

Cansu Ünal

M.Sc. Thesis

AGU 2024

EXPLORING THE DIALOG BETWEEN
DESIGN AND DISPLAY:
ARCHITECTURAL INTEGRATION OF
CONTEMPORARY ART EXHIBITIONS
IN ITALIAN INSTITUTIONS

M.Sc. THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF ARCHITECTURE
AND THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF ENGINEERING AND SCIENCE
OF ABDULLAH GUL UNIVERSITY
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER

By
Cansu Ünal
June 2024

EXPLORING THE DIALOG BETWEEN DESIGN
AND DISPLAY: ARCHITECTURAL
INTEGRATION OF CONTEMPORARY ART
EXHIBITIONS IN ITALIAN INSTITUTIONS

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF ARCHITECTURE
AND THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF ENGINEERING AND SCIENCE OF
ABDULLAH GUL UNIVERSITY
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER

By

Cansu Ünal


June 2024

SCIENTIFIC ETHICS COMPLIANCE

I hereby declare that all information in this document has been obtained in accordance with academic rules and ethical conduct. I also declare that, as required by these rules and conduct, I have fully cited and referenced all materials and results that are not original to this work.

Name-Surname: Cansu Ünal

Signature :



REGULATORY COMPLIANCE

M.Sc. thesis titled Exploring the Dialog Between Design and Display: Architectural Integration of Contemporary Art Exhibitions in Italian Institutions has been prepared in accordance with the Thesis Writing Guidelines of the Abdullah Gül University, Graduate School of Engineering & Science.

Prepared By
Cansu ÜNAL

Advisor
Prof. Burak Asiliskender

Head of the Architecture Program
Assoc. Prof. Buket Metin

ACCEPTANCE AND APPROVAL

M.Sc. thesis titled Exploring the Dialog Between Design and Display: Architectural Integration of Contemporary Art Exhibitions in Italian Institutions and prepared by Cansu Ünal has been accepted by the jury in the Architecture Graduate Program at Abdullah Gül University, Graduate School of Engineering & Science.

20/06/2024

JURY:

Advisor : Prof. Burak Asiliskender

Member : Assist. Prof. Can Boyacıođlu

Member : Prof. Pietro Nunziante

APPROVAL:

The acceptance of this M.Sc. thesis has been approved by the decision of the Abdullah Gül University, Graduate School of Engineering & Science, Executive Board dated /..... / and numbered

..... /..... /

Graduate School Dean
Prof. İrfan ALAN

ABSTRACT

EXPLORING THE DIALOG BETWEEN DESIGN AND DISPLAY: ARCHITECTURAL INTEGRATION OF CONTEMPORARY ART EXHIBITIONS IN ITALIAN INSTITUTIONS

Cansu Ünal

MSc. in Architecture

Advisor: Prof. Dr. Burak Asiliskender

June 2024

Museums are dynamic spaces where architecture and exhibition design interact in significant ways, influencing each other and contributing to a cohesive cultural experience. The relationship between contemporary art exhibitions and museum architecture is crucial in shaping the narrative and the display of art. By exploring the relationship between contemporary art exhibitions and the architecture of museum buildings, a comprehensive analysis is offered of how these elements engage in a dynamic dialogue. Through a detailed comparative analysis of four landmark institutions—Fondazione Prada in Milan, Strozzi Palace in Florence, MAXXI in Rome, and the Venice Biennale's Arsenale—the study investigates the transformative role of architectural innovation in redefining historical structures for contemporary cultural purposes. The research underscores the significance of adaptive reuse in the evolution of museum spaces, examining how the architectural characteristics and spatial configurations of each building influence curatorial strategies and display of art. Focusing on the interplay between museum architecture and the thematic content of art exhibitions, the study highlights how museums serve as active participants in cultural discourse. This research provides insights into the ways contemporary art exhibitions and museum buildings collaboratively construct a hierarchical narrative space, enhancing the aesthetic, cultural, and educational value of art.

Keywords: Contemporary Art Exhibition, Museum Architecture, Adaptive Reuse, Curatorial Strategies

ÖZET

TASARIM VE SERGİLEME ARASINDAKİ DİYALOĞU KEŞFETMEK: İTALYAN KURUMLARINDA ÇAĞDAŞ SANAT SERGİLERİNİN MİMARİ ENTEGRASYONU

Cansu Ünal

Mimarlık Anabilim Dalı Yüksek Lisans
Tez Danışmanı: Prof. Dr. Burak Asiliskender
Haziran-2024

Müzeler, mimari ve sergi tasarımının önemli şekillerde etkileşime girdiği, birbirlerini etkilediği ve bütüncül bir kültürel deneyime katkıda bulunduğu dinamik mekanlardır. Çağdaş sanat sergileri ile müze mimarisi arasındaki ilişki, sanatın anlatısını ve sunumunu şekillendirmede kritik öneme sahiptir. Çağdaş sanat sergileri ile müze binalarının mimarisi arasındaki ilişkiyi araştırarak, bu unsurların dinamik bir diyalog içinde nasıl etkileşime girdiğine dair kapsamlı bir analiz sunulmaktadır. Milano'daki Fondazione Prada, Floransa'daki Palazzo Strozzi, Roma'daki MAXXI ve Venedik Bienali'nin Arsenale'si gibi dört önemli kurumun ayrıntılı karşılaştırmalı analizi aracılığıyla, araştırma, mimari yeniliğin tarihi yapıları çağdaş kültürel amaçlar doğrultusunda yeniden tanımlamadaki dönüştürücü rolünü incelemektedir. Araştırma, müze mekanlarının evriminde uyarlanabilir yeniden kullanımın önemini vurgulayarak, her binanın mimari özelliklerinin ve mekansal konfigürasyonlarının küratoryal stratejileri ve sanat sunumunu nasıl etkilediğini irdelemektedir. Müze mimarisi ile sanat sergilerinin tematik içeriği arasındaki etkileşime odaklanarak, müzelerin kültürel söylemde aktif katılımcılar olarak nasıl işlev gördüğünü ortaya koymaktadır. Bu araştırma, çağdaş sanat sergileri ve müze binalarının, sanatın estetik, kültürel ve eğitsel değerini artıran hiyerarşik bir anlatı alanını nasıl birlikte inşa ettiklerine dair içgörüler sunmaktadır.

Anahtar kelimeler: Çağdaş Sanat Sergileri, Müze Mimarisi, Adaptif Yeniden Kullanım, Küratoryel Stratejiler

Acknowledgements

Firstly, I would like to thank my thesis advisor, Prof. Burak Asiliskender, for his continuous support and guidance from my bachelor's degree through to my master's. He has always been supportive and motivating. From the beginning, he created a discussion environment where we could potentially create something new, exciting, and unique. His deep knowledge of both art and architecture greatly contributed to this thesis, allowing me to delve deeply into the subject. His positive and enthusiastic approach has been one of my greatest motivations.

Then, I would like to thank Prof. Pietro Nunziante, a member of the thesis committee. He was a kind and welcoming instructor during my Erasmus+ journey in Naples, Italy. His insightful approach to the topic has greatly influenced my work and broadened my perspective.

Also, I would like to thank Assist. Prof. Can Boyacıođlu, a member of the thesis committee, for his quality evaluations and feedback, which helped me to enhance and clarify my thesis topic and writings overall.

Additionally, I would like to thank Dr. Burak Kolukısa, who has guided me through the thesis process. He has been someone I could ask anything without hesitation when I struggled.

Finally, I would like to thank my family, especially my dear mother, Ayşe Ünal, and my father, Murat Ünal, who have been a tremendous support throughout my educational journey. I want to give them something tangible like this thesis to recognize their hard work in making our lives better every single day. This thesis is devoted to them. Additionally, I would like to thank my sisters and my brother, Ebru Ünal Kolukısa, Kadriye Ünal, and Hüseyin Ünal, for their unwavering support. And lastly, I want to thank my dear friends who have been a real support for me during this journey: Fulya Bolat, Seyfullah Kaplan, Ömer Bilgen and Şevval Okutan.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 PURPOSE OF THE THESIS	2
1.2 METHOD OF THE THESIS	4
1.3 SCOPE OF THE THESIS	5
2. MUSEUM IN TRANSITION	7
2.1 HISTORY AND EVOLUTION OF MUSEUM	8
2.2 ART AND ARCHITECTURE DOMINANCY IN MUSEUMS	11
2.2.1 <i>Museum as Monument</i>	13
2.2.2 <i>Museum as Instrument</i>	15
2.2.3 <i>Museum as Icon</i>	19
2.3 ADAPTIVE REUSE IN MUSEUM BUILDINGS	23
2.4 MUSEUM'S SHIFTING ROLE	26
2.5 CHAPTER REVIEW	29
3. EXHIBITION AS AN INTERFACE	30
3.1 DISPLAYING TYPES IN MUSEUMS	31
3.2.SPATIAL MORPHOLOGY OF MUSEUMS	38
3.2.1 <i>Circulation Patterns</i>	38
3.2.2 <i>Spatial Layout of the Museums</i>	39
3.3 CHAPTER REVIEW	43
4. FOUR ITALIAN INSTITUTIONS' CASE STUDIES.....	45
4.1 STROZZI PALACE	48
4.1.1 <i>Architectural Analysis of Strozzi Palace</i>	50
4.1.2 <i>Display Analysis of Strozzi Palace</i>	55
4.1.3 <i>Art and Architecture Hierarchy in Strozzi Palace</i>	62
4.2 ARSENALE DI VENEZIA.....	64
4.2.1 <i>Architectural Analysis of the Arsenale di Venezia</i>	68
4.2.2 <i>Display Analysis of The Arsenale</i>	72
4.2.3 <i>Art and Architecture Hierarchy in The Arsenale</i>	74
4.3 FONDAZIONE PRADA.....	77
4.3.1 <i>Architectural Analysis of Fondazione Prada</i>	80
4.3.2 <i>Display Analysis of Fondazione Prada</i>	85
4.3.3 <i>Art and Architecture Hierarchy in Fondazione Prada</i>	89
4.4 MAXXI	92
4.4.1 <i>Architectural Analysis of MAXXI</i>	97
4.4.2 <i>Display Analysis of MAXXI</i>	103
4.4.3 <i>Art and Architecture Hierarchy in MAXXI</i>	104
4.5 CHAPTER REVIEW	105
5. CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE PROSPECTS	113
5.1 CONCLUSIONS	113
5.2 SOCIETAL IMPACT AND CONTRIBUTION TO GLOBAL SUSTAINABILITY ...	115
5.3 FUTURE PROSPECTS	117
6. BIBLIOGRAPHY	117

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 2.1 Cabinet of Curiosities developed during 17 th and 18 th centuries.....	9
Figure 2.2 Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum interior view.....	18
Figure 2.3 Acropolis Museum Main Exhibition Area, Athens, Greece (left), Ara Pacis Museum Main Exhibition Area, Rome, Italy, 7th December 2022 (right).....	18
Figure 2.4 The Guggenheim Museum designed by Frank Gehry, Bilbao, Spain.....	20
Figure 2.5 MAXXI exterior view (left) and interior view (right) showing the foyer of the museum, 7th December 2022	20
Figure 2.6 Groninger Museum designed by Alessandro Mendini facade and interior view, Groninger, Netherlands.....	21
Figure 2.7 Centrale Montemartini, ancient sculptures in the power plant, Rome, Italy.	23
Figure 2.8 Tate Modern Turbine Hall before and after restoration, London, United Kingdom	24
Figure 2.9 The Arsenale, Gaggiandre and Sale d'Armi during Venice Biennale 2022: The Milk of Dreams, Venice, Italy, 21 st October 2022	25
Figure 3.1 National Gallery of Modern and Contemporary Art in Rome curated with the white cube aesthetic, 8 th December 2022	32
Figure 3.2 National Archaeological Museum of Naples curated by Salon Style, 2 nd October 2022	33
Figure 3.3 Vatican Museum Egyptian Collection curated by Archival Display, 30 th October 2022	34
Figure 3.4 MAXXI exhibition curated by Black Box Style, 7 th December 2022.....	35
Figure 3.5 'Milk of Dreams' Venice Biennale curated with Site-Specific installations, 21 st October 2022.....	36
Figure 3.6 Lehmbruck's basic typology of circulation pattern	38
Figure 3.7 Hillier's two notional buildings except for the arrangement of openings, which makes them very different from the point of movement and space structures	40
Figure 3.8 Kali Tzortzi's the morphology of exploration	41
Figure 3.9 Spatial Morphologies in Museum's Theoretical Framework by Tzortzi.....	42
Figure 4.1 Strozzi Palace Courtyard hosting 'Under the Weather' installation by Olafur Eliasson, 21 st January 2023.....	48

