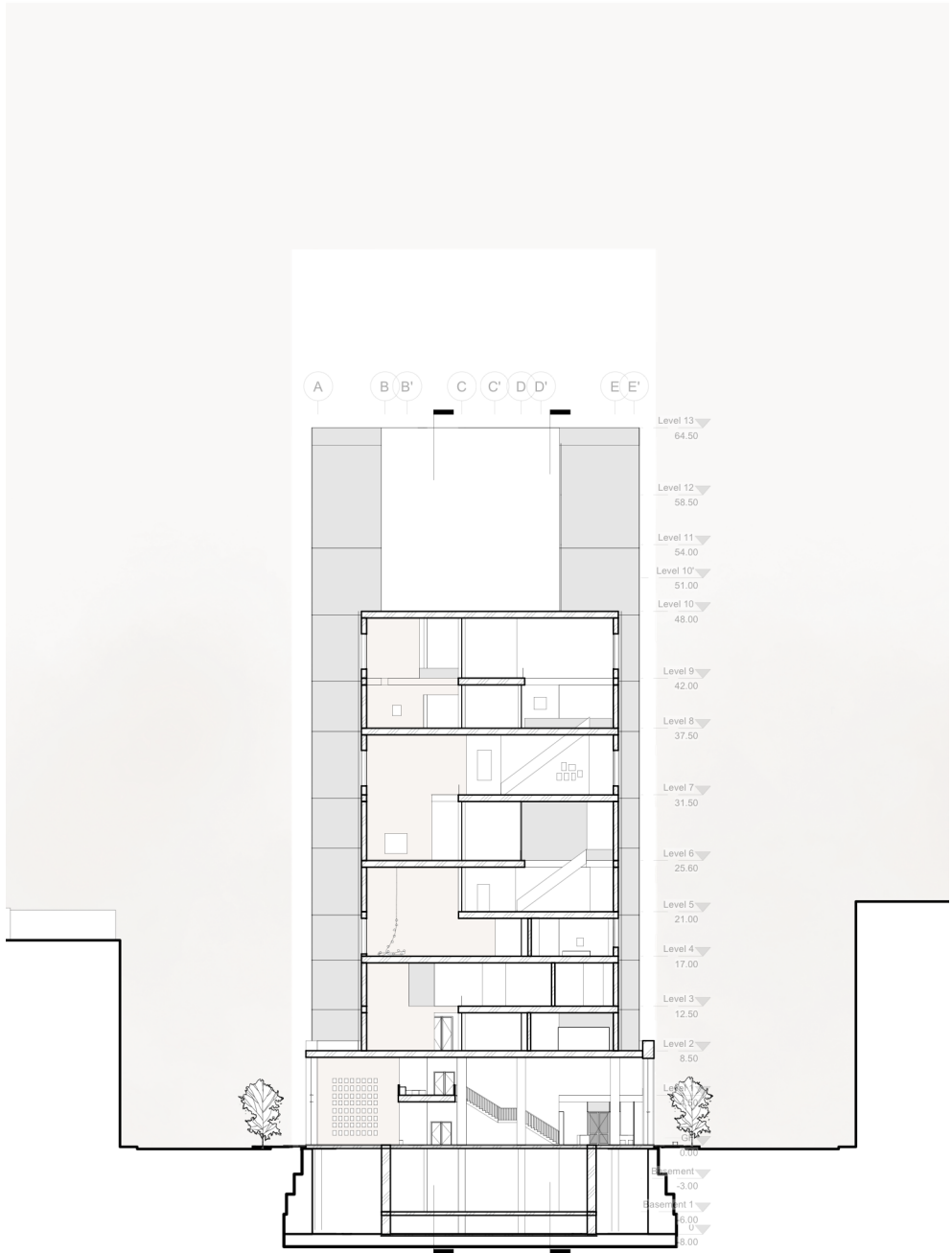
Proposed Ground Floor



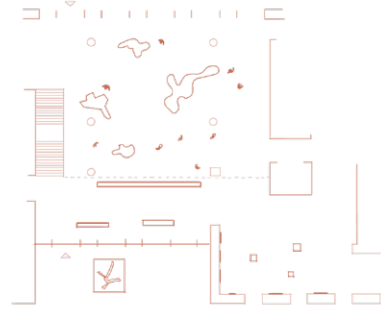
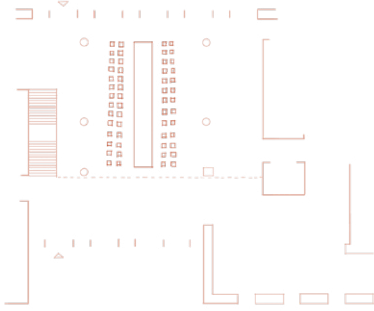
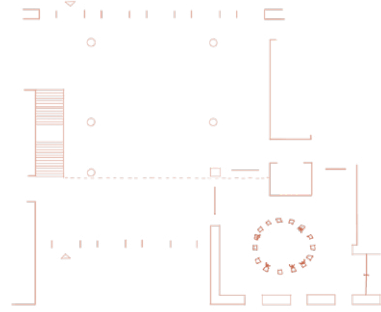
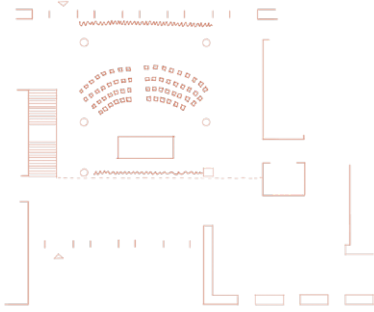
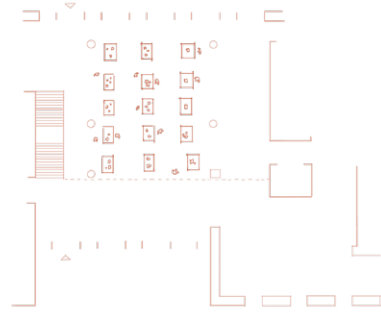
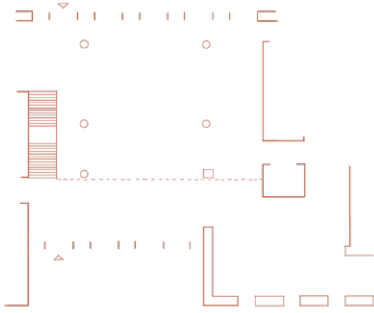
Scapelab
Cukrarna Gallery
Slovenia



The inside of the former sugar refinery was emptied out and the facade was kept as an enclosure. This skin disguises