The City as a Museum
Reshaping the Urban Interiors of Stockholm

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Statement.
Fig.1 Bilbao redevelopment is a typical example of how post-industrial cities were developed.
The city is dynamic. Physically speaking, contemporary urban environments exist on top of older ones. A perfect variation of layers remain hidden in the soil on which we walk and exist. Archaeologists call it stratigraphy: a foundation of the evolution theory of cities later used to unfold the past by historians. When the layers co-exist or overlap, they become apparent. The evolution of the physical environment is a reflection of social change. In this dynamic situation, city and society progress simultaneously reflecting each other.
Fig.2 Abu Simbel was the first commission of UNESCO as it was literally reconstructed in order to be saved.
The city is static. By claiming nowadays that cities are complex organisms, their use remains categorized as simple mechanisms that are described in their totality. These places were open fields for those who already possessed wealth, power, and knowledge. Athens and the State, Rome and the Church, Paris and the Bourgeois, explain how old and historical urban environments were formed and transformed by mechanisms of power. An oversimplified idea that manufactures a different reality; an idealism around a network of spaces that could be eternal irrespective of the society. The prominent argument rests on the cultural significance, an abstract term which suggests a chronological continuum of the built environment, and aspires to forge a connection between society and politics.
Fig.3 A mathematical-diagram illustrating the battle between past and future.
The battle. Hannah Arendt in her book Between Past and Future (1969) states: “He has two antagonists: the first presses him from behind, from the origin. The second blocks the road ahead. He gives battle to both.” Each of these forces, the “one pushing him forward,” the other “driving him back,” should support the man in his struggle against the other. A Kafkian influence that seeks freedom from this conflict. Arendt concludes: “some time in an unguarded moment – and this would require a night darker than any night has ever been yet – he will jump out of the fighting line and be promoted, on account of his experience in fighting, to the position of umpire over his antagonists in their fight with each other.” This articulates the battle that exists among the urban context of being pushed forward while simultaneously held back. The old city wants to be preserved while the new city yearns to move forward.
Approach.
Michel Foucault (1997) argued that during the 19th century the museum was established as an “espace autres,” a world outside of our own; a parallel preserved world, which we view for self-reflection, serving as a space of antagonism to propel the condition of utopia.

The museum! Even as a parallel world, museums now have been affected by tradition. What if museums had fewer rules?
The collection. The exhibit, both private and public collections, became enormous and vast in scale after modernism. One could claim that the museum's physical scale started growing from the inside instead of the outside in order to incorporate dynamic pedagogical purposes. Experience and interaction were some of the new variables.

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Fig.5-6 From the typical display of an ancient vessel to the Rothko chapel; the introduction of the abstract.
The architect’s task is to plan individual rooms that each act as cellular spaces for the viewing of art. Each room must function as an individual autonomous world and simultaneously as a piece of a greater whole. These spaces are linked to a larger set of rooms in a wing, which is in turn nestled within the confines of the museum.

Fig.7-9 Illustrations from Jonathan A. Scelsa on the evolution of Enfilade.
The interior. The internal structure of the museum supports the conception of the museum as an interior city within the city. The museum is primarily a public institution that over the past century continued to grow in size.

Fig. 10 Illustration from Jonathan A. Scelsa on the possibility of the museum as a typology in architecture that is informed and driven by an urban grid.
The exception. In cities of similar scale, the city center remains a stagnant historical exhibit for tourists and locals alike. Museums and monuments are the only elements that bring back those urban memories. New development and change happen on the periphery of this, consequently extending focus to different areas that surround the center. Stockholm is an exception to this notion, rebuilding in the very city center. Lower Norrmalm remains a nucleus of constant change.
*Progress.* Lower Norrmalm has been drastically changed by demolishing the past and building for the future. A direct emphasis on the future consisting of cars and concrete buildings. The essence of progress inside the city is valuable; Stockholm does not have anymore and does not need another Gamla Stan.

Fig.13-14 During the 50s Norrmalm’s basic infrastructure and iconic architecture was built.
Norrønmuseum. The aim is to create a museum as an open setting that celebrates urban change. A new layer, a factory of urban experiences that create a dynamic environment. A transcendent structure that ignores selectively the form of the city and therefore the architecture, approaching Aldo Rossi’s “Analogous City”; a backdrop of theatrical life.