Figure 4.2 Palazzo Strozzi Basement Floor 'Your View Matter' Vr Installation, 21 st January 2023	53
Figure 4.3 Ground Floor Map of Strozzi Palace indicating visitor route and function of the spaces	56
Figure 4.4 Strozzi Palace First Floor Spatial Analysis Map.....	57
Figure 4.5 Triple Seeing Survey Installation, Palazzo Strozzi First Floor, 21 st January 2023	58
Figure 4.6 Tomorrow installation, Strozzi Palace First Floor, 21 st January 2023	59
Figure 4.7 Just Before Now Installation, Strozzi Palace First Floor, 21 st January 2023	60
Figure 4.8 How do we live together installation, Palazzo Strozzi First Floor, 21 st January 2023	61
Figure 4.9 Beauty Installation, Strozzi Palace First Floor, 21 st January 2023.....	62
Figure 4.10 Arsenale di Venezia Aerial View, Venice, Italy	65
Figure 4.11 Functional Analysis of whole Arsenale.....	66
Figure 4.12 Arsenale di Venezia, 21 st October 2022.....	68
Figure 4.13 Spatial Analysis of Arsenale di Venezia including Spatial Sequences.....	69
Figure 4.14 Gaggiandre, Arsenale di Venezia, before and after installation, 21 st October 2022	72
Figure 4.15 Dixit Algorizmi – The Garden of Knowledge, Uzbekistan National Pavillion, 21 st October 2022	73
Figure 4.16 Wu Tsang Of Whales installation view from Venice Art Biennale 2022: The Milk of Dreams, 21 st October 2022	74
Figure 4.17 View of Fondazione Prada Torre Building from Haunted House, 24 th February 2023	77
Figure 4.18 Volumes seperated by its functions and showcasing the new built parts in Fondazione Prada.....	79
Figure 4.19 Facade of Fondazione Prada from the road.....	80
Figure 4.20 Podium, Recycling Beauty Exhibition (left), Courtyard 1 (right), 4 th February 2024	82
Figure 4.21 Spatial Diagram of Fondazione Prada.....	83
Figure 4.22 Architecture and Display Analysis of Fondazione Prada Ground Floor.....	86
Figure 4.23 Plan of the Level 9 of Torre Building	87
Figure 4.24 Exhibition Atlas in Fondazione Prada Torre Building and its Diagram, 4 th February 2023	90

Figure 4.25 MAXXI Courtyard, 7 th December 2022.....	92
Figure 4.26 MAXXI real life model located in the museum, 7 th December 2022	95
Figure 4.27 MAXXI Courtyard (left), MAXXI Interior (right), 7 th December 2022	97
Figure 4.28 Gallery 2 (left), Second floor viewing Gallery 1 (right) in MAXXI, 7 th December 2022,.....	98
Figure 4.29 MAXXI Ground Floor Visitor Circulation Map (left), Foyer of the Museum (right), 7 th December 2022.....	99
Figure 4.30 Spatial Layout of the galleries of MAXXI.....	101
Figure 4.31 MAXXI Ground Floor Visitor Circulation Map (left), Gallery 1 (right), 7 th December 2022	102
Figure 4.32 Comparison of Arsenale di Venezia and Fondazione Prada in order to spatial layout.....	107
Figure 4.33 Comparison of Strozzi Palace and MAXXI in order to spatial layout.....	108
Figure 4.34 Strozzi Palace Courtyard (left), Arsenale di Venezia Gaggiandre (right).	110
Figure 4.35 Display Preferences Comparison of Fondazione Prada (above), MAXXI (below).....	111
Figure 5.2 United Nations Sustainability Development Goals.....	116

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1.1 Research Questions, Objectives and Assumptions.....	3
Table 4.1 Identity Card for Strozzi Palace, detailing location, architect, establishment year, key features, and architectural significance.....	49
Table 4.2 Architectural Analysis of the Strozzi Palace by several features	50
Table 4.3 Spatial Analysis of Strozzi Palace by several features	54
Table 4.4 Spatial analysis of ground floor of Strozzi Palace.....	56
Table 4.5 Spatial analysis of first floor of Strozzi Palace.....	58
Table 4.6 Art and Architecture Hierachy in Strozzi Palace.....	62
Table 4.7 Identity Card for Arsenale di Venezia, detailing location, architect, establishment year, key features, and architectural significance.....	65
Table 4.8 Architectural Analysis of Arsenale di Venezia	68
Table 4.9 Spatial Analysis of Arsenale di Venezia by several features	70
Table 4.10 Spatial Analysis of Arsenale di Venezia by several features	71
Table 4.11 Art & Architecture Hierarchy in Arsenale di Venezia	75
Table 4.12 Identity Card for Fondazione Prada, detailing location, architect, establishment year, key features, and architectural significance.....	78
Table 4.13 Architectural Analysis of the Fondazione Prada by several features	81
Table 4.14 Spatial Analysis of Fondazione Prada by several features	82
Table 4.15 Architecture and Display Analysis of Fondazione Prada Ground Floor	84
Table 4.16 Architecture and Display Analysis of Fondazione Prada Torre Building	86
Table 4.17 Art & Architecture Analysis of Fondazione Prada.....	90
Table 4.18 Identity Card for MAXXI, detailing location, architect, establishment year, key features, and architectural significance.....	93
Table 4.19 Architectural Analysis of the MAXXI by several features	97
Table 4.20 Spatial Analysis of MAXXI by several features	98
Table 4.21 Architecture and Displaying Analysis of MAXXI Ground Floor	100
Table 4.22 Architecture and Display Analysis of MAXXI	102
Table 4.23 Art and Architecture Hierarchy Analysis in MAXXI.....	104
Table 4.24 Architectural Features Comparison Table.....	106
Table 4.25 Display Preferences Comparison Table.....	106
Table 4.26 Architectural Features Comparison Table.....	107
Table 4.27 Architectural Features Comparison Table.....	108

Table 4.28 Display Preferences Comparison Table of Strozzi Palace and Arsenale di Venezia	109
Table 4.29 Display Preferences Comparison Table of Fondazione Prada and MAXXI	111
Table 5.1 Research Questions, Objectives, Evaluations.....	114



Chapter 1

Introduction

Historically, museums were primarily spaces for storing and displaying collections, often reflecting the tastes and values of the elite. Over time, the role of museums has evolved into public institutions focused on education and cultural engagement, reflecting a broader societal shift towards democratization of art access.

The relationship between the architectural design of museums and the display of artworks is a critical factor in how visitors engage with and interpret art. In this context, the architecture of a museum plays a significant role, influencing not only the aesthetic appeal of the space but also its functionality in terms of visitor flow and artwork display. The design of museum spaces can guide visitor interactions with the exhibits, enhancing understanding and engagement through strategic layout and design choices. As such, the architectural design of a museum directly impacts the visitor experience, acting as an intermediary between the artwork and the audience.

Contemporary museum architecture often embraces innovative design elements that support and enhance the display of modern art forms. These spaces are designed to be more than mere containers for art; they are conceived to interact with the artwork, facilitating a dialogue between the art and the architectural environment. This approach is especially relevant in contemporary art settings, where the integration of space and art can be a critical component of the exhibition's conceptual framework.

The dialogue with art display has gained a new perspective, particularly within museums that have embraced the adaptive reuse of historic structures. Such projects transform historically significant buildings into contemporary venues that fulfill the modern functional requirements of museums. This practice not only conserves architectural heritage but also introduces complex challenges for designers who must meld historical aesthetics with the needs of contemporary art display. These adaptive reuse initiatives underscore the changing role of museum spaces, showing how they can be

effectively reimagined to support vibrant and modern cultural activities while respecting their architectural legacies. The integration of old and new elements often creates a rich, dialogic environment where the architecture itself becomes part of the curatorial narrative, enhancing the overall thematic and aesthetic experience for visitors. This approach not only preserves the past but also redefines it, creating museum spaces that are both historically resonant and dynamically aligned with contemporary cultural discourse.

Overall, the study of museum architecture and its impact on display is crucial in understanding how these spaces serve not just as venues for viewing art but as active elements that shape the cultural and educational experiences of visitors. As museums continue to evolve, the exploration of how architectural space influences and enhances the display of art remains a vital area of academic inquiry within the field of architecture.

1.1 Purpose of the Thesis

The purpose of this study is to explore the relationship between architectural design and exhibition strategies within contemporary art museums, focusing on how these elements mutually influence each other. This research aims to understand the dynamic interaction similar to host and guest relationship, where architecture and exhibitions continuously shape and redefine one another. Through a detailed examination of how exhibition narratives can guide architectural configurations and how architectural forms can shape the viewing experience of art, this study aims to reveal the complex interactions between spatial design and artistic content, with each influencing and responding to the other within the museum setting. To demonstrate these dynamics, the thesis utilizes case studies from four renowned Italian institutions -Fondazione Prada, Palazzo Strozzi, MAXXI, and the Venice Biennale's Arsenale— to illustrate how architectural spaces and curatorial practices interact, providing a practical examination of the broader theoretical concepts of space and presentation in art institutions.

The main focus of the study is to explore how art and architecture influence each other in museum settings. This investigation leads to several specific questions about the interaction between museum layouts and art displays. The study examines how these interactions help create engaging and meaningful experiences for museum visitors. (Figure 1.1)

Table 1.1 Research Questions, Objectives and Assumptions

Research Questions	Objectives	Assumptions
What roles do museums play in presenting art and facilitating its interaction with audiences?	Categorizing the hierarchy of dominance between art and architecture in museums, where each feature exhibits different levels of dominance depending on the case.	The architecture of museums acts as a dynamic participant in the exhibition display narrative, sometimes transforming the museum itself into a form of art.
What is the relationship between art and architecture in adaptively reused contemporary art institutions, and how do they influence each other?	Investigating how contemporary art and architecture shape each other in a historical setting.	The design of a museum, especially in a historical setting, is both influenced by and an influencer of the art it hosts. Each aspect is crafted to complement the other, enhancing the aesthetic and functional qualities of both while respecting the building's historical significance.
How does the design of exhibition display impact the spatial layout and visitor circulation within contemporary art museums?	Analyzing the morphological impact of exhibition design on the utilization of museum space and the flow of visitor traffic.	Exhibition layouts are strategically designed to guide visitor movement and interaction within museum spaces, potentially influencing the overall experience and perception of the artworks.

Furthermore, this research will explore the role of adaptive reuse in the development of museum spaces, emphasizing the importance of innovative architectural solutions in enhancing cultural participation and public access to contemporary art. Through detailed analysis, this research will provide insights into the dynamics of museum design, exploring how architectural and curatorial strategies can be effectively combined to enhance the visitor's interaction with art. The findings are expected to offer practical contributions to the ongoing discussion on museum architecture and exhibition practices, potentially influencing future approaches to museum design and layout. Italy is widely recognized as one of the birthplaces of the museum concept, with its tradition of collecting and displaying artifacts dating back to Roman times and evolving significantly during the Renaissance. In recent decades, Italy has transformed unexpected buildings such as distilleries, barracks, and shipyards into museums, reflecting a broader trend in contemporary museology that combines preservation with innovation. Italian institutions offer unique case studies to explore this rich heritage and its influence on modern museum architecture and exhibition design. The blend of historical continuity and innovative approach in Italy provides an ideal context for studying the dynamic interaction between architecture and exhibition spaces.

1.2 Method of the Thesis

The methodology of this thesis is grounded in a comprehensive conceptual framework that examines the interplay between the museum concept, architectural design, and exhibition strategies. The research begins with a thorough literature review and interpretation of the museum's role, its architectural significance, and the relationship between exhibition and space. This foundational analysis sets the stage for a deeper investigation into specific case studies.

Initially, the thesis explores the concept of the museum and its evolving usage and value. Following this, the relationship between exhibition practices and spatial design is discussed, including an analysis of display types and spatial arrangements in museums, as well as visitor flow patterns. This analysis is used to create a reference framework for the case studies.

In the fourth chapter, the thesis delves into a detailed analysis of four renowned Italian institutions: Fondazione Prada, Strozzi Palace, MAXXI, and the Venice Biennale's Arsenale. These site visits were essential for understanding the spatial dynamics and curatorial integration from an architectural perspective. Extensive photographic documentation supplements these observations, providing a visual record of the interaction between the buildings and their exhibitions. The methodology includes morphological and syntactic analysis of the spaces, comparing and contrasting the exhibition routes and spatial configurations. By examining these aspects, the thesis highlights how each institution uniquely addresses the interplay between architecture and exhibition design.

During each visit, detailed observations were made regarding the layout of the museums, the use of space, visitor flow, and the relationship between the architectural elements and the artworks displayed. This hands-on approach allowed for an in-depth assessment of how the physical environment influences visitor experiences and engagement with art. Key to this methodology was capturing a comprehensive array of images that document various aspects of the museums' interiors and exteriors. These photographs serve not only as evidence to support analytical discussions within the thesis but also as a visual reference that underscores the spatial narratives encountered in each museum.

To complement the qualitative observations, simplistic space syntax graphs were created to quantitatively analyze the layout of the buildings and the exhibitions. Space

syntax is a method used to measure and interpret the relationships and flows within spatial configurations. By employing this technique, the thesis delineates the connectivity and integration of different spaces within the museums, providing a clearer understanding of how architectural design influences visitor movement and interaction patterns.

