

I. Central Idea : National Art ARK

It is an enduring paradox in modern museums that the majority of their collections remain unseen, hidden away in inaccessible vaults, with only a small selection of works on show.

National Art ARK reverses this diagram. The archives and their content are elevated high up in the air, exposing them to all of Oslo as a treasure box of Norwegian Art as a National Cultural Heritage. Underneath this storage canopy a rich mix of gallery spaces and environments are provided. Allowing for the full range and flexibility demanded by a modern museum, as well as providing the necessary climatic conditions and security.

II. Urban Design

The Museum building respects the surroundings and recognises the importance of its location: The old station building together with the new museum form a new courtyard. This courtyard will act as a new and lively plaza, set back from the vast expanses of the Rådhuspladsen, it provides a sheltered, more intimate environment with opportunities for all day activity.

The museum buildings and the "treasure box" are organised with respect for the overall orientation of the city, both the 19th century grid and the more contemporary interventions such as Aker Brygge and Vika-kvartalet. The museum compliments the trinity of historical landmarks, the Akershus castle, Rådhuset and the Nobel Peace Centre. The much larger new National Museum visually will serve as a stage set for the Nobel Museum as an international House of Peace on Norwegian soil.

III. The Treasure Chest

The "treasure chest" will act as the new logo and is the most important part of the National Art ARK, containing the Art, Architectural and Design Heritage of the country. Consequently this volume is rotated to align with the historical "Quadraturen Axis" and to the station building.

Its façade reflects the Fjord (Nature) during daylight and serves as a media façade during the dark hours. The facades will be an expression of the varied light conditions in Norway throughout the year. The media façade could serve as a continuous display surface for the otherwise invisible content of the Treasure Box, thus making its content accessible and overcoming the hidden character of many of the objects housed within it.

Whereas in the 19th century expressions of the hierarchies within a society sparked an urban program, today it is national cultural identity which promotes urban activity. This is demonstrated the country's present effort to link national cultural achievements.

The Treasure Box will be a visual link between the three Houses of Culture in the Norwegian Capital, as this volume is seen at long distance from the new Opera House and the new Munch/Stenersen Museum.

Along with these two new projects, the National Art ARK will hence create an urban visual connection in much the same way as the connection between Parliament and Castle along Karl Johans Gate, with the National Theatre and the University did 150 years ago.