the open spaces and double heights inside behind a traditional gridded openings.



Proposed Transversal Section

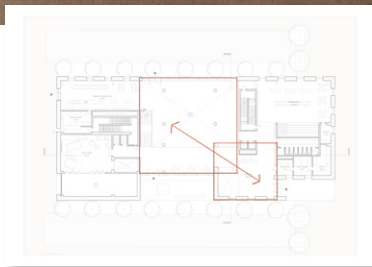


Flexibility of uses for
different events



Above
Render of interior perspective of
entrance to the building.

Underneath
Diagram of relationship between
entrance to the building and Forum.





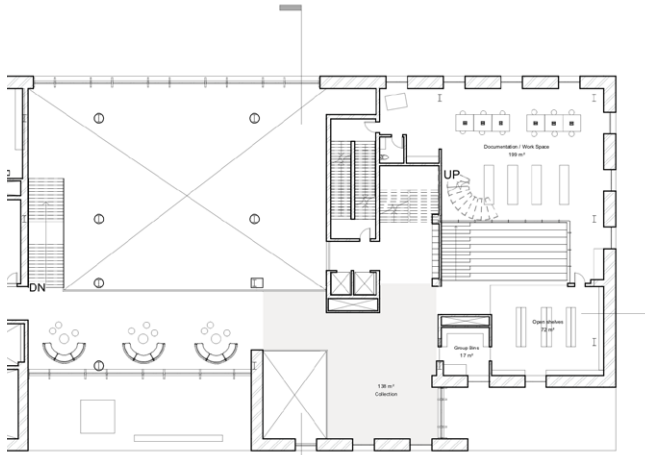
Interior view of the Forum space
looking towards the entrance space.



