

ART/DESIGN:CULTURE

National Museum of Art Architecture and Design

Art and design are two critical elements that together form the culture of a people and nation. While the NMAAD is a singular institution that will be responsible for showcasing both art and design in Oslo, Norway, the two are very distinct entities and are worth exploring and observing as individual parts that create a cultural identity. The proposal for the ART.DESIGN/CULTURE Museum is focused on the idea that art and design should be observed as both unique and individual entities as well as inseparable parts of a culture. The building critically compares and contrasts art and design based on four different categories (form, function, statement and process) and these analyses are manifested architecturally into different systems of the institution's architectural language (massing, structure, skin, circulation).

1. FORM:MASSING

ART: Art is not a tool but a self-sufficient entity. Art and its creation itself is the goal of the artist. Art, its final form in itself, is ultimately the artist's statement and expression and is not influenced by any other functional requirement.

DESIGN: The form of a design product is highly influenced by the product's function. A designer's expressive capacity impacts the form, but ultimately the design product is highly bound to constraints and a functional purpose, which influence its form.

NMAAD: While an art piece and a design product may take on similar forms, the purpose of their creation can be quite different. Form itself cannot be used to distinguish art and design. Thus while the art building and the design building share a similar form factor, the nature and essence of the two are rather disparate.

2. FUNCTION:STRUCTURE

ART: Because art is not affected by any functional or practical constraints, the expressive freedom of an artist are much broader than that of a designer.

DESIGN: A designer is bound to constraints associated with the specific function that the product must perform. While there is surely an opportunity for personal expression, the product's first and foremost priority is the effective performance of its function.

NMAAD: The two buildings' structures perform differently based on how much freedom of expression was permitted. The art building features a structural system which goes beyond its minimal structural requirements to become an artistic expression and interior ornamentation of its own. On the other hand, the design building's structural system is much more confined to its load requirements and is thus relatively more utilitarian.

3. STATEMENT:SKIN

ART: The statement or message contained in an art piece is highly subjective. Yet, even more subjective and open ended is the interpretation of the viewer.

DESIGN: Regardless of the solution that the designer proposes, the basic function and purpose of a design product is less prone to subjectivity. The range of different interpretations and readings will likely fall within a narrower spectrum.

NMAAD: The two buildings employ skin systems of different dynamic range. The art building's skin system features vertical louvers of undulating profiles, based on the daylighting requirements of the programs inside, creating changing visual effects depending on the perspective from which one views it. The design building's facade, which also strategically controls daylight into the interior programs, consists of planar elements oriented in a way that allows much less variation in terms of its visual aesthetics.

4. PROCESS:CIRCULATION

ART: Art is the physical manifestation of an artist's inner world, an organic synthesis of inner emotions bound by little rhyme or reason. Thus the creation process is very much non-directional.

DESIGN: Design must first and foremost fulfill a functional requirement. While a designer may employ personal expression in a design, he/she is guided throughout the design process by logic and functional constraints.

NMAAD: The exhibition spaces within the two buildings reflect the processes of thought that guide the creation of art and design. The exhibition galleries in the art building are laid out as a network of non-directional spaces that allow a vast range of options in terms of viewing sequence. On the other hand, the design building's exhibition spaces are laid out in a linear fashion largely guiding the guests experience

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It is at the NMAAD that Art and Design, two unique yet inseparable critical elements come together to symbolize the rich culture and heritage of Oslo, Norway. More specifically, the "culturescape," the wooden surface that covers a majority of the site, acts as the physical connection and meeting place between the art and design buildings. Above the culturescape is the main route that people take to enter the museum as well as a sculpture park. Below the culturescape lies an public interior concourse which programatically connect the two buildings and houses common facilities for the art- and design-related programs.