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## PUBLIC

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# The New Archaeological Museum of Patras

### The concept of a museum

*B«You enter: the architectural spectacle at once offers itself to the eye. You follow an itinerary and the perspectives develop with great variety, developing a play of light on the walls or making pools of shadow.*

*Large windows open up views of the exterior where the architectural unity is reasserted.B»*

*Le Corbusier ΕΙΕ±ΕΗ Pierre Jeanneret, L' oeuvre complēte 1910-1929*

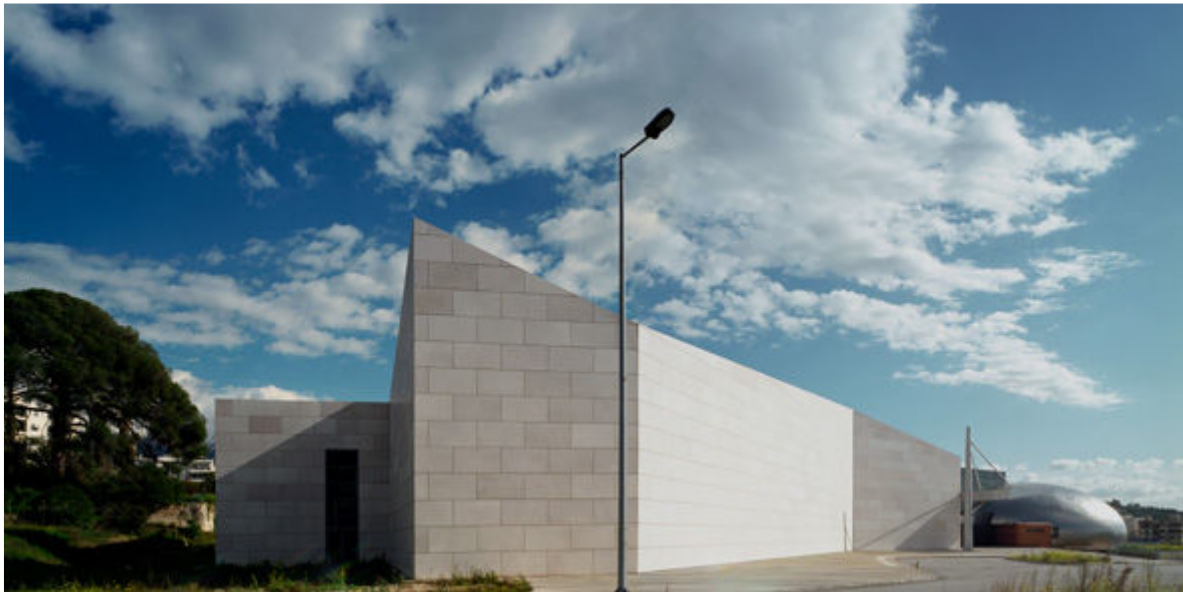
In the field of Architecture, there are some milestones: buildings that could stand forward among other projects, buildings that could be considered as actual manifestos regarding a way of thinking and a way of living. These are buildings that, if assigned to an architect, are both a challenge and the fulfillment of a dream, a statement and the utmost lesson after which Architecture will never be the same again. The New Museum of Patras was such a project for the Bobotis architectural office.



A Museum is the kind of building where the theory of Le Corbusier regarding the "architectural stroll" ("promenade architecturale") can be easily applied - the idea of a journey throughout the building, a tool to fully understand its concept. In there, the visitors/users could be moved to follow a specific route, specific alternatives or deviations from it, with specific views in a specific order - exceptions here could only justify the rule. The space should be at the same time both aesthetically of high quality and neutral to this aim: to be only a "container" to house the most precious Art and the most precious Historical memory.



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The New Archaeological Museum of Patras is a meeting place. Of both the past which has been excavated and the future that is to come. Of both the citizens/visitors and the city that could participate in all actions taken by the museum. Of both the exhibitions and the surrounding Architecture. Ultimately however, it is a womb where new ideas and new actions will be developed and given back to culture.

The elements which have been used in the New Museum of Patras - and they have been used as the steps of a choreography - are a series of views progressively revealed, the element of surprise and the unexpected, the small details, light, color, texture, sound - in the words of Le Corbusier, all that which transform Architecture into true initiation.

