

Defining a place

As a structure of international significance and stature, the building must take into account its urban context, with particular regard to public access, and the need to provide space for the display of sculpture. The characteristics of the site as well as the museum's exhibitional function dictate a horizontal organization of space. The structure we envision is iconic: a simple yet powerful landmark situated in a changing urban landscape on Oslo's waterfront, a building that speaks no language but that of its own constitution. We have translated this concept into a series of abstract 'objects' that complement the scale and pattern of the existing and projected buildings planned for the Oslo V site and the Bjorvika area.

The **Gallery** building is spatially articulated as a continuation of the outside public space surrounding the Oslo waterfront. The museum's recessed location creates a natural flow from the public space in front of the museum into the foyer. We therefore projected the Government office building on the southwest side of Dokkveien, enabling the park-like setting to serve both the museum and the office building, creating the cornerstone for Pipervika's iconic maritime seafront.

The open area in front functions like the proscenium of a stage. This horizontal sculptured surface (Sculpture Square) is decisive in establishing an awareness of approach to the Museum and the adjacent buildings. The Museum's front façade, stretching the entire width of the site, reflects the sparsely decorated 'rear' facades as a reminder of the former Railway Station now situated in front of it. A new center is established.

Embodiment of wholeness

The horizontal body affords space for all 'active' functions. In order to provide efficient internal routes, all 'passive' functions are stacked on top of each other. This vertical body is used as a pedestal for the Library, documentation & art on paper to provide an isolated space for rest, reflection and contemplation, featuring spectacular views for all to enjoy. The design of the storage rooms echoes the heavily built bell towers of City Hall. Together, they form the gateway from the city to the Oslo Fjord. Its simplicity is its power.

Two collateral structures distinguish themselves in scale and location from the main museum's gallery building, thus providing a meaningful order and coherent architectural environment for the museum site. The **Atelier** building, located in front of the Gallery, serves as a 'window gallery' on ground level and holds the exhibition technique workshop. The **Depot** building replaces The Express Goods Shed and holds the security room with monitoring center, offices, and other functional areas.

The performance of space

Organizationally, the overall layout is represented by a 'cross model'. It divides the building envelope into four parts based on orientation and circulation. It operates like the spine of the exhibition rooms and organizes all supporting functions. The position of the museum's main entrance separates the visitors area into two parts which can be easily interconnected when needed. In spatial terms, the foyer is a zone of transition and preparation before entering the actual museum proper. Visitors ascend from ground level in order to enter the indoor exhibition spaces, a moment of consciousness. Here they find the front desk and cloakrooms. Far removed from any rigid formal model, the exhibition layout reveals itself through exploration, a continuous internal space in which one work of art smoothly and seamlessly leads to the next. The design encourages the overlap of all functions, and allows different collections to be experienced as a spatial continuum, inside and out.

The sheltering tree

In terms of structure, the large open space of the museum creates what might be described as a cumulonimbus incus cloud pressed upwards by the convection of the exhibition route. The concealed exhibition spaces of the upper level function as a 'hollow box' which is carried by a curtain of pillars that touch the basement like pins.

Moving silhouettes

The interior is projected to the outside public space by a light transmitting membrane; a double skin facade of opaque, transparent, and translucent aerogel filled acid-etched glass.

Infrastructure

Storage vaults are situated safely in the lower part of the high-rise structure. Large open floor spaces and wide staircases ensure visibility, a prerequisite for optimum security and safety for visitors and artwork alike.