Fig 15-16 Transcendental structures have always been an architectural dream. Mutating their structure could allow that dream to come true.
The zone. The museum is founded in a disconnected and indifferent part of Norrmalm. Its proportions are 1:3 crosscutting through spaces of different characteristics including commercial areas, touristic sites, and heavy infrastructure. Leftover spaces, if reconsidered, serve as an opportunity to bind the area. Significant axes cut through the zone connecting to the static museum of Gamla Stan.

Fig 17-18 Brunkebergstorg marks the middle of the zone as it is important in terms of topography and planning.
Fig. 19-21 Metro stations, walking distance, and topography are variables in the zone analysis.
Layers. The museum as a “city within a city” has a distinctive form derived from specific topography that is a result of the intersection of two urban grids. Diverse building typologies include public institutions as well as monumental gardens and detached urban squares that shape a unique site of seemingly unconnected spaces.

Fig.22-23 The two city grids collide when the modernist city meets the stone city at Brunkebergstorg.
The urban structure. The idea is to imagine the urban grid as the whole of a museum. Thus, the blocks and buildings are seen as potential rooms, the streets as corridors, the open spaces as atriums following allegorically the structure of a typical museum.
The program. The hypothesis is that the proposed museum establishes an alternative way to experience an exhibition while integrated in the urban environment. Temporary and permanent exhibits, pauses and intense environments and hierarchy between the objects create meaning.

Fig 26-27 Some of the typical museum spaces are removed as the auxiliary spaces are achieved within the functions of adjacent buildings.
Concept.
The network. Stockholm is changing. Aside from the building industry that keeps reforming Norrmalm, a wide variety of public spaces are redesigned and reconsidered. The “circulation” inside the museum cannot be based on today’s spatial formation and quality. The only way to compose elements and new narratives is by choosing key-spaces according to their current spatial interest. Accessibility as well as a potential contribution to this new network are imperative. These spaces gradually lead to the formation of the thematic rooms that impact the current pattern of change in the zone.

Fig. 28-29 The zone is divided into different areas according to accessibility and nodes. These areas mark central locations-potential sites for the museum.
The shell. In architectural terms, the idea of a museum starts with the distinction of its hard shell to protect the exhibit from the terrifying outside conditions and its soft interior to welcome the audience. This archetype when transferred to the urban environment allows a two-fold approach of exhibition space; the “hard” one, an over-described individual experience inside a vessel, and the “soft” one, an open space characterized by the essence of an urban and social existence in the city. Thus, the museum becomes the spatial experience of wandering around the free and enclosed spaces, dark and light, empty and clustered, architectural and urban. The exhibit becomes nothing else than the discovery of the urban.
Fig. 32-34 The three typologies act as urban condensers and provide an answer to different needs.
The typologies. The consistency of the proposal is not only based on the program but also a spatial quality from which the museum idea is derived, establishing 3 different archetypes. The entrance, the tower, and the screen. The investigation of these typologies culminates in the proposal of 6 drastically different spaces. Therefore, the museum has a spatial and architectural consistency by which it communicates with visitors but also establishes a well-designed setting that is integrated perfectly within the urban environment of Stockholm. These archetypes do not stand as an excuse to what is designed. They stand as a research and design framework that allows us to establish the idea of the museum in the zone.
Fig.35 Zone Master Plan
Fig. 36-37 Religion and consumption are edited in the same way.
E1. Klara Kyrka stands as a leftover of lower Norrmalm. It is an interesting landmark of the city that is visible and defines the skyline even though the scale of its surroundings have completely changed. The proposal edits the boundaries between the old and the new introducing a secondary element.

A new entrance is found in order to attract visitors from Drottninggatan but most importantly state the importance of the place and its faded mystic character. A rhythmic pace between the opening of the door and the space behind it is created as a way to simply recall the importance of light as an element in the city and the courtyard as a forgotten public space.
Fig. 39 Intervention Program
Fig. 40 Eye-level impression
Fig. 41 Integration axonometric
E2. The Gallerian is a typical example of interior urbanism strongly related to the climate conditions of Stockholm. Its vast scale and diverse private uses leave no choice but to intervene at an entrance.