## **New Archaeological Museum of Patras**

### **Project Data**

Project: B B B B B B B B B B B B B B B B B B **New Archaeological Museum of Patras**

Location: B B B B B B B B B B B B B B B B B B On the Athens-Patras National Road



prismatic blocks and one elliptic entity, creating a total in which, through anarchy, harmony will prevail. Harmony expressed in its blocks, the surfaces comprised therein, the motions and paths crossing the areas in which the findings are exhibited. Harmony, free from the restrictions of symmetry, aiming to communicate with the surroundings and the visitors-operators.B

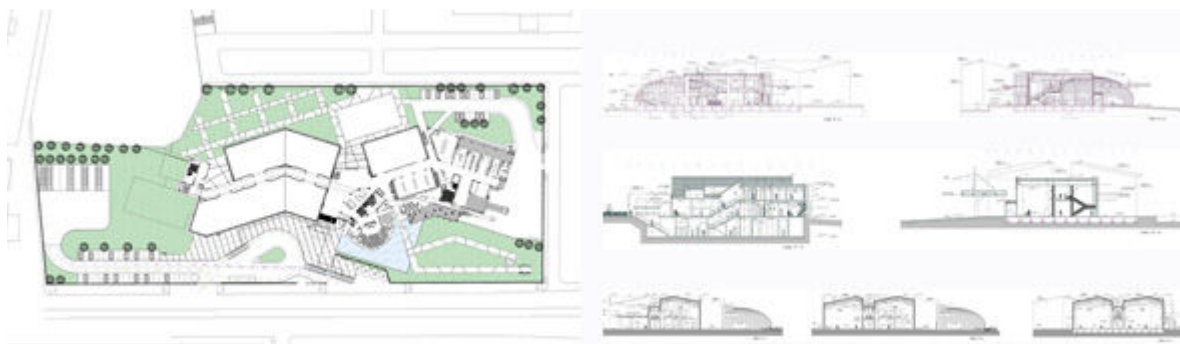
In this building, the aim was the organic co-existence of the three following elements:

- Architecture, which shall establish the proper conditions in order to ensure the findings' exhibition flows, the appropriate exhibition method and the suitable spaces for supporting the various activities.
- The organization and the findings' exhibition method, which shall employ the recommendations of the Architectural design in order to establish the thematic, diachronic, and other paths and generally to promote the exhibits in the proper manner.

β€AB The Management of the museum, which shall organize the events and activities that, along with the exhibition, shall ensure the interactive character of the Museum, so that the latter establishes a culture production field by letting the city itself, enter the museum.

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Theofanis Bobotis observes that the site, situated on the Athens-Patras National Road (providing an easily identifiable and accessible place by a large number of passers-by) naturally has affected the design, which would be observed by both the visitor and the highway driver. Thus the building could be identified as a series of walls at a skewed angle in relation to the axis of the National Road, which also create areas that welcome those approaching.



A technologically modern building has been created, with a specific geometry, and identifiable modest aesthetics. Such aesthetics arise from the composition and the form, from the texture and colour of the composing elements, as well as from the synthesis of the various geometrical blocks hosting the various applications. Theofanis Bobotis stresses the point that it was important to create a building free from any elements of temporary impressiveness, aiming towards a diachronic presence and the need to express and record the modern era, our contemporary culture.

The New Museum of Patras was designed to be easily identifiable, given that it houses culture and more importantly that it address people from all over the world. It was designed to be a landmark and hopefully to influence the future surrounding built environment. As form follows function, the compact volumes house the exhibition areas, whereas the elliptic entity houses the amphitheatre, the shop, the virtual museum, etc. The compact volumes are covered by marble tiles, and the elliptic entity is clad with titanium foils, which are suitable for this kind of shape.



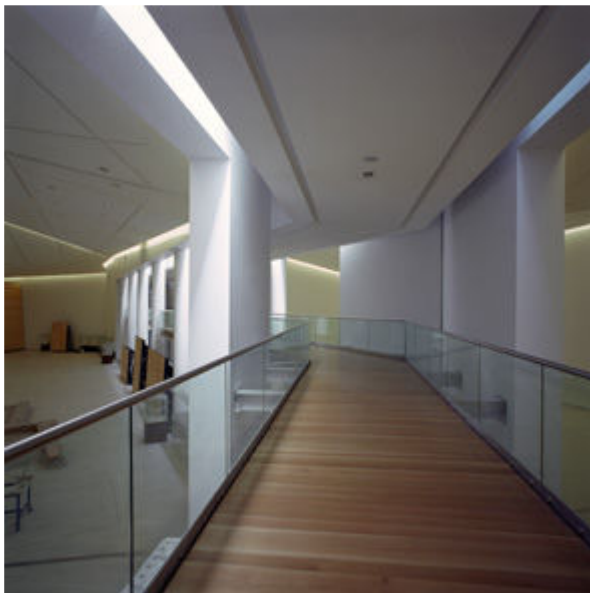
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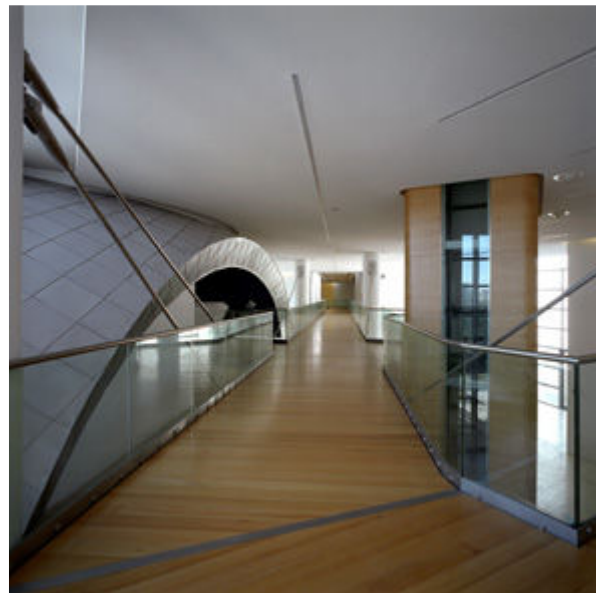
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With its orientation being parallel to the Athens-Patras National Road, the broken deployment of the building is one of the major regulating parameters of the overall layout and form of the building both in plane and in space. The external aesthetic simplicity, the forms and shapes enter the building's interior so that the mass-shaping of the external shell is depicted in the interior, establishing thus the dialectic continuity between the external and the internal environment. The colour and texture of the coating materials, combined with the location and form of the surfaces delimiting the volumes, promote the overall plasticity of the building. This plasticity gains a dynamic character through the variable luminosity of the surfaces, which depends on the location of the sun.