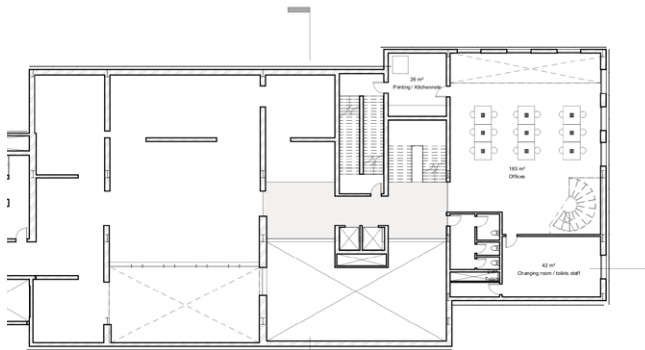
Photograph of Round room in current MHKA inside the old silo.

Presence of the institution and vertical movement

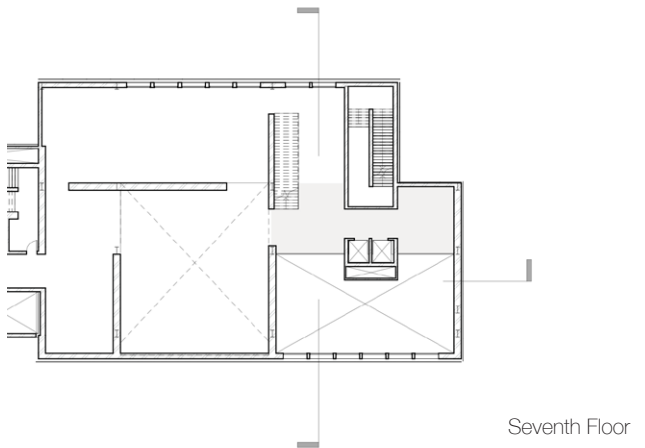
Part of the requirements in the brief was the recreation of the round room in MHKA. However, instead of taking a literal approach, this statement reflects the desire to establish a strong presence within the building. It indicates the institution's aspiration to be recognized and emphasizes the importance of architectural quality. In response to this, the first space upon entering the building through the main door towards the park is proposed as an exhibition space, aiming to create a welcoming and accessible environment. This space then becomes a vertically recognizable area within the building, facilitated by the use of double heights and vertical circulation, which aids in navigating such a large structure.



First Floor



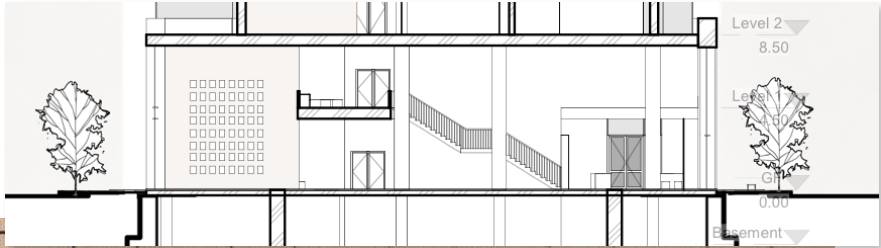
Third Floor



Seventh Floor

Space Present in Every
Floor for orienting the visitor

Fragment of transversal section showing the entrance and the forum



Render of exterior view.
Forum face and outdoor
patio to the south,



Renders exploring the opening to the street. Connection between outside and the Forum



Interior view of the Forum space



Interior view of the Forum space

This section delves into the exploration of gallery spaces within the new building, focusing on the concepts of domesticity and their relationship to materiality.

gallery
spaces



Gallery Spaces

The current MHKA, housed in an old silo, exhibits an interior atmosphere reminiscent of the white cube museum, characterized by a sense of immateriality and almost blandness. This poses a challenge for curators and the museum to accommodate the diverse nature of contemporary art, resulting in a monotonous experience for visitors.

As expressed in the brief, one of the primary motivations for constructing a new building is the lack of a cohesive framework within the current interior. Art objects appear to float amidst a sea of neutral surfaces, hindering the overall enjoyment of the experience. In response, the project aims to create spaces that exhibit art with a distinct identity and materiality, providing an opportunity for flexible programming and enhancing the overall engagement of visitors.



Photograph of gallery spaces in current MHKA.