The observational data and space syntax analysis were then critically analyzed to draw insights into how museum architecture and design influence the display and perception of art. This involved a careful review of the physical setups, noting how different architectural decisions impact the overall effectiveness of art exhibitions. The combination of firsthand observation, photographic evidence, and analytical space syntax graphs provides a robust foundation for discussing the complex interplay between architecture and art display, aiming to contribute substantively to the discourse on museum design in the contemporary art context. Through this approach, the thesis seeks to highlight practical and theoretical implications of architectural choices in enhancing cultural and educational experiences within museum spaces.

1.3 Scope of the Thesis

The scope of this thesis is narrowly defined to concentrate on contemporary art museums in Italy that have undergone adaptive reuse and have hosted exhibitions during the 2022-2023 period. The focus is Italy because it is the birthplace of the museum concept and provides a selection of adaptively reused contemporary art museums, offering valuable references for comparison. This focus allows for an in-depth exploration of how historical buildings repurposed as art museums meet contemporary cultural and functional demands while maintaining their architectural integrity. Additionally, Italy's expertise in the architectural conservation of historical buildings and its status as a focal point in the art world make it an exemplary model for global museology

This study specifically examines the dynamics between the architectural renovation of these spaces and their current use as venues for contemporary art exhibitions. By limiting the scope to recently held exhibitions, the research aims to capture the most current practices and trends in museum layout, curatorial strategies, and visitor engagement. This temporal focus also provides insights into how these museums have adapted to recent challenges, including changes in audience behavior and expectations, as well as the evolving nature of contemporary art itself.

In choosing Italy as the geographical focus, the thesis benefits from a rich context of historical architecture and a vibrant contemporary art scene. Italy's unique blend of classical and modern influences offers a fertile ground for studying the adaptive reuse of architectural heritage within the sphere of contemporary cultural practices. The selected museums represent a variety of approaches to the integration of old and new, each providing distinct case studies on the successful melding of historical preservation with innovative architectural design to enhance art presentation and viewer experience.

Overall, by focusing on adaptively reused contemporary art museums in Italy that have been active exhibition venues in the recent period, the thesis aims to provide a comprehensive overview of how these institutions function as cultural intermediaries in the modern art world, preserving the past while dynamically engaging with the present.



Chapter 2

Museum in Transition

Museums have long been essential institutions in the preservation and interpretation of cultural and historical narratives, with their roles and missions evolving significantly over time. The concept of the museum dates back to the ancient Greek "mouseion," which referred to places dedicated to the Muses, with the Museum of Alexandria, established around 280 BCE, being a notable early example (Abt, 2006). Traditionally, museums have been seen as repositories for art and scientific artifacts, often described as "guardians of the past" for their role in preserving ancient objects and treasures (Günay, 2012). In modern times, museums have expanded beyond their traditional roles of preservation and exhibition to become dynamic centers for exploring and interpreting artistic and scientific achievements. These institutions not only house valuable artifacts but also play a crucial role in the display and appreciation of art. Museums serve as vital platforms for artists to present their work, offering the public access to a diverse range of artistic expressions, from classical masterpieces to contemporary creations. By curating and presenting art, museums enhance cultural awareness and appreciation, contributing to the public's understanding of artistic trends and movements. Moreover, museums are important centers for research and education, dedicated to increasing public knowledge of both historical and contemporary art. By studying and showcasing various forms of human creativity, museums play a key role in advancing art history and promoting cultural literacy. Their evolving roles enable museums to connect the past with the present, providing insights that link historical art contexts with modern artistic developments, thus enriching the cultural and intellectual life of society.

2.1 History and Evolution of Museums

The Latin origin of the word "museum" was associated with intellectual debate spaces throughout Roman times. The renowned Museum at Alexandria, established by Ptolemy I Soter at the beginning of the third century BCE, functioned more like a model university, featuring a college of academics and a famous library, rather than a facility for preserving and interpreting material legacy. This early concept of a museum emphasized intellectual enrichment and scholarly pursuits, laying the groundwork for the later development of collecting and studying artifacts (Abt, 2007). During this period, the concept of Pinacothecae, or image galleries, emerged in Roman homes. Derived from the Greek word pinakes, meaning painted tablets, these spaces featured movable paintings and frescoes depicting scenes in panel-like frames or trompe l'oeil replicas of paintings mounted on or hanging from walls (Bounia, 2017). Like Roman libraries, pinacothecae presented social challenges; despite being situated within private homes, social norms required them to be accessible to the public.

The word "museum" was reintroduced in 15th-century Europe to characterize Lorenzo de' Medici's collection in Florence, although this time it referred to a comprehensive collection rather than a physical structure. Even then, discussions about museum privacy are raised. Musaeum was an epistemological structure that included a variety of ideas, images, and institutions that were crucial to late Renaissance culture. It served as a mediator between private and public space, integrating the monastic notion of study as an introspective activity, the humanistic notion of gathering as a textual strategy, and the social demands of status and display satisfied by a collection (Findlen, 1989)

Initially, museums and collections were often exclusive to the elite, reflecting the tastes and interests of wealthy patrons. The 17th and 18th centuries saw the emergence of Cabinets of Curiosities, which can be considered pioneers to modern art museums. These so-called initial 'museums' displayed a wide range of natural and artificial items, including various art pieces and scientific samples, and were typically curated and owned by significant collectors.



Figure 2.1 Cabinet of Curiosities developed during 17th and 18th centuries.

The Enlightenment era of the 18th century sparked increased public interest in art, science, and culture, leading to the establishment of public museums. The Louvre Museum, opened in 1793, exemplifies this movement, with its mission to make art more accessible to a broader audience and commit to enlightenment and education. This marked a significant shift as museums transitioned from elite institutions to public spaces, dedicated to serving a wider community.

During 19th century art academies and specialized museums has arisen devoted especially to fine arts. These institutions carried an important role for acceptance and praise of art as a discipline by itself. Early 20th century has witnessed the arise of modern art movements which are; surrealism, expressionism, cubism triggered the establishment of specialized modern art institutions. For instance Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) which has opened in New York city in 1929 has mainly focused on the unusual exhibition concepts and publicity of up-to-date art.

At the second half of the 20th century which was the beginning of an important shift at the museum world. Due to changes in a museum's mission throughout its history, the definition of the word "museum" has evolved over the years. In their meeting in 1955, the International Council of Museums stated that museums are "permanent organizations in the service of society and its development, open to the public, which collect, preserve, research, communicate, and displays the tangible and intangible heritage of humanity and its environment with the aim of study, education and enjoyment." According to Sözen and Tanyeli (1986), museums are places that are accessible to the public and created to permanently display artistic, cultural, historical, or scientific items or that have the characteristics mentioned above. Traditional perspectives have been started to question within the emerge of new institutions focused on modern and contemporary art. When we especially take a look at the art museums, they have gone through a significant evolution. They started rethink their static concept on displaying artworks or cultural artifacts, to be more engaging and dynamic. Within this evolution museums have a need to redefine their existing mission and perspective. Stable contents and exhibitions which cause us to be a passive observer, started to transform into more engaging areas which enables active participation. This movement was a detangle for exhibitions from being static and stable to transforming into more dynamic art installations which cause to redefining the core concept of the museum experience for its user. This transformation was not only limited with the walls of the museums alone. Emergence of pop-up exhibitions, which are temporary yet quite impactful in terms of content, started to challenge the norm of permanent exhibition concept in the museum. These exhibitions which are showcasing for a limited of time, mostly located in unconventional places, became a key point for the transforming feature of contemporary art and its natural tendency towards being experimental and temporary.

Simonsson (2014), re-defines museum concept by rejecting the common stereotype of a museum which are consists of rooms are more than simply holding areas for temporary exhibits and on-display items. The layout, ambiance, and design of a museum are among the most important aspects of the whole experience. In museums and other places, spatial design is a communication component that lends extra significance to the contents of a space. The way that a space's elements are put together influences the atmosphere that surrounds a visitor. Furthermore, the relevance of spatial interactions is reinforced by additional aspects to create the exhibition setting in the context of museums,

where display practices play a vital role. This augmentation creates new meanings by introducing many modes. All components of an exhibition, including the exhibition space, are interdependent, and the notion of museum displays—which are distinguished by their multimodality and three-dimensionality—was born out of the interactions between these aspects. Our experiences are influenced not only by the concept of museums as collections of priceless artifacts and captivating narratives, but also by the physical architectural features, such as color schemes and lighting, that envelop visitors as they navigate the museum's areas. It's crucial to remember that exhibition space and its contents are inseparable and cannot be perceived as independent entities. This can be seen from the descriptions and analyses of each of the museums covered here as well, where factors like volume and proportions, or light and color, may interact to produce an impression that isn't strictly limited to just one of the two but instead to the combination of both.

2.2 Art and Architecture Dominancy in Museums

In contemporary art museums, artworks are arranged according to conceptual and spatial frameworks rooted in two distinct design strategies: curatorial and architectural. These strategies deploy specific design languages and methods for organizing, classifying, grouping, and displaying artworks, thereby structuring the relationship between the exhibition and the architecture. Psarra (2005), argues that the architecture of a museum holds equal importance to its exhibitions in drawing visitors. A building's design can become iconic enough to entice audiences regardless of the specific displays it houses. In terms of perception, "it is not possible to separate things from their way of appearing," as emphasized by Merleau-Ponty (2002). In museums, we cannot isolate our impressions of the art from its spatial context. The art influences our perception of the spaces, on the contrary, the spaces influence our impressions of the art. Together, they create a distinct significance, two interrelated components, and as their relationship evolves, so does the meaning.

Museums have evolved from being seen of as static stores of historical items to becoming dynamic institutions that capture the essence of their nations' cultures. Throughout history, museums have played various roles that exert significant influence on society, including political, cultural, and social dimensions. Simultaneously, the architectural forms of museums have undergone transformations to align with these roles.

This progression represents a broader cultural change in the way that art is viewed and appreciated, in addition to influencing the visual experience of visitors. Apart from changes in architectural styles, the methods of displaying artworks have also evolved considerably. Initially static and permanent display settings have become more flexible and temporary over time, profoundly impacting the history of art exhibitions. Exhibitions now play a more dominant role, extending beyond the walls of museums to appear in public spaces like streets, eliminating the need for dedicated museum structures. This change reflects a broader societal shift in how people perceive and access art, reshaping the way art is presented and experienced. Art has become more accessible and less restricted to formal institutions because to the move toward more adaptable and transient exhibition spaces. Pop-up stores, community art initiatives, and street displays are becoming essential components of the changing art scene. In addition to broadening the settings in which art is experienced, this democratization has given artists the freedom to try out new mediums and interact with a wider audience. Consequently, a new age where creativity transcends traditional constraints and fosters a more interactive and accessible cultural experience has been welcomed in by the dynamic interplay between art, its exhibition settings, and the public domain.

This section categorizes the historical discourse on museums into three sections, aiming to comprehensively comprehend the evolution of the museum concept. These categories encompass the museum as a monument, museum as an instrument, and museum as icons. Within these categories, museums will be analyzed by examining their architectural design and the dialogue between exhibition styles. Monumental museums are characterized by their ornate and neoclassical styles, contributing to their role as symbols of historical and cultural significance. On the other hand, the museum as an instrument introduces a novel approach to exhibition settings, emphasizing the presentation of artworks against a white, blank background, commonly referred to as the 'white cube' concept. Lastly, in the section addressing museums as icons, certain institutions transcend their role of merely displaying artworks; they become artworks themselves. Beyond serving as venues for art, their architectural designs evolve into landmarks, attracting people to visit and experience the building itself. This analysis will explore the multifaceted interactions between form and function, past and present, that transform these cultural institutions into more than just historical exhibits by looking at significant historical moments, significant architects, and important art movements. From

the I.M. Pei-designed Louvre Pyramid to Frank Gehry's avant-garde masterpiece, the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao, the evolution of museums mirrors not only the path of art and history but also the dynamic interaction between architecture and the displaying elements.

2.2.1 Museum as Monument

Museums as monuments are frequently distinguished by their grand neoclassical architecture, functioning as cultural landmarks and embodiments of national identity and historical continuity. These monumental museums often exhibit elaborate, decorative designs that maintain a distinct architectural identity independent of the exhibitions they contain. The dialogue between the exhibition and the architecture emphasizes this separation, as the building's architectural grandeur and ornamental features are considered significant works of art in their own right. This distinction positions the museum structure itself as a focal point, with its architectural magnificence providing a sophisticated backdrop that enriches the overall visitor experience while preserving a unique architectural presence distinct from the exhibited artifacts.

According to Giebelhausen (2006), the early 1800s witnessed a remarkable surge in museum construction within the small German kingdom of Bavaria. After a visit to Rome, Ludwig, the future king of Bavaria, decided that Munich needed a museum. Consequently, three significant museums were constructed in rapid succession: the Neue Pinakothek (1846-1853), dedicated to modern art; the Glyptothek (1815-1830); and the Alte Pinakothek (1826-1836), an image gallery. These designs were deeply rooted in eighteenth-century culture. The Berlin and Munich museums played pivotal roles in standardizing this new architectural type. The Glyptothek and the Altes Museum adapted Durand's seminal concept for the ideal museum, presenting art exhibits as ordered, linear histories that visitors could traverse and experience firsthand (Giebelhausen, 2006).