A new space is proposed in order to playfully welcome visitors offering a change in pace. The facade is comprised of hinged panels arranged in a puzzle-like configuration. Inside a soft diagonal introduces a temporary exhibition that encourages a different type of interaction with commercial space. An alternative approach to retail space - an urban design hybrid not requiring heavy program like a galleria.
Fig. 43 Intervention Program

- skylight
- panel facade
- semi-transparent exhibition element
- intervention trace
Fig. 44 Eye-level impression
Fig. 45 Integration axonometric
Fig. 46-47 Stockholm has a very specific skyline, therefore, designing new urban towers is challenging.
Fig. 48 Elevation
One of the areas of Stockholm’s urban plan with a lot of potential is the corner of Tegelbacken and Vasagatan. The Sheraton Hotel was designed, architecturally speaking, heavy for that exact reason. However, there is a lot of space in front which is given to complex car traffic.

The proposal rearranges the traffic flow in order to extend the public space in front of the hotel. A new corner is introduced, a tower that stands as a landmark for the area and together with a ramp encloses a public space vivid and vibrant even for the hotel customers. As a result, there is also a new front of the city towards the water, which is aligned with the goals of Stockholm’s urban regeneration plan.
Fig. 49 Intervention Program

- hard shell
- exhibition space
- ground view
- public circulation
- intervention trace
Fig. 50 Eye-level impression
Fig. 51 Integration axonometric
Fig. 52 Elevation
T2. Brunkebergstorg is the hidden square of Stockholm. Blocked by the Gallerian and Kulturhuset this space fails to welcome visitors. This space has been continually re-designed to solve issues of the prior generations. On the verge of the modern and the old city, in an urban void, a new tower is proposed.

Afraid to touch its neighbors, a grid facilitates the circulation through the exhibition. The evolution of the museum spans 4 floors highlighting accordingly different eras. The traditional, the modern, the post-modern and the contemporary ways of organizing an exhibit. A steady reminder of the urban history given the chaotic construction sites that surround the square.
Fig. 53 Intervention Program

circulation

enclosure

exhibition spaces

spatial grid

intervention trace
Fig. 54 Eye-level impression
Fig. 55 Integration axonometric
Fig. 56-57 Even if an enclosure is one of the basic requirements for a successful space, an unprecedented addition of a screen unlocks various possibilities.
Fig. 58 Elevation
Behind Kulturhuset there is a small and quaint space with the opportunity to be an active area. A new vertically designed hybrid is introduced on the back of Kulturhuset offering an open-air exhibition space. The importance of this space does not rely only upon the program but also the vertical movement of the visitor which enables an unprecedented view to Brunkebergstorg.

In front of this vertical structure, a semi-transparent screen serves as a hard surface during daytime and soft during the nighttime. Considering the new screen and the enclosure of the space, a new culture room is proposed creating an open setting that breaks the heavy and monotonous volume of Kulturhuset while attracting people from Drottninggatan.
Fig. 59 Intervention Program

- circulation
- structure
- suspension cables
- screen
- exhibition space
- intervention trace
Fig. 60 Eye-level impression
Fig. 61 Integration axonometric
Kungsträdgården is a linear space that spans many city blocks. From the waterfront a deep facade of the city exists. The conclusion of the park at Hamngatan remains unresolved. The park does not offer a facade to the city. Fragmented and unrelated elements fail to enclose the activities that happen along the formalistic garden.

Light scaffolding with ramps serve as an alternative amphitheater for the city. A new semi-transparent screen surface is proposed to introduce an alternative experience of theatrical space. People moving up the ramp establish an exhibit for the people watching from below and vice versa. A fun and playful structure that highlights human curiosity and wandering as its primary object.
Fig. 63 Intervention Program

- Circulation
- Light scaffolding
  - Kungsträdgården facade
- Hamngatan facade
- Intervention trace
Fig. 64 Eye-level impression
Fig.65 Integration axonometric
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