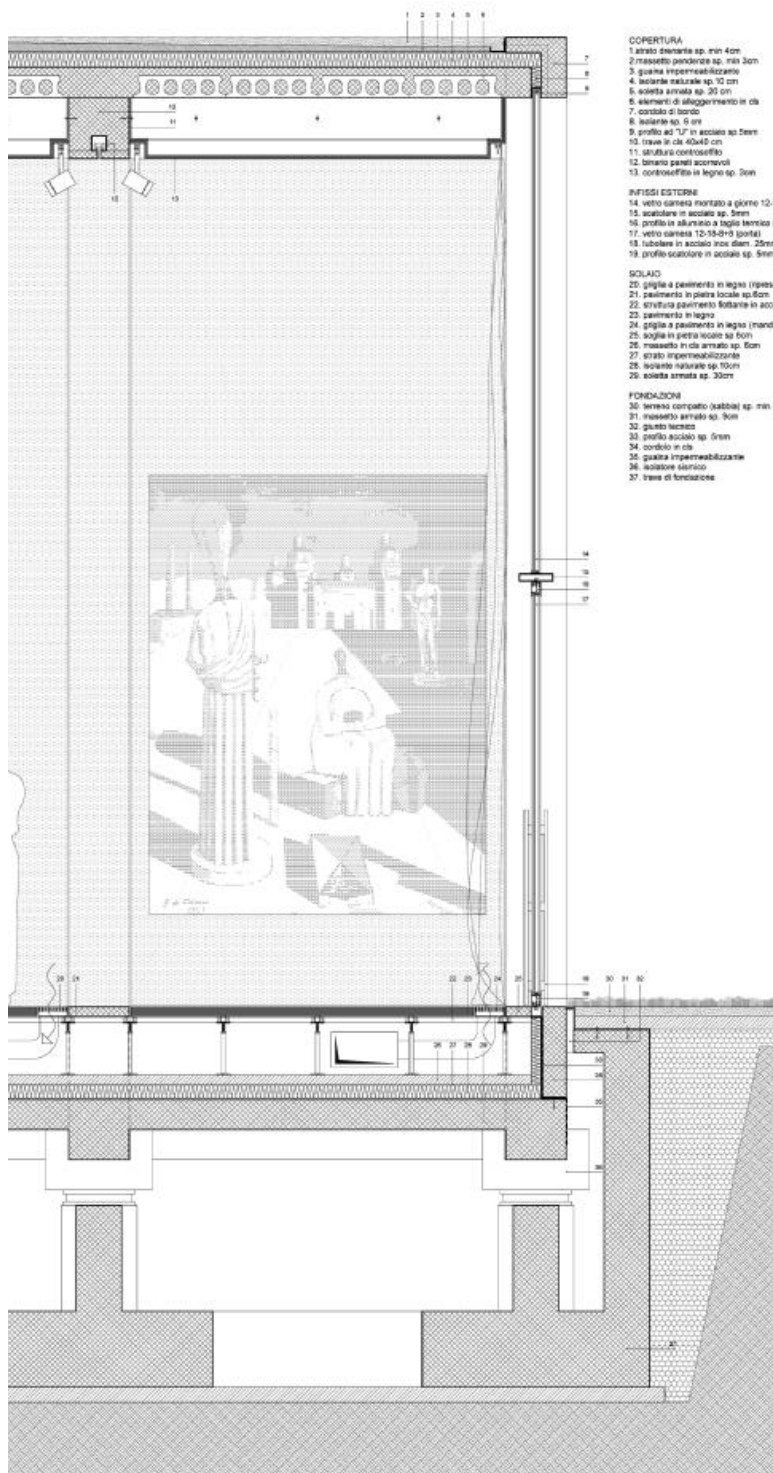
Collage of interior space atmosphere presented at P2.

At the moment of the P2, this image represented the envisioned atmosphere for the building—a space characterized by material identity and warmth conveyed through the tones of those materials. Furthermore, the proposed ceiling system for Marlene Dumas is integrated as a means to accommodate the ever-changing needs of the museum. This approach has been recently explored in other projects, such as the expansion proposal for Palazzo dei Diamanti Modern, where the ceiling facilitates the movement and arrangement of temporary walls within an open pavilion.