The Vatican Museums, situated within Vatican City, are housed in a complex of neoclassical buildings and papal apartments, including the iconic Sistine Chapel. The architecture itself is integral to the museum experience, immersing visitors in the historical and religious context of the Vatican. The exhibition style in the Vatican Museums is characterized by careful curation and specialized lighting, which highlights the intricate details of masterpieces like Michelangelo's frescoes, creating a sublime atmosphere that connects the art with the spiritual and historical significance of the

Vatican. Italy's profound influence is evident in the Vatican Museums, encapsulating centuries of artistic and religious heritage, making it a cultural gem within the broader Italian context.

The Uffizi Gallery exemplifies Renaissance heritage and meticulously curated exhibition settings. Housed within the historic Palazzo degli Uffizi, the gallery's architectural layout, featuring interconnected rooms and corridors, offers a seamless journey through Renaissance art from the 13th to the 17th centuries (Giebelhausen, 2006). The exhibition settings within the Uffizi are designed to provide visitors with a chronological and thematic exploration of artistic developments. Natural light, flooding through large windows and skylights, creates an illuminating ambiance that enhances the viewing experience. The interplay of natural and artificial lighting is carefully orchestrated to highlight the intricate details of masterpieces while ensuring their preservation. Thematic displays weave a narrative connecting individual artworks to broader cultural, religious, and historical contexts. Benches and seating areas invite contemplation, allowing visitors to absorb the rich tapestry of Renaissance art in a setting resonating with the historical significance of the palace.

The British Museum in London, a 19th-century neoclassical masterpiece by Sir Robert Smirke, embodies the imperial aspirations of the British Empire. This monument stands as a memorial to the country's colonial past, with its majestic construction complementing the grandeur of the ancient artifacts it houses. Similarly, the Palazzo Doria Pamphilj serves as an example of a historic house museum. These structures, once residences, have been transformed into museums due to their cultural, historical, and preservation significance. Often restored to their former condition, they provide a unique glimpse into the lives of their former inhabitants (Simonsson, 2014).

The Prince's Palace in Monaco, comprising structures built between the 13th and 20th centuries, still serves as a residence for the Prince of Monaco. In the case of Palazzo Doria Pamphilj, its architectural magnificence mirrors many other palaces in Rome, some repurposed into museums globally, while others continue to function as homes with public-accessible areas. This dual functionality allows these structures to serve as repositories of historical artifacts and echoes of a bygone era, offering visitors a unique insight into the lives of the individuals who once inhabited these grand residences.

An interesting parallel to this transformation is the Louvre in Paris. Originally constructed as a royal palace, the Louvre underwent a significant metamorphosis,

evolving into one of the world's largest and most renowned museums. The Louvre's transformation reflects the dynamic relationship between historical structures and their adaptability to changing cultural contexts. With origins dating back to the medieval period, the Louvre now stands as a cultural icon, housing an extensive collection spanning centuries and civilizations. The Louvre's transition from a royal residence to a global cultural institution showcases the potential of historical house museums to evolve into expansive, inclusive spaces. This transformation aligns with the broader trend of repurposing historical buildings to serve contemporary cultural needs while preserving their architectural and historical integrity.

In conclusion, museums as monuments represent a unique blend of art, history, and architectural magnificence, often showcasing neoclassical designs that reflect cultural and national heritage. These institutions, such as Bavaria's early 19th-century museums, the Vatican Museums, the Uffizi Gallery, the British Museum, and the Louvre, demonstrate the development of museum architecture and its impact on cultural storytelling. The strong architectural identity of these museums, characterized by detailed and decorative designs, creates a distinct relationship with the exhibitions they house. This relationship not only highlights the museum building itself as an important architectural and historical piece but also enhances the visitor experience by providing a grand and contextually rich environment for viewing art. Therefore, museums as monuments continue to be key cultural landmarks, preserving the essence of their historical eras and offering a meaningful link between the past and present through their architectural and curatorial quality.

2.2.2. Museum as Instrument

Museums designed as instruments prioritize creating a neutral space that emphasizes the artwork without architectural interference, contrasting significantly with monumental museums where the architecture itself can dominate the visitor's experience. In monumental museums, the architecture often interacts dynamically with the art, potentially influencing the viewer's perception. In contrast, museums as instruments aim to minimize this interaction, instead offering a neutral background that lets the artwork stand out. Concept of the museum as an instrument reflects a shift towards neutrality, functionality and

practicality in museum design, emphasizing the museum's role as a dynamic space for the display and appreciation of art.

The "white cube" concept is central to the idea of the museum as an instrument. Originating in the mid-20th century alongside movements like abstract expressionism and minimalism, the white cube is defined by its minimalist aesthetic—white walls, simple ceilings, and discreet lighting. This setup is intended to remove any distractions that could detract from the artwork itself, creating a neutral environment that enhances the viewer's focus on the art. And the white cube refers to a gallery aesthetic characterized by its square or oblong shape, white walls, and a light source usually from the ceiling, providing a controlled environment ideal for viewing art.

The Great Exhibition, which took place in London's Hyde Park in 1851, significantly altered this conventional method of exhibition. The occasion, which marked the beginning of the era of global fairs, was ground-breaking and extraordinarily ambitious in terms of its scope and reach (Greenhalgh, 1988). The exhibition introduced two crucial aspects to display architecture: flexibility and temporariness. The massive Crystal Palace, constructed from prefabricated glass and iron components, met the needs of this new exhibition format with its easy assembly and disassembly. After the exhibition, the Crystal Palace was relocated to Sydenham, where it served as a display venue until its destruction by fire in 1936. The success of the Great Exhibition led to a series of international exhibitions, such as those held in Paris (1855, 1867, 1878, 1889, and 1900), London (1862), and Chicago (1893). Also, the success of this exhibition contributed to the creation of the South Kensington Museum, now known as the Victoria and Albert Museum. This museum, and others like it across Europe such as the applied arts museums in Vienna, Berlin, and Hamburg, were inspired by the need to adapt and evolve to accommodate changing displays and modern industrial innovations.

The Museum of Modern Art in New York is similarly founded on the idea of the museum as an instrument (Pointon, 1994). It was established in 1929 with an emphasis on modern art creation, encompassing photography, video, design, sculpture, architecture, and works on paper. Alfred H. Barr, the museum's first manager, described it like a torpedo traveling throughout time. Works would be periodically examined and either de-accessioned or added to the permanent collections of the Metropolitan Museum in order to be really modern. MoMA's initial strategy of concentrating on the contemporary—a fifty-year time frame—would guarantee that it would have a permanent collection, but

one whose contents would be continuously updated. The main home of MoMA in midtown Manhattan was built by Philip L. Goodwin and Edward Durell Stone, and it opened its doors in 1939. During that period, MoMA continued to adhere to its radical beliefs and required adaptable exhibition spaces. With the exception of the load-bearing pillars, each floor of the galleries was designed as an open-plan area. Partitions might be used to separate them in order to allow a variety of works and exhibit narratives. MoMA sought to design "neutral" and adaptable exhibition rooms. This is where the "white cube" theme first appeared. The majority of earlier exhibition formats positioned the artwork within magnificent interiors, such as opulent palaces or opulent nineteenth-century institutions. Rather than diverting attention from the item, the interior of the "white cube" was designed to create an environment that encouraged artistic contemplation and absorption. The ceilings were simple and practical, with white walls holding artwork, monochrome flooring, and discreet tracking devices that allowed for adjustable lighting. Similar to how nineteenth-century museum rooms often followed the classic enfilade of galleries, which were inspired by palaces, the "white cube" emerged as the modernist exhibition paradigm. Throughout the latter part of the 20th century, it was to take center stage in gallery and museum interiors (O'Doherty, 1999).

Following modernism, museums have taken on a variety of shapes. The design philosophy typically emphasizes architecture as a "neutral" backdrop that supports rather than overshadows the artwork. This approach aims to simplify the environment, reducing it to its essential elements to encourage visitors to focus purely on the art. However, the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, designed by Frank Lloyd Wright in 1959, presents a nuanced interpretation of this trend. While it maintains the white cube concept within its exhibition spaces, ensuring that the artworks are viewed against a minimalist, undistracted background, the museum's architecture itself challenges these norms. The gallery is reimaged as a sculpture. The iconic domed rotunda of the Guggenheim is dynamically formed, transforming the building into a sculptural work of art in its own right. This design strategy suggests that while the exhibition spaces preserve the white cube's focus on art, the museum building itself engages visitors as a monumental piece of art, enhancing the overall aesthetic and experiential impact.



Figure 2.2 Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum interior view

When considering the broader concept of architecture serving as a neutral interface for artworks, certain features emerge that allow us to classify museums based on how effectively they embody this principle. Both the Acropolis Museum in Athens and the Museo dell'Ara Pacis in Rome, for instance, utilize architectural elements and exhibition settings that enhance the display of cultural heritage. These museums are designed to center around significant historical artifacts—elements of the Parthenon frieze in the Acropolis Museum and the Ara Pacis altar in the Museo dell'Ara Pacis. Additionally, both spaces share architectural similarities, including ample natural light from many windows, minimalist white furnishings, and stone details. These features create an environment that supports and accentuates the intrinsic value of the artworks, making them prime examples of how museums can serve as neutral interfaces for artistic and cultural expression.

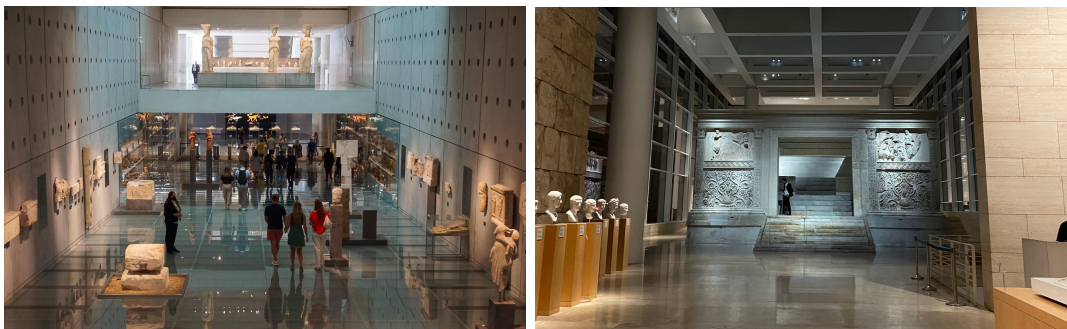


Figure 2.3 Acropolis Museum Main Exhibition Area, Athens, Greece (left), Ara Pacis Museum Main Exhibition Area, Rome, Italy, 7th December 2022 (right)

Overall, the shift from monumental to instrumental museum designs reflects a nuanced understanding of the interplay between architecture and art. Where monumental museums often use their architectural prowess to augment the visitor's experience,

museums designed as instruments adopt a more restrained approach, using minimalist and flexible spaces to highlight the art itself. This evolution in museum architecture is vividly illustrated by the transformation in exhibition strategies, from the grand, opulent halls of traditional museums to the adaptable, unobtrusive galleries seen in modern institutions like the Museum of Modern Art and the Centre Pompidou. These contemporary spaces prioritize the art over the architectural setting, promoting a viewer experience that is focused on direct engagement with the artworks, free from the interpretive influence of their surroundings. This strategic shift not only enhances the accessibility and appreciation of contemporary art but also underscores the museum's role as a dynamic platform for cultural expression and interaction, blending high and popular cultural elements to democratize art consumption and engage a broader audience.

2.2.3. Museum as Icon

In museum architecture, the "Museum as Icon" distinctly differs from "Museum as Monument" and "Museum as Instrument." While museums as monuments emphasize historical significance and architectural prominence, and museums as instruments focus on creating functional, neutral spaces to showcase art, museums as icons prioritize the architectural presence. This approach treats the building itself as a key element of artistic expression, often allowing the architecture to overshadow the artworks within. In these iconic museums, rather than serving as a neutral interface, the architecture shifts the balance of dominance, becoming a work of art that can overshadow the exhibition it houses. As a result, visitors are often drawn to these museums more for their architectural innovation and aesthetic appeal than for the exhibitions they host. Iconic museums transform the museum into a focal point that not only attracts attention but also contributes significantly to shaping the city's cultural and visual identity, positioning the structure as a landmark within its urban context.



Figure 2.4 The Guggenheim Museum designed by Frank Gehry, Bilbao, Spain

The exploration of how museums act as icons within their cities includes examining structures like the avant-garde MAXXI in Rome and the deconstructivist Guggenheim Museum Bilbao. Architects like Frank Gehry have re-envisioned museums not merely as venues for displaying art but as monumental works of architecture in their own right. The Guggenheim Bilbao, for instance, not only houses an impressive collection of modern art but also stands as a beacon of deconstructivist design. Gehry's use of titanium panels and fluid forms has transformed Bilbao's industrial waterfront into a vibrant cultural hub, redefining the city's image and establishing the museum as a global landmark. This transformation showcases the museum's role in hosting a variety of cultural activities along the riverfront, with its galleries offering diverse environments—from expansive atrium-style spaces to more traditional, top-lit rooms—challenging the modernist ideal of neutral exhibition spaces and celebrating the variety inherent in artistic expression.



