

Vestbanen Oslo

National Museum for Art, Architecture and Design

Project description:

Physical character and architectural concept

The project for the Vestbanen Museum takes its initial form from the geological make-up of Norway and it is based on the morphological characteristics of the eroded mountainous edges and the mesmerizing fjord landscape.

Through the architectural form, we explore the issue of the erosion of the landscape by means of forming topographical singularities. The produced land-mass, is translated into plateaus, offering a series of useful spaces.

These eroded spaces are contextually organized:

On one hand, the erosions reflect the urban space of the surrounding streets and the volume reciprocates the heights of the buildings by which it is surrounded, complementing the urban environment and completing the void. By careful modulation of the mass of the building, the south edge is kept lower reflecting the human scale of the Old western Railway Station (Nobel Peace Center) and Local Station (ministry of Foreign Affairs for development and Cooperation), both of which form part of the completed urban block that occupies the site. The higher Ackermann Brygge and office buildings to the north and west edges of the site are also reflected with a higher volume of the museum and the government offices.

On the interior, the erosion, produces a sensuous and serene wooden screen that articulates the lobby, primarily as an inviting, open public space, whilst behind it lay a series of large interconnected exhibition spaces.

On the roof, the system of erosions forms the "mass" of the government office building, that forms an integral part of the museum form and produces cascaded plateaus of roof planes open to the public and with opens itself to the sublime views of the Vestbanen harbour.

The system of striations generates the tectonic structure of the enclosure and it produces our of wood and glass reinforced concrete plates. More importantly, the landscaped topography attains a very special characteristic:

It is at once massive and open.

The graduality with which the gaze of the observer penetrates the skin, is an important aspect in our concept. It allows a transparency without the compromise of the demonstration of highly technical parts such as mullions, nuts and bolts, but more importantly it gives the museum an abstract quality:

The museum as a work of art in-itself.