The project for the expansion of the Palazzo dei Diamanti Modern Art Gallery. Proposal by 3TI Progetti Italia Ingegneria Integrata SPA. Ferrara, Italy





- COPERTURA**
- 1. arredo fienante sp. min 4cm
 - 2. massetto pendente sp. min 3cm
 - 3. guaina impermeabilizzante
 - 4. isolante esterne sp. 10 cm
 - 5. soletta armata sp. 30 cm
 - 6. elementi di alloggiamento in c.a.
 - 7. cordolo di bordo
 - 8. isolante sp. 5 cm
 - 9. profilo ad "L" in acciaio sp. 5mm
 - 10. trave in c.a. 40x45 cm
 - 11. struttura controsoffitto
 - 12. tiranti panneli acustici
 - 13. controsoffitto in legno sp. 2cm
- INFISSI ESTERNE**
- 14. vetro camera montato a giorno 12-1
 - 15. scottolare in acciaio sp. 5mm
 - 16. profilo in alluminio a taglio termico ()
 - 17. vetro camera 12-18-2+3 (spinta)
 - 18. lubrificatore in acciaio inox diam. 20mm
 - 19. profilo scottolare in acciaio sp. 5mm
- SOLAIO**
- 20. pignoli a pavimento in legno (regata)
 - 21. pavimento in pietra locale sp. 6cm
 - 22. strivitura pavimento: fibranite in acci
 - 23. pavimento in legno
 - 24. pignoli a pavimento in legno (manto)
 - 25. sigilla in pietra isolata sp. 5cm
 - 26. massetto in c.a. armato sp. 6cm
 - 27. strato impermeabilizzante
 - 28. isolante isolante sp. 10cm
 - 29. soletta armata sp. 30cm
- FONDAZIONI**
- 30. terreno compatto (sabbia) sp. min 1
 - 31. massetto armato sp. 3cm
 - 32. giunto lacnico
 - 33. profilo acciaio sp. 5mm
 - 34. cordolo in c.a.
 - 35. guaina impermeabilizzante
 - 36. isolatore sismico
 - 37. trave di fondazione

Construction Detail for The project for the expansion of the Palazzo dei Diamanti Modern Art Gallery. Proposal by 3TI Progetti Italia Ingegneria Integrata SPA. Ferrara, Italy



Picture of Model for Mariene Dumas showing the walls attached to the beams.

When examining spaces at a closer scale and discussing the treatment of individual houses within the building, the question arises of how to represent this individuality, if any, through architectural language. David Chipperfield discusses the use of materials and small design elements that can be employed to create or emphasize certain effects. For instance, in his Miyake store, he mentions the use of a stone floor that, as a flat surface alone, does not convey the feeling of stone. To emphasize the stone as a weight rather than just a surface, he incorporates a small moment of stone stairs in the room (which could be a reference to Scarpa and his transformative use of traditional materials).

In the context of my project, what architectural languages then give identity to the individual spaces, and what are they related to? Are these houses differentiated based on function, size, or use?

The focus is to create an atmosphere with a strong material presence that does not overpower the art. Materials such as wooden floors, wooden skirt boards, and furniture are used to evoke a sense of domesticity. This is complemented by clay-plastered walls, and an emphasis on the flexible floorplan is achieved by detaching the walls from the columns in specific areas. The ceiling reintroduces the same system as the proposed space for Marlene Dumas, allowing for flexibility and accommodating different uses within the galleries.



Interior photography
of Miyake Store by
Chipperfield



Render of interior view. Forum face and entrance to elevator,



Render of interior view.
Entrance to gallery spaces
and entrance to elevator on
sixth floor.



Render of interior view.
Entrance to gallery spaces
and entrance to elevator on
sixth floor.



Render of interior view.
Entrance to gallery spaces
and entrance to elevator on
sixth floor.



Render of interior view.
Entrance to gallery spaces.



Render of interior view.
Entrance to gallery spaces.



Render of interior view.
Entrance to gallery spaces.



Render of interior view.
Entrance to gallery spaces.



Render of interior view.
Entrance to gallery spaces.



Render of interior view.
Entrance to gallery spaces.