Figure 2.5 MAXXI exterior view (left) and interior view (right) showing the foyer of the museum, 7th December 2022

Similarly, the MAXXI—National Museum of the 21st Century Arts—located in Rome’s Flaminio district, is a testament to the modern interplay between art and architecture. Designed by Zaha Hadid, the museum embraces fluidity and dynamism, breaking away from conventional architectural forms. Since its opening in 2010, the MAXXI has served as a bold exploration of Hadid’s signature style, characterized by sweeping lines, organic shapes, and a sense of continuous movement. The design blurs the boundaries between interior and exterior spaces, allowing a seamless flow of light and air, and creates an engaging environment that challenges traditional perceptions of museum architecture. This space is not only a venue for viewing art but is itself a dynamic piece of contemporary sculpture.

The MAXXI Museum in Rome exemplifies a dual approach to museum architecture, balancing iconic design elements with functional exhibition spaces. At the entrance, the museum’s foyer acts as a striking visual icon, characterized by the dramatic design of its staircase. This architectural feature not only serves as a bold statement piece but also encapsulates the museum's identity as a modern art venue, attracting visitors and framing their initial interaction with the space. Inside, the gallery areas present a reevaluation of the traditional white cube concept. While still maintaining the minimalist aesthetics of white walls and controlled lighting typical of the white cube, the MAXXI modifies this approach to ensure the architecture itself remains noticeable yet less dominant. This subtle integration of architectural presence allows the artwork to be the central focus, yet acknowledges the building's design as an integral part of the visitor experience. By balancing these elements, the MAXXI achieves a harmonious environment where the architecture enhances rather than overshadows the art, redefining how a museum can simultaneously celebrate its architectural identity and serve its primary function as a space for art exhibition.



Figure 2.6 Groninger Museum designed by Alessandro Mendini facade and interior view, Groninger, Netherlands

Despite the inherent uniqueness of the mentioned museums in terms of architectural elements, environmental settings, and exhibition concepts, a commonality exists in their display settings. These institutions can be systematically compared based on this shared aspect, providing a valuable framework for analysis and evaluation. According to Simonsson (2014), the unique façade and internal design of the Groninger Museum in Groningen make MAXXI comparable of that institution. Another example of an unusual museum structure that, like MAXXI, is well-known for its architectural design and draws tourists for that specific purpose is the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao. Even though the layout, color scheme, and other aspects of these three art museums vary greatly, they all represent the idea of the museum as an art form. This approach marks a significant shift in how museums are perceived and interacted with, not just as venues for art display but as integral parts of the artistic dialogue themselves. Each building, through its unique architectural design, engages visitors on multiple sensory levels, enhancing the overall experience by integrating the structure with the art it hosts. These museums challenge visitors to consider the architecture as a deliberate, curated part of their visit, blurring the lines between the art on the walls and the space around it, fostering a deeper appreciation for how environments influence perception and interaction with art.

In conclusion, the 'museum as icon' approach transforms the traditional museum space, elevating the architecture itself to the level of artwork, often overshadowing the exhibitions it hosts. This evolution in museum design marks a departure from the architectural neutrality typically expected in museum settings. Instead of merely serving as a backdrop for displays, the architectural design becomes a dominant feature of the visitor experience. Museums such as the MAXXI, Groninger, and Guggenheim Bilbao illustrate how these structures do more than house artworks; they become central pieces of art, defining the landscape and drawing public interest perhaps even more for their architectural innovation than for the collections they contain. This shift underscores a complex layering in the dialogue between architecture and art, where the building adds a unique dimension to the cultural narrative, profoundly impacting how art is experienced within its walls.

2.3 Adaptive Reuse in Museum Buildings

Repurposing already-existing historical buildings is a growing trend in museum architecture. This method not only revitalizes historical structures while preserving its essential qualities, resulting in a vibrant blend of the past and modern. Two primary objectives influenced the concept: preserving the historic built environment and redefining the city's image. The contemporary trend of repurposing historical structures into museums is exemplified by notable institutions, such as Musée d'Orsay, Centrale Montemartini, and Tate Modern. This architectural approach transcends conventional refurbishment, encompassing a deliberate synthesis of preservation, urban identity redefinition, and innovative exhibition methodologies. Take the Musée d'Orsay in Paris as a paradigm. Formerly a railway station (Gare d'Orsay), it now functions as a museum showcasing French art from the latter 19th to early 20th centuries. This adaptive repurposing not only rejuvenates the historical station but also fosters a unique setting for art display, intentionally juxtaposing masterpieces against the distinctive Beaux-Arts architecture. This intentional blending of historical preservation with artistic exhibition underscores the transformative potential of such endeavors.

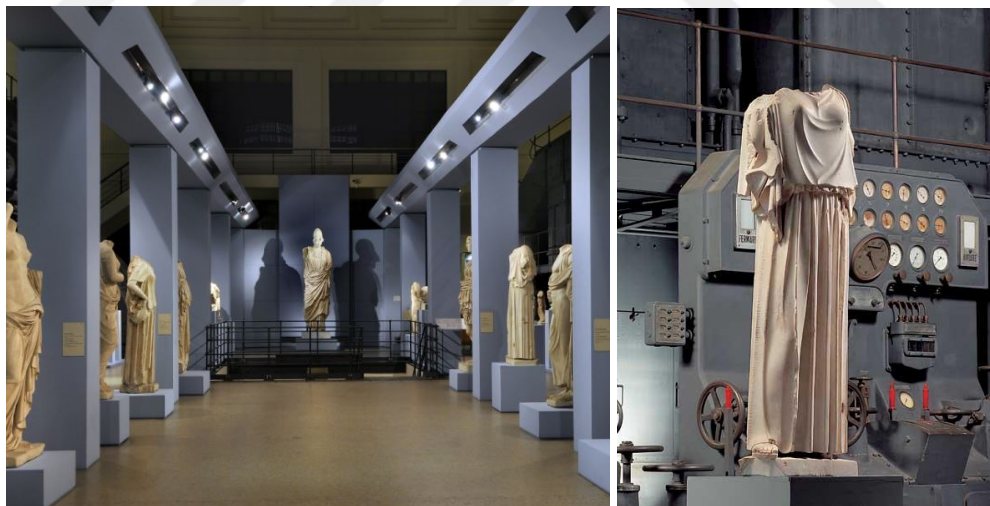


Figure 2.7 Centrale Montemartini, ancient sculptures in the power plant, Rome, Italy

Similarly, the Centrale Montemartini in Rome represents a distinctive transformation of a former power plant into a museum space. The juxtaposition of classical sculptures amid industrial machinery provides an insightful interplay between ancient artifacts and modern infrastructure, offering a nuanced perspective on historical narratives and technological evolution. This fusion of classical and industrial elements

underscores the innovative potential inherent in repurposing historical structures for museum curation. (Figure 2.7)



Figure 2.8 Tate Modern Turbine Hall before and after restoration, London, United Kingdom

The Tate Modern in London is another exemplary case, repurposing the Bankside Power Station into a globally renowned contemporary art museum. (Figure 2.8) The conversion of an industrial facility into a cultural institution symbolizes the harmonious coexistence of historical architecture and avant-garde artistic expression. The expansive Turbine Hall, hosting monumental installations, further accentuates the adaptability of repurposed spaces for dynamic and immersive exhibitions. In academic discourse, these instances of repurposing historical buildings for museums underscore the transformative potential of this architectural practice. Through the integration of architectural preservation with the redefinition of urban landscapes and innovative curatorial strategies, these museums epitomize a comprehensive approach that not only safeguards cultural heritage but also fosters a nuanced discourse between historical continuity and contemporary expression.



Figure 2.9 The Arsenale, Gaggiandre and Sale d'Armi during Venice Biennale 2022: The Milk of Dreams, Venice, Italy, 21st October 2022

The Venice Arsenale offers a compelling example of adaptive reuse in the museum sector, transforming from its historical role as a naval shipyard into a dynamic contemporary art space (Figure 2.9). Originally constructed in the early 12th century, the Arsenale was crucial to the maritime power of the Venetian Republic, serving as one of the largest pre-industrial production centers in the world. This historic complex was primarily dedicated to shipbuilding and the manufacturing of military equipment, symbolizing Venice's naval dominance. Today, repurposed as a primary venue for the Venice Biennale, the Arsenale facilitates a vibrant dialogue between its formidable architectural heritage and contemporary art exhibitions. This transition not only preserves the physical fabric of the historic site but also reinvigorates its cultural significance by providing a unique backdrop that enhances the presentation and experience of modern art, thereby contributing to the ongoing cultural narrative of Venice.

The adaptive reuse of historic buildings into museum spaces is a powerful approach that not only preserves architectural heritage but also redefines their cultural utility for contemporary society. Through the transformation of structures these buildings continue to serve as vital cultural repositories, their rich histories providing a resonant context for the presentation of modern art. This practice not only mitigates the environmental impact of new constructions but also enriches the community's cultural landscape by linking the past with the present in meaningful ways. As these spaces evolve, they embody the dynamic interplay between historical preservation and modern innovation, ensuring that heritage buildings remain relevant and vibrant in today's rapidly changing world. This

strategy exemplifies how adaptive reuse can successfully marry history with functionality, offering sustainable solutions that celebrate and utilize the intrinsic value of historical sites in contemporary cultural expressions.

2.4 Museum's Shifting Role

Contemporary art museums have undergone a profound transformation from traditional institutions primarily focused on preservation to dynamic entities that engage with and reflect the complexities of modern society. This shift in focus reflects broader changes in the art world and society at large, influenced by significant historical, technological, and cultural shifts.

Initially, museums primarily served as custodians of the past, but the advent of contemporary art in the 20th century, with its emphasis on new materials and concepts, required these institutions to reconsider their roles. As detailed by Alberro (2009), the post-1989 world, marked by events like the fall of the Soviet Union and the rapid expansion of globalization, introduced a new era that integrated digital culture, fundamentally altering the relationship between art and its audiences. This period demanded that museums not only preserve art but also engage actively with living artists and communities, facilitating a more interactive dialogue between art and its viewers.

Formerly, museums served as guardians of historical artifacts. However, as contemporary art in the 20th century began to challenge traditional boundaries with new materials and conceptual approaches, these institutions were compelled to reassess their roles. According to McClellan (2003), this shift required museums to transition from passive repositories to active, engaging spaces that facilitate interactions between the artwork and the audience, reflecting a broader transformation in the interaction between art and its viewers marked by significant global events.

Institutions like MoMA have been pivotal in this transformation. Belting (2012) notes that MoMA not only contributed to the development of modernism but also redefined the cultural and social roles of museums through its influential exhibitions. Similarly, the Venice Biennale and Tate Modern have expanded their scope to include fostering international dialogue and community engagement, reflecting a broader trend where museums are not just places of art display but also venues for cultural exchange and social interaction, as highlighted by Cole and McIyntre (2014).

The pressures of globalization and increased cultural exchange have further influenced museums to embrace inclusivity and diversity. Dumbadze (2015) emphasizes the importance of including diverse voices within the museum setting, enriching the cultural discourse and expanding the museum's role in society. Additionally, the rise of digital technology has transformed how museums interact with their audiences. Kelly (2010) explores how digital advancements have reinvented communication and community dynamics, presenting both challenges and opportunities for museums to engage with a global audience beyond physical boundaries.

Moreover, the societal role of museums has evolved from authoritative institutions to facilitators of cultural and social transformation. According to Prior (2003), contemporary museums are now seen as open and adaptive spaces, actively participating in cultural dialogues and responding to the changing needs of society. Nieroba (2018) adds that today's museums engage with diverse audiences and adapt to rapidly changing societal expectations by promoting cultural integration and understanding.

When this topic is approached from the perspective of the transformation of artworks, the display of artworks in museums has seen a significant transformation, mirroring the shift of museums from simple storage spaces to vibrant cultural centers. Initially, museums primarily showcased 2D visual art, such as paintings and drawings, often displayed in static formats. These early displays focused on preserving and presenting artworks within a neutral, often sterile environment, like the "white cube" gallery concept, which aimed to minimize distractions and emphasize the artwork itself.

As museums embraced their role as cultural institutions, the approach to displaying art began to change. Artworks evolved from static objects to dynamic installations that engage multiple senses and invite interaction. This shift reflects a broader trend in contemporary art, where the focus has expanded beyond visual aesthetics to include more engaging and participatory elements. Modern exhibitions frequently feature multimedia installations, interactive displays, and site-specific works that transform the viewer's experience from passive observation to active participation.

This change in art display has allowed museums to create more engaging and thought-provoking exhibitions. By incorporating diverse media and embracing new technologies, museums can offer visitors a richer, more varied experience. This transformation highlights the changing role of art in society, where artworks are no longer confined to traditional formats but are part of a broader dialogue that includes spatial,

sensory, and interactive dimensions. The evolution of art display thus mirrors the museum's journey from a place of preservation to a dynamic space for cultural exchange and innovation.