The principal idea of the functional architectural design was to create an axis (an element inspired from the National Road), on both sides of which exhibition rooms, an amphitheatre, laboratories and generally all spaces needed are arranged. The above mentioned axis is the main area for the principal traffic and service of the exhibition and Museum needs in general. It is a diaphragm, a circulation relief space, an area for special exhibitions, a point of light and a pathway for service ducts. It both divides and unifies the rooms, it establishes, in itself, an exhibition room of a short exhibition path, it serves the movement needs of the exhibits and other elements from the rooms to the labs and vice versa. It runs along the entire length of the Museum, and constitutes the "backbone of the building" connecting all areas, without any exception.



B



In an attempt to clarify the design's inner logic, Theofanis Bobotis would like to point out the following elements:

- Entrance to the building (the architectural promenade begins well beyond the Museum)

It is placed in the center and is visibly identifiable by means of the special roofing and lateral elliptic entity, which sits on an aquatic surface. This is a reference to the water element which constituted and continues to constitute a principal evolution factor of the Greek civilization.

- Entrance and circulation distribution area

Relief and waiting area. It is located on the axis and constitutes a continuation of the main entrance and the movement and traffic distribution center from and to all Museum areas.

The elliptic entity, the "aerial" traffic corridor, the stairways and elevators, the shop and the sanitary facilities volume, etc. constitute a series of elements and sites integrated within the said area rendering it, both functionally and visually, the most dynamic space.

- Circulation - movements - elevated museum course

The visitor has the ability to choose different routes, as per the organisation of the exhibition. He also has the ability to select the "elevated" museum course, observing the exhibits in a panoramic view and at a different viewing angle. This course, among others, is also offered to those not having the necessary time to visit the Museum, in order for them to acquire a summarized overview of the exhibits. This includes travelers for who Patras is not their final destination but only a transit point towards other directions.

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- Amphitheatre

A room to accommodate projections and lectures regarding the Museum exhibitions (or other subjects) with direct access from the entrance area, so as to host events regardless of the Museum's opening hours. In combination with the virtual museum and the exhibition organising can contribute effectively to the interactive character of the Museum.B

- Virtual Museum

The organisation and equipment of this site, contributes also to the interactive character of the Museum by means of providing the ability to receive all types of information on the Museum

exhibits, the relationship between civilizations, eras, etc. It is situated within the elliptic block, at the aerial traffic level.

- Exhibition areas

Spacious rooms of uniform colour, free from any elements that can visually impede the exhibits. The size and relatively great height of these areas ensure a multitude of presentation possibilities for the exhibits without any low ceiling "load" limitations. Their broken deployment increases the display levels and along with the prismatic false ceiling contributes to the reduction of sound passage and interference.

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The Museum is surrounded by a series of other areas such as the shop, administration areas, canteen, maintenance workshops, warehouses, as well as open-air exhibition areas next to the Museum.

In order to complete the Museum Design, following the Architectural concept, it is necessary to design the museological study (prepared also by BOBOTIS architects) as well as to organize actions and activities so that, as already stated, the Museum is not just an interesting exhibition site, but an actual culture producing field, participating in all cultural events, both for the city and the entire country.

It represents a cultural building that expresses the current status and links the current civilization to that of the past. A Museum, that apart from being a guardian of the past civilization is also able and responsible to contribute dynamically to its evolution.

*The New Archaeological Museum of Patras was selected to be on the short list of six, for the International Interior Design Awards FX 2009, in the category of B«Museum or Exhibition SpaceB».*

Photos: B X. Louizidis

**Dafni Soulogianni**

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