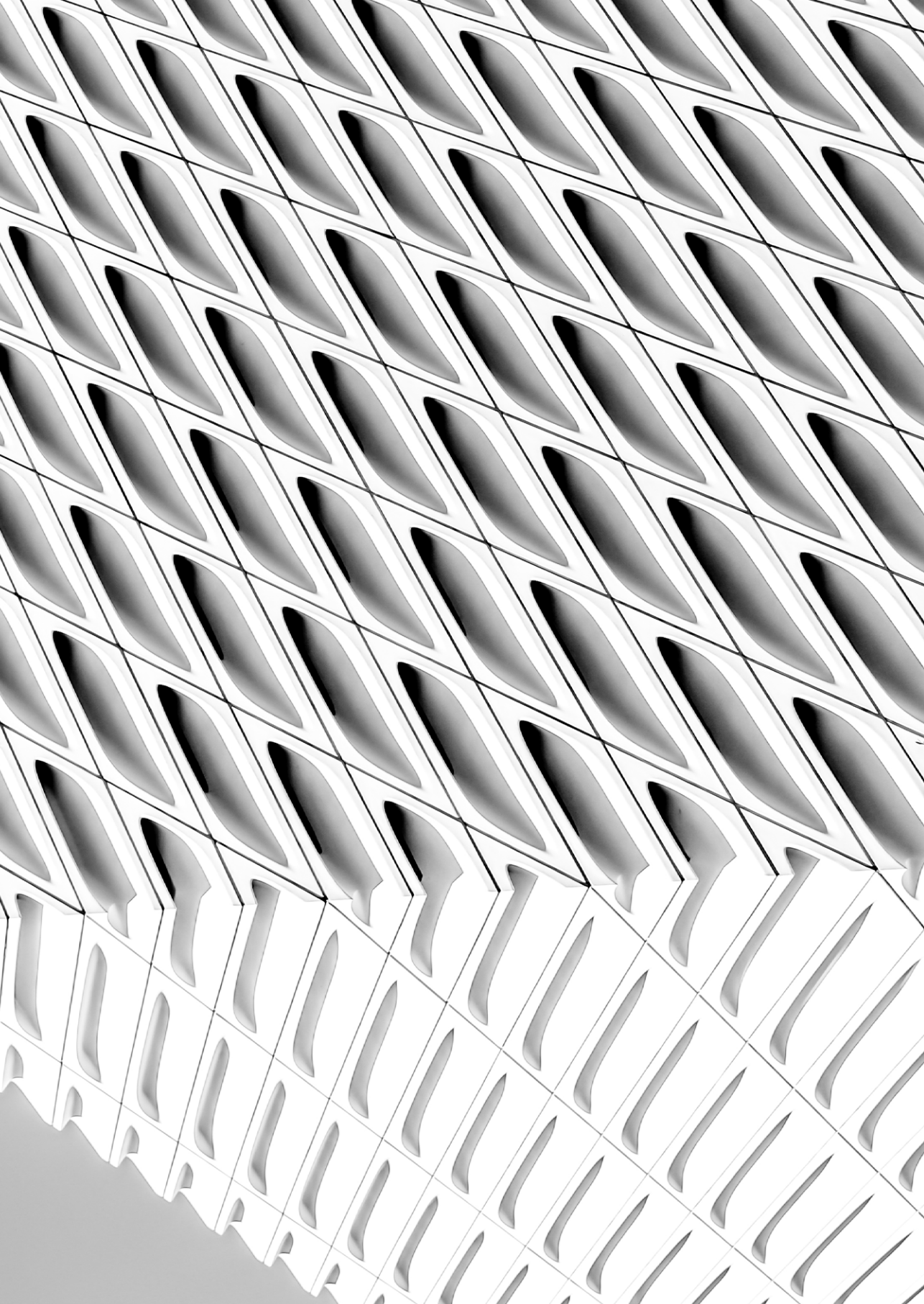
MHKA's origins are deeply rooted in the anti-museum notion established by the ICC. As such, publicness and social outreach become critical and essential aspects of the institution that the current building's architecture fails to accommodate. The project for the new MHKA explores the social agency of the institution and the articulation of art display and other public everyday functions. The permanent collection is made free and accessible and arranged as a vertical volume that serves as a lobby for spaces destined for other activities such as catering, seminar rooms, auditoriums, and temporary exhibitions. This arrangement allows to incorporate both and allows them to spill into each other across the building. The flexibility of the museum is explored through this combination of uses and flexibility of the building as a structure that can easily adapt to other uses in the future.

Reflecting on the future of the contemporary museum, it seems inevitable to go beyond the mere display of art. While the practices of curation remain central to the institution, new technologies and access to information have diminished the exclusivity and power that artifacts once possessed. MHKA, with its online availability of the entire collection, serves as an example of how both people's perception of public buildings and the institution itself are evolving, aiming to explore their social agency. This project responds to these changes by offering flexibility, but not in a flashy way of moving walls or motorized elements. Instead, it adopts an intrinsic approach embedded in its architecture through spatial composition, materiality, scale, and form.



Render of interior view.
Entrance to gallery spaces.







September 2022

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June 2023