In summary, the role of contemporary art museums has undergone a profound change, moving from static institutions focused on preservation to vibrant cultural hubs that actively shape and respond to contemporary culture. Also, the displaying of art and artworks has transformed too. Now, the artworks don't depend on the museum; they create a narrative and experiential sequence on their own. This shift makes museums rethink their approach to displaying and engaging with art. They now function not only as educational centers but also as active participants in the cultural landscape, fostering dialogue, inclusivity, and engagement with the arts. This shift underscores the importance of museums as dynamic entities that reflect and influence the evolving cultural and social fabric of our times.

2.5 Chapter Review

This chapter provides a comprehensive exploration of the dynamic history and evolution of museums, detailing how the intertwined roles of art and architecture have influenced their development over time. It further discusses the categorization of museums based on their architectural and functional prominence—Museum as Monument, Museum as Instrument, and Museum as Icon—each embodying different aspects of cultural and architectural significance. The chapter concludes with an examination of adaptive reuse in museum buildings, highlighting how historical structures are being repurposed into cultural institutions that meet contemporary needs while preserving heritage.

Museums have historically served as custodians of culture, evolving from private collections accessible only to the elite, to public institutions serving broader societal interests. This evolution reflects changes in societal values towards accessibility, education, and cultural preservation. As museums have transformed, their architectural designs have also shifted, moving from merely functional spaces to iconic structures that communicate a city's cultural status and aspirations.

The classification of museums—Monument, Instrument, and Icon—further elucidates their role in society. Museums as Monuments are often historical landmarks, offering a connection to the past and serving as a testament to enduring cultural values. Museums as Instruments function as educational platforms, actively engaging with audiences to foster a deeper understanding of art and heritage. Meanwhile, Museums as Icons are architecturally significant structures that enhance the urban landscape, symbolizing innovation and cultural pride. The discussion on adaptive reuse in museum buildings addresses the contemporary challenge of preserving historical integrity while adapting to modern requirements. This practice not only breathes new life into old structures but also integrates them into the cultural and social fabric of urban life, allowing them to serve new functions as vibrant centers of art and community.

Overall, this chapter underscores the importance of museums not just as repositories of art but as vital entities within the cultural ecosystem, continuously evolving to reflect and respond to changing artistic landscapes and societal needs. This ongoing transformation is crucial for museums to remain relevant and effective in their mission to educate, inspire, and engage the public.

Chapter 3

Exhibitions as an Interface

Contemporary art museums function as critical nodes where the exhibition of artworks and the architectural environment interact to shape visitor experiences. Building on the discussion from the previous chapter, which examined the dialogue between art and architecture through the lens of architectural features, this chapter advances the analysis by focusing on exhibition display types and spatial morphology within these institutions.

Initially, this chapter explores the array of display methodologies utilized in contemporary art museums. Understanding these exhibition types is essential for comprehending how they serve as active components in the narrative and perception of art. Each display methodology—whether minimalist, immersive, or interactive—proposes distinct strategies for viewer engagement, affecting both their interpretative journey and their spatial navigation within the museum setting.

Subsequently, the chapter will examine the spatial configurations of museum environments, assessing how the design of visitor pathways and the morphological arrangement of spaces influence the overall museum experience. This analysis aims to illuminate the ways in which architectural planning and exhibition design interact to guide visitor flow and engagement, thereby enhancing the communicative power of the museum's architectural and curatorial intent.

By examining these aspects, the chapter seeks to articulate how exhibitions function as dynamic interfaces that not only showcase art but also actively shape the visitor's encounter with it, redefining the museum's role as an educative and experiential space. The insights garnered from these analyses will serve as a foundational reference for the forthcoming case studies, providing a critical framework for understanding the interplay between architecture and exhibition within these settings.

3.1 Displaying Types in Museums

Art museums are distinctive institutions, each shaped by its unique organizational structure and mission, even when engaging with similar historical periods, specific artists, or cultural themes. Despite the diversity inherent in the cultural sector, the exhibition of art has achieved a recognizable degree of standardization throughout the history of art. However, diverging from traditional methodologies, some museums and galleries have adopted post-modern approaches and strive to create displays that are not only visually compelling but also serve conceptual and aesthetic purposes.

This analysis will explore five prevalent exhibition strategies that have demonstrated enduring effectiveness and relevance across various contexts. The display types to be examined include the 'White Cube', known for its minimalist and neutral backdrop that focuses attention solely on the art; 'Salon Style', which utilizes dense arrangements of artworks to maximize space and evoke historical grandeur; 'Black Box', favored for multimedia and digital installations where darkness enhances the sensory experience; 'Archival Display', which organizes artworks and artifacts to narrate a historical or thematic story; and 'Site-Specific' installations, where artworks are integrally designed for and influenced by their specific locations.

Visitors and observers are encouraged to critically assess the arrangement of artworks during their visits, contemplating the strategic and underlying implications of these configurations. Through this scrutiny, the chapter seeks to reveal how each display type not only showcases art but also shapes the viewer's engagement and interpretation.

White Cube

The "**white cube**" is a common concept that galleries and art institutions use to organize their exhibition areas. Known for its rectangular shape, spotless white walls, and usually ceiling-mounted lighting, the gallery aesthetic gained popularity in the second half of the 20th century, correlating with the movements of minimalism and abstract expressionism. Because the walls in these areas are flawlessly white, there is a clear, uninterrupted viewing field that is uniformly and perfectly lit. The wall text that goes with the artworks is kept to a minimum and is purely practical, serving only to improve comprehension and not drawing attention away from the pieces themselves.



Figure 3.1 National Gallery of Modern and Contemporary Art in Rome curated with the white cube aesthetic, 8th December 2022

Early in the 20th century, the white cube display style was developed in response to the modern art movement's rising abstraction. In order to reduce distractions, artists from prominent movements like the Bauhaus and De Stijl chose to present their works against these white backgrounds, framing their pieces like the borders of a photograph. This desire was in line with simultaneous improvements in design and construction, which created a suitable setting for these kinds of art exhibits. For instance, National Gallery of Modern and Contemporary Art in Rome curated with the white cube aesthetic. (Figure 3.1)

In a series of columns for Artforum magazine in 1976, Brian O'Doherty offered more criticism on this style, which was eventually collected into the book "Inside the White Cube." The sanctified environment of the white cube, according to Brian O'Doherty, presents difficulties for art interpreters since it may give items an almost religious character, making it more difficult for viewers to interact with the work of art. Doherty (1999) In order to ensure that each piece of art has its due moment free from the disruption of crowded arrangements, the white cube approach stresses a neutral setting that accentuates the individual pieces

Salon Style

In a salon style display, paintings are placed both above and below eye level and frequently enclosed in ornated frames. This is a classic way to arrange artworks on a wall. Renowned establishments like the National Gallery in London and the Louvre in Paris employ this type of presentation. Salon style was the most common form of presentation until the 20th century, having its origins in the late 1600s at the Paris Salons, the world's most famous art exhibition that year. It was the only realistic method to accommodate all the artworks into the limited area, which was the reason behind this dense arrangement. Paintings hung higher on the wall were traditionally seen as having more significance since they were easier to see, particularly in spaces with many of people. An example of this would be the National Archaeological Museum of Naples, which is curated by Salon Style (Figure 3.2).



Figure 3.2 National Archaeological Museum of Naples curated by Salon Style, 2nd October 2022

Even if the salon style is now frequently associated with religious art, neoclassical collections, or portrait galleries, it yet has a feeling of ceremony and distinction. In stark contrast to minimalist techniques such as the white cube, this presentation style offers a visually rich and multilayered experience while capturing the historical spirit and majesty of previous art exhibitions.

Archival Display

Archival display is a method of presenting cultural objects, artist's drawings, or contextual documents in a unique way, generally by encasing or protecting them behind

glass screens. This arrangement of the pieces not only emphasizes their seeming worth but also relates to their apparent fragility. Furthermore, the "historical/cultural context" component of an art exhibition is usually indicated by the use of faded or darker-colored walls. For example, the "Le Cubisme" display at the Centre Pompidou showcased 20th-century cubist artworks in a white cube-like setting, while rooms with muted colors held sections highlighting historical influences and cultural references and showcasing objects like West African masks behind glass. Discussions over this exhibition style's possible drawbacks and anachronistic inclinations—which might put works in a setting that is inaccurate to their true historical period—have been aroused. Furthermore, there is concern that these approaches might devalue non-Western cultures' art, seeing it as "supplementary context" alone, rather than as essential elements of the show.



Figure 3.3 Vatican Museum Egyptian Collection curated by Archival Display, 30th October 2022

An example of this may be found in the way the Vatican Museums present their collection of items from Egypt while still preserving them. The historical significance and fragility of objects like as papyri, relics, and statues from ancient Egypt are highlighted by the protective glass covering them. As shown in Figure 3.3) The "historical/cultural context" of these objects is emphasized by the exhibit's darker wall colors and muted lighting style. In addition, this arrangement sets the room apart from other museum areas, such the brilliantly illuminated and simpler displays of Renaissance art. This method improves visitors' comprehension of the scope and complexity of the museum's many collections by enabling them to switch between several historical and cultural narratives.

Black Box

The "black box" display system, which is frequently used to present movies and other visual art, produces an immersive atmosphere with little to no lighting setup and is sometimes divided by a door or curtains. This arrangement works particularly effective for showcasing digital art and technology-focused shows.



Figure 3.4 MAXXI exhibition curated by Black Box Style, 7th December 2022

The black cube, for instance, has been effectively utilized at the MAXXI Museum in Rome to improve the tourist experience surrounding multimedia shows. (Fig. 3.4) One noteworthy application is in dynamic digital artwork shows, where the viewer's attention is drawn exclusively to the striking visuals and audio of the display by the black cube's enveloping blackness. By removing outside distractions from the digital experience, this technique lets viewers interact with the technology-driven art to the fullest extent possible.

Furthermore, MAXXI has presented films alongside art exhibits using the black box format, offering viewers a more comprehensive contextual knowledge of the artworks on display. This creative use of the black cube highlights the museum's modern focus by fusing technology and conventional art forms to produce an unforgettable and captivating visitor experience.

Site- Specific

Some of the most striking and captivating works of art are site-specific installations, which are created especially for a given area or period. These pieces are deeply interconnected with their surroundings, whether they are autonomous public installations or were commissioned by institutions. These sculptures have such a strong connection to their original site that if they were placed somewhere else, their meaning may be completely lost or changed. Notable examples of site-specific art include Olafur Eliasson's "The Weather Project," which was on show at the Tate Modern and turned the large Turbine Hall of the museum into a captivating space with mirrors and mist that resembled the sun and sky.

Kara Walker's "A Subtlety," another powerful sculpture, has been installed in the former Domino Sugar Factory and emphasizes the themes of labor and racism by drawing on the historical significance of the location. These pieces engage not only because they are visually striking and interactive, they also deeply connect with the unique histories and ambiances of the places they are shown, giving spectators experiences that will not soon forget.



Figure 3.5 'Milk of Dreams' Venice Biennale curated with Site-Specific installations, 21st October 2022

The Venice Biennale's "Milk of Dreams" exhibition is another compelling example of site-specific art that profoundly engages with its surroundings. (Figure 3.5) Held in the unique historical and cultural context of Venice, the exhibition takes its title from a

book by Leonora Carrington, reflecting on the transformation and possibilities of human bodies and identities in contemporary society. This theme is explored through a collection of works that respond not just to the physical spaces of the Biennale's pavilions, but also to the metaphorical and imaginative spaces of Venice itself.

In conclusion, the diverse array of display styles in art exhibitions—from the stark, minimalist white cube to the enveloping darkness of the black box, from the densely packed traditional salon-style arrangements to the contextually anchored site-specific installations—establishes essential frameworks through which art is engaged with and interpreted. Each style offers distinct perspectives and advantages, profoundly influencing the viewer's perception and interaction with the artworks. These varied exhibition formats are not merely aesthetic choices but are carefully considered strategies that provide unique contexts. These contexts enhance the viewer's sensory and intellectual experiences, deepening the emotional and cognitive connections with the art displayed.

Understanding these display methodologies is crucial not only for appreciating the aesthetic and conceptual dimensions of the artworks but also for recognizing the curator's deliberate intent in staging these pieces to the public. The strategic placement and presentation of artworks within these different environments can dramatically alter the narrative conveyed and the interpretative pathways offered to the audience. As museums and galleries continue to evolve and experiment with new exhibition formats, they do so in dialogue with contemporary cultural trends and artistic innovations. This dynamic interplay between the artwork and its mode of display remains a fundamental aspect of the discourse within the art world, continually challenging and reshaping our conceptions of space, art, and audience interaction.

The ongoing evolution of exhibition styles reflects a broader shift in how art is consumed and understood in modern society. As curators and designers push the boundaries of traditional display norms, they invite audiences into more immersive and interactive experiences, thereby enriching the dialogue between the viewer and the artwork. This shift highlights the importance of display methodologies in not only setting the stage for artistic appreciation but also in crafting meaningful narratives that resonate with diverse audiences, ensuring that the art remains relevant and impactful in an ever-changing cultural landscape.

3.2. Spatial Morphology of Museums

3.2.1 Circulation Patterns

In museums, the configuration of circulation patterns—how visitors navigate through spaces and exhibitions—significantly affects their interaction with and understanding of the displayed artworks. These patterns are strategically designed to direct visitors through a curated narrative or thematic sequence, enhancing their engagement and educational experience. Effective circulation considers not only the physical layout but also visitor flow, aiming to optimize accessibility and minimize overcrowding. This allows for a more thoughtful and uninterrupted interaction with the art. Ideally, a museum's circulation will guide visitors in a way that aligns with curatorial intentions, revealing the art in a predetermined sequence that underscores thematic or historical connections.

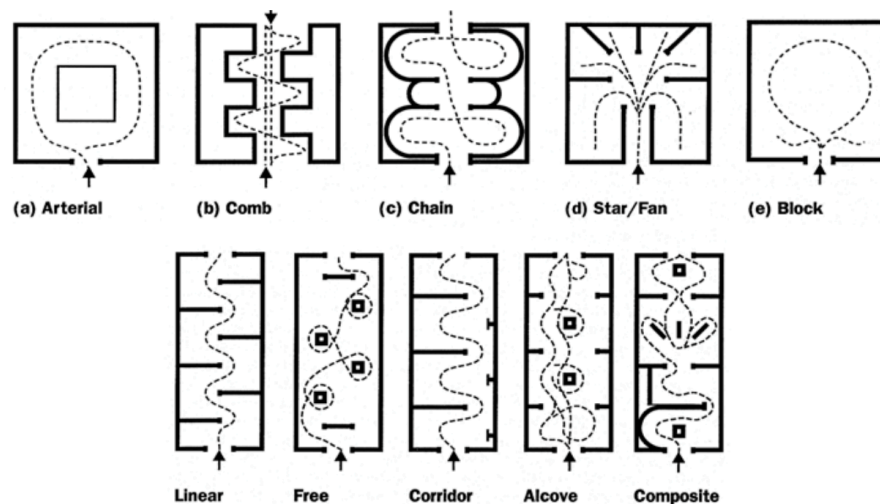


Figure 3.6 Lehmbrock's basic typology of circulation pattern

Lehmbrock has developed a classification for access systems within museum spaces, proposing that architectural spaces be deliberately designed to include a variety of focal points, perspectives, and mood transitions, similar to methods used in broader urban planning strategies.

Centralised access which includes the types between (a) to (e) in Figure 3.6 ; the principal benefits of such architectural systems lie in their enhanced capabilities for control and surveillance. These systems facilitate the systematic guidance of visitors along a designated trajectory. A significant limitation, however, is that visitors are

sequentially exposed to multiple preliminary impressions before encountering any particular object of interest. The arterial layout, predicated on the principle of continuous flow, necessitates ongoing movement, mirroring the characteristics of a guided tour. This form of visitor guidance, subtle yet directive, is achieved through varied architectural forms which channel visitors in a predetermined yet somewhat formulaic progression from the exhibition's start to its conclusion, though opportunities exist for shortening the path at designated intervals. The configuration of these arterial pathways may be straight, serpentine, or curved. In all scenarios, the continuity inherent in these designs offers relatively few alternatives for presentation, a constraint that is particularly pronounced in narrower arterial passages.

Decentralized Access Systems are the ones which have multiple entry and exit points available, visitors are not confined to a predetermined path but are free to explore as one might in pedestrian zones of city centers, with the museum seamlessly integrating into these spaces. There were the examples showing in the Figure 3.6 which are; Linear, Free, Corridor, Alcove and Composite. Given the impracticality of viewing every exhibit in a single visit when using a 'free-range' approach, additional visits become necessary for further exploration and discovery. Initially, the socio-psychological benefits of this model have been overshadowed by organizational challenges. Despite these hurdles, this proposal continues to be discussed in academic and competitive circles and has been implemented in formats akin to 'exhibition streets', where challenges like security and cloakroom services are managed, potentially with the aid of electronic solutions. (Lehmbruck, 1974)

3.2.2 Spatial Layout of the Museums

In the exploration of architectural spaces within museums, the nuances of spatial layout play a pivotal role in shaping visitor experiences. An insightful examination by Bill Hillier in 1996 unveils the profound impact of architectural design choices on human movement and interaction within these environments. His study provides a foundational understanding of how spatial configurations, specifically the placement of openings, can direct and influence the dynamics of visitor engagement and movement.

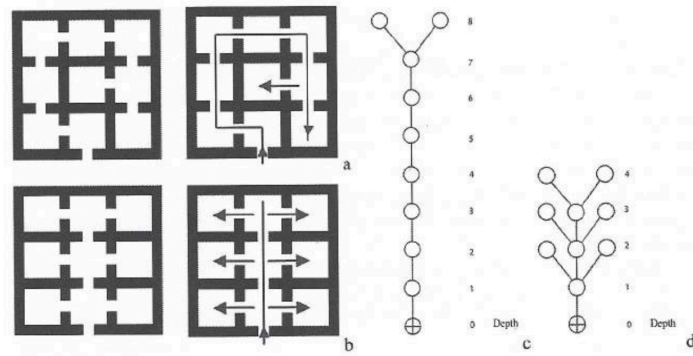


Figure 3.7 Hillier's two notional buildings except for the arrangement of openings, which makes them very different from the point of movement and space structures

Bill Hillier introduced a captivating architectural theory in 1996, using a comparative analysis of two hypothetical buildings identical in all respects except for the design of their openings. This study illustrates the significant impact that even subtle design variations can have on human behavior within spaces. Focusing on how the location and arrangement of openings—such as doors and windows—can change the way people navigate and experience a structure, Hillier's research demonstrates that a building with strategically positioned openings promotes more fluid movement, enhancing accessibility and connections among different areas. In contrast, a building with less optimally placed openings might hinder movement, possibly creating isolated or hard-to-reach zones. This principle underlines the crucial influence of architectural details on both the physical and social aspects of a building. Hillier's findings stress the critical role of meticulous architectural planning in determining how spaces are perceived and utilized, asserting that minor elements like the placement of doors and windows can substantially alter the functionality and sociability of a space. (Figure 3.7)

According to Tzortzi (2007), the organization of viewing sequences is a fundamental principle in museum architecture, essential for facilitating visitor flow and the strategic placement of exhibits. This structured approach enhances the logical progression through museum spaces and is critical for the coherent presentation of artworks. An analysis of various case studies reveals a spectrum of design strategies from highly structured to more exploratory layouts.

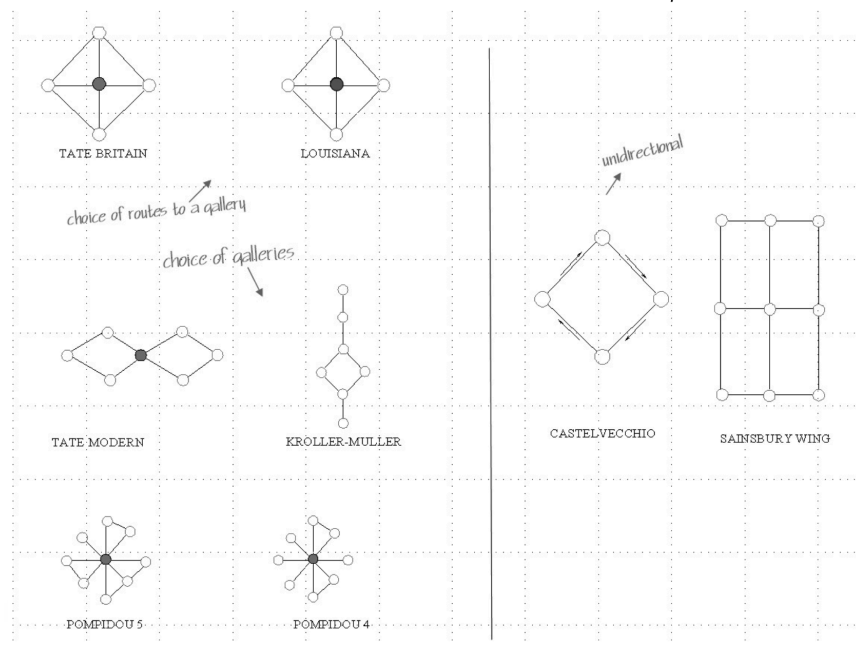


Figure 3.8 Kali Tzortzi's the morphology of exploration

At one end of the spectrum, the grid layout allows for an open-ended exploration, characterized by its minimal imposition on visitor movement, thereby increasing the potential for random and spontaneous discovery. This approach is exemplified by the Sainsbury Wing, where visitors enjoy a high degree of freedom in choosing their path through the space. (Figure 3.8)

In contrast, the linear sequence layout imposes a strict navigational route, as seen in Castelvecchio's arrangement. This layout compels visitors to follow a predetermined path through a continuous loop of galleries, enforcing a uniform sequence of experience and limiting deviation. (Figure 3.8)

Intermediate models, such as those found in the Pompidou Center, Tate Britain, and to a lesser extent, the Kröller-Müller Museum, feature a main pathway with additional offshoots. These secondary paths provide unique, localized experiences but are dependent on the main route, requiring visitors to return to the central path periodically. This configuration offers a balance between directed navigation and the opportunity for exploration, structuring the visitor experience to combine guided discovery with personal exploration. (Figure 3.8)

She argues that the flow and connectivity between different exhibition areas can create a sequence of experiences that enhance understanding and retention of the displayed information. This can be seen in the way linear layouts facilitate a chronological

or thematic progression, while more networked arrangements allow for multiple paths and personal exploration, thus supporting diverse visitor interests and interaction patterns. Tzortzi also discusses the potential of utilizing architectural elements such as sightlines, thresholds, and transitions in scale and lighting to subtly direct attention and movement, thereby enriching the visitor's journey through the museum. These design choices, she posits, can dramatically affect how visitors connect with and interpret both the space and its contents, ultimately contributing to a richer, more engaging museum experience. Tzortzi's work is a compelling reminder of the power of architecture not just to house but to actively shape the cultural and educational encounters within museum spaces.

		<i>Long model</i>	<i>Short model</i>
INDEPENDENT VARIABLES	<i>Spatial structure of the building</i>	The more spaces are arranged in sequences, the less variety there is in the way they can be traversed	The more there is choice, the more differentiation in visitors' paths
	<i>Spatial arrangement of objects</i>	The more there is conceptual intervention by the curator, in terms of a pre-given narrative, the more the aim is to reflect a specific meaning	The less such intervention, the higher the intellectual effort required by the visitor
DEPENDENT VARIABLE	<i>Informational dimension of visitor experience</i>	The architect or curator controls the information and reduces the exploratory aspect of the visit both <i>intellectually</i> and <i>spatially</i>	Initiative passes to the visitor to explore fields of possible meaning
	<i>Social dimension of visitor experience</i>	The layout controls visitors' movement in a prescribed way and structures a restricted pattern of encounter	More exploratory patterns of movement create more randomized and so emergent patterns of encounter

Figure 3.9 Spatial Morphologies in Museum's Theoretical Framework by Tzortzi

Kali Tzortzi's analytical framework also extends to the utilization of the long model and short model in understanding the spatial dynamics of museum layouts, particularly how these models influence visitor behavior and exhibition interaction. In her research, Tzortzi differentiates between these two models to describe the extent and manner in which museum spaces are navigated. The long model refers to museum designs that encourage extended visitor journeys through long, continuous paths that potentially cover all or most areas of the museum. This model promotes comprehensive exposure to exhibits but can also lead to visitor fatigue and overload of information. On the other hand, the short model facilitates shorter, more segmented paths that allow for quick, often thematic visits, enabling visitors to focus deeply on specific areas of interest without the commitment to a lengthy trajectory. (Figure 3.9)

In this context, Tzortzi (2016), identifies the dependent and independent variables crucial to understanding the impact of these models. The independent variables include the architectural elements and design choices such as the layout of pathways, placement of exhibits, and the overall organizational structure of the museum. These design elements dictate the flow and movement within the space, shaping the visitor's experience as they navigate through the museum. The dependent variables, in contrast, are the visitor behaviors and interactions that result from these designs, such as the duration of visits, the sequence of exhibit engagement, and the overall visitor satisfaction and comprehension. By analyzing the interplay between these variables, Tzortzi elucidates how spatial configurations can be strategically manipulated to achieve desired outcomes in visitor engagement and educational impact, highlighting the critical role of architectural design in enhancing the effectiveness of museum exhibitions.

3.3 Chapter Review

This chapter has explored the transformative elements of museum design, focusing on displaying types, visitor routes, and spatial morphology. The comprehensive examination of these topics provides an in-depth understanding of how contemporary museums are adapting to the evolving demands of cultural consumption and visitor engagement, reflecting broader shifts in the art and cultural sectors. Through the detailed analysis of various exhibition strategies and architectural configurations, it has been determined how each design choice significantly influences visitor perception and interaction within the museum space. These findings are vital for framing the subsequent case studies, illustrating the complex interplay between design choices and their impacts on both museum functionality and the overall visitor experience. The discussions have extensively covered how different displaying types, from traditional to innovative, the strategic structuring of visitor pathways, and the careful consideration of spatial morphology contribute to creating environments that are not only engaging but also educational. Each of these elements has been shown to be a critical component of the overarching design framework, shaping the analysis of how museums effectively facilitate interactions between the art and the audience. Furthermore, this chapter highlights the role of thoughtful architectural planning in enhancing the functionality of museums. By integrating innovative design with interactive elements, museums can transform from mere exhibition spaces into dynamic cultural hubs that actively shape the

visitor's journey and enhance their experience. This adaptive approach is crucial for meeting modern visitor expectations and solidifying the museum's role in the cultural landscape.

In conclusion, the insights gained from this chapter provide a robust theoretical framework for the upcoming case studies. By applying these principles to specific museum contexts, the analysis will delve deeper into how museums not only display art but also play a pivotal role in educating and engaging their audiences. This nuanced understanding underscores the ongoing transformation of museums, highlighting their importance as institutions that are continuously evolving to meet the challenges and opportunities of the contemporary cultural milieu.



Chapter 4

Four Italian Institutions' Case Studies

Italy is widely recognized as one of the birthplaces of the museum concept. The tradition of collecting and displaying artifacts can be traced back to Roman times, where collections of objects and artworks were often displayed in public and private spaces. This rich heritage continued to evolve, particularly during the Renaissance. In the 16th century, Italian noble families played a pivotal role in this development. They created extensive collections and cabinets of curiosities, which served as prototypes for modern private museums. These early collections were not only displays of wealth and power but also centers of learning and scholarship, reflecting the Renaissance ideal of knowledge and discovery (Simonsson, 2014).

The opening of the Uffizi Gallery in Florence marked a significant milestone in the history of museums. As one of the earliest examples of a public art gallery, the Uffizi set a precedent for modern museums as institutions dedicated to the preservation and exhibition of art and culture. This historical context underscores Italy's profound influence on the development of museum practices and its enduring legacy in the cultural sector.

In recent decades, there has been a notable shift in Italy towards transforming unexpected buildings such as distilleries, barracks, and shipyards into museums. This trend reflects a broader movement in contemporary museology, where the adaptive reuse of industrial and historical structures serves both preservation and innovation. These transformations not only conserve the architectural heritage but also introduce a new perspective for displaying artwork, offering unique and stimulating venues for contemporary art. In some cases, the architecture itself is elevated to the status of art, creating a renewed discussion on the hierarchy between art and architecture. This approach allows for a dialogue between the past and present, with historical settings

creating an interface that enriches the relationship between exhibitions and architecture, enhancing the narrative and context of the displayed artworks.

Choosing Italian institutions as case studies provides a unique opportunity to explore this rich heritage and its impact on contemporary museum architecture and exhibition design. By examining institutions such as Fondazione Prada, Palazzo Strozzi, MAXXI, and the Venice Biennale's Arsenale, this research uncovers how historical precedents have shaped modern approaches to museum spaces and the presentation of contemporary art. The Italian context offers a compelling blend of historical continuity and innovative transformation, making it an ideal setting to study the dynamic interplay between architecture and exhibition design.

The inclusion of MAXXI, Fondazione Prada, Palazzo Strozzi, and Venice Arsenale further enriches this comparative analysis through the lens of adaptive reuse. These institutions exemplify a noteworthy trend in museum architecture, where historical structures are repurposed for contemporary cultural spaces. For instance, MAXXI, designed by Zaha Hadid, showcases the adaptability of a former military compound into a contemporary art museum. Fondazione Prada, housed in a former gin distillery, combines historical industrial elements with avant-garde architectural interventions, often featuring innovative installations that interact with the industrial backdrop. Palazzo Strozzi, a Renaissance-era building, preserves its historical significance while adapting its interiors to host contemporary exhibitions that contrast with the historical backdrop. The Venice Arsenale, a vast shipyard with a rich maritime history, has been transformed into an international exhibition venue during the Venice Biennale. These approaches not only preserve and honor the historical significance of the buildings but also breathe new life into them, making them relevant to contemporary audiences. It offers a fresh perspective on the display of art, where the setting becomes an integral part of the narrative, enhancing the interpretation and appreciation of contemporary works.

The methodology of this case study involved direct observation and in-situ examination of the selected institutions. Each institution was initially summarized in a general information table, followed by a brief overview of the building's adaptive reuse process. The architectural aspects of the buildings were then analyzed in detail, along with their exhibition display preferences and the dialogue between the exhibitions and the architecture. To ensure clarity and comparability, several tables were constructed to categorize the data: architectural analysis, spatial analysis, display layout analysis, and

art and architecture hierarchy analysis. To understand the dynamic interplay between art and architecture, all museums were analyzed morphologically, using simplistic spatial diagrams to visualize the building's flow before and after the exhibitions. This approach identified the impact of exhibitions on the buildings. Additionally, the display settings and the dominance of art and architecture were closely examined for each institution. These analyses aimed to understand the relationship between art and architecture, exploring how buildings function as interfaces for art and how architecture itself can become an art form. To strengthen and compare these arguments, the analyzed features were compared in the concluding part of the case study, providing a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between contemporary art exhibitions and museum architecture.

Finally, the shared principles among these museums extend beyond traditional museological considerations to embrace the innovative repurposing of historical structures. The exhibition display settings further enhance the overall narrative, ensuring a seamless integration of curated content within the distinctive architectural frameworks, showcasing a global standard in museum practices. As a result, these case studies offer insightful information about the ways in which historical preservation, modern museology, and international museum practices are converging.

4.1 Strozzi Palace

Strozzi Palace, located in Florence, Italy, is an exemplary Renaissance structure completed in 1538 (Table 4.1) stands as a monumental testament to the era's architectural and cultural ambition. Commissioned by the wealthy Strozzi family, who were significant rivals to the Medici, the construction of Palazzo Strozzi began in 1489. The project aimed to showcase their prestige and status in Florentine society. Although often attributed to Filippo Brunelleschi, the design was completed by a team of architects and craftsmen, including Giuliano da Sangallo and Benedetto da Maiano. Their combined efforts resulted in a structure that embodied the architectural ideals of the Renaissance, setting a new standard for palatial design in Florence. The architectural style of Palazzo Strozzi features a strong, rusticated facade arranged symmetrically around a central courtyard, reflecting the Renaissance principles of symmetry, proportion, and harmony (Figure 4.1). This innovative design balanced private luxury with public use, making it both a residence for the Strozzi family and a place for social, commercial, and cultural activities.



Figure 4.1 Strozzi Palace Courtyard hosting 'Under the Weather' installation by Olafur Eliasson, 21st January 2023

Table 4.1 Identity Card for Strozzi Palace, detailing location, architect, establishment year, key features, and architectural significance.

Name	Palazzo Strozzi
Location	Florence, Italy
Architectural Style	Renaissance
Construction Completed	1538
Architect	Filippo Brunelleschi (attributed)
Key Features	Symmetrical layout, central courtyard, rusticated stone facades
Current Use	Exhibition space for art and cultural events
Significance	One of the most outstanding examples of Renaissance domestic architecture

The Palazzo's grand exterior, with its harmonious geometric shapes and regularly spaced mullioned windows, strikes a balance between strength and elegance. It stands as a fortress of solitude that blends seamlessly into Florence's urban landscape. Over the centuries, Palazzo Strozzi has evolved from a symbol of familial prestige to a respected institution of art and culture.

Originally a Renaissance private residence, Palazzo Strozzi was converted into a public art exhibition space during the Fascist era, a time when efforts to preserve Florence's Renaissance heritage were politically motivated. The restoration, completed in 1940, marked the Palazzo's transformation into a heritage site with significant commercial and political importance, symbolizing Florence's historical identity. In the same year, Palazzo Strozzi hosted its first exhibition, the Mostra del Cinquecento Toscano, featuring High Renaissance artworks by renowned artists like Michelangelo, Raphael, and Pontormo. Without its own collection, the Palazzo borrowed pieces from various private and public collections, mainly from Florence's Galleria degli Uffizi. Today, Strozzi Palace continues to collect and exhibit artworks, maintaining its role as a dynamic cultural institution. (Staton, 2021)

In the transformative journey of Strozzi Palace, the courtyard has become a central exhibition space, highlighting its architectural and functional evolution. This large, open-air area, framed by the symmetrical Renaissance arches and loggias, has evolved from its original use as a social and familial hub to a dynamic stage for contemporary art installations. The adaptation of the courtyard as an exhibition space represents the broader transformation of the Palazzo, demonstrating how historically significant areas can be reimagined to engage with the present. The courtyard's integration as a key exhibition

venue leverages its architectural beauty and public accessibility, creating a unique platform for artists and curators. Contemporary installations in this space benefit from natural light and the grandeur of the surrounding architecture, enhancing the visual impact of the art. Additionally, the courtyard's role as a communal gathering place is revitalized, fostering a dialogue between the Renaissance setting and modern artistic expression. This innovative use of the courtyard not only enriches the exhibition experience but also reinforces Palazzo Strozzi's status as a cultural landmark that bridges historical legacy and contemporary creativity.

Furthermore, the Palazzo's role in the urban transformation extends beyond its physical presence; it acts as a cultural catalyst, inspiring initiatives that rejuvenate the surrounding area and stimulate the local economy. Through its exhibitions and events, Palazzo Strozzi draws visitors and locals alike, fostering a vibrant cultural ecosystem that enriches the urban experience. Palazzo's courtyard becomes an urban hub for the city of Florence by integrating streets and creating an art break during the discovery of the city.

4.1.1 Architectural Analysis of Strozzi Palace

Table 4.2 Architectural Analysis of the Strozzi Palace by several features

Architectural Style	Building Iconic Status	Adaptive Reused	Integration with Surrounding	Material
Renaissance	Historical, Central Landmark	Renaissance Palace	Central, Urban Harmony	Local Stone and Bricks

The design philosophy behind Strozzi Palace is deeply rooted in the ideals of the Renaissance, emphasizing harmony, proportion, and humanism, reflected in both its architectural layout and material choice. This philosophy manifests in a deliberate spatial organization that prioritizes symmetry and balance, with the palazzo's square plan centered around a spacious courtyard. This layout not only facilitated social interaction and public gatherings but also underscored the humanistic ethos of blending beauty with utility, making the Strozzi a model of Renaissance architectural thought (Table 4.2). Rooms are distributed in a manner that allows for natural flow and connectivity, ensuring that the grandeur of the facade is matched by an interior that is both majestic and welcoming. Materials play a crucial role in expressing the design philosophy of Strozzi Palace. The extensive use of locally sourced pietraforte sandstone for the exterior lends the building its characteristic robustness and texture, a nod to the Florentine tradition of employing durable materials to signify strength and permanence (Table 4.2). The

rustication of the stone, becoming progressively finer as it ascends, visually anchors the building to the ground while allowing the upper stories to convey a sense of lightness. Inside, the choice of materials and finishes reflects a Renaissance appreciation for craftsmanship and detail. Frescoes, stucco, and terracotta floors complement the stone architecture, enriching the interior with artistic flourishes that celebrate human creativity and skill. The integration of art within the architectural fabric of the Palazzo goes beyond mere decoration, serving to elevate the human experience of the space.

The plans of Palazzo Strozzi, carefully laid out to align with the urban fabric of Florence, demonstrate an awareness of the building's relationship with its surroundings (Table 4.2). The Palazzo's imposing structure respects the scale and character of the city, contributing to the streetscape without overwhelming it. This sensitivity to context, combined with a masterful use of materials and a layout that embodies Renaissance principles, underscores the Strozzi Palace's status as an architectural masterpiece that seamlessly blends form, function, and setting. The architectural layout of Strozzi Palace meticulously articulates the Renaissance ideals across its various levels, with the first and second floors each serving distinct functions while harmonizing within the overall design scheme.

The ground floor, of Strozzi Palace embodies Renaissance architectural and social ideals. Traditionally, this floor contained the main living quarters of the Strozzi family and was designed to impress visitors with its luxury and artistry. The layout centers around a grand courtyard, with rooms arranged symmetrically to emphasize balance and harmony. These spaces are connected through a series of enfilades, allowing for a smooth transition from one grand room to another, accommodating both the private life of the family and the public display of social events. The architectural detailing on the ground floor is of the highest order, with ceiling frescoes, intricate stonework, and rich materials reflecting the wealth and status of its inhabitants. The windows on this level are larger, designed to let in ample light and offer views of the surrounding city, connecting the interior life of the palazzo to the vibrant urban landscape of Florence. The use of proportion and scale on this floor serves not just aesthetic purposes but also reflects the Renaissance humanist philosophy, with the architecture designed to elevate and reflect the human condition.

The first floor of Strozzi Palace, while maintaining the architectural integrity and style of the first floor, traditionally served more private functions. The layout here

continues the symmetrical arrangement of rooms around the central courtyard but is typically characterized by smaller, more intimate spaces that were used for the family's personal living quarters. The detailing, though still exquisite, is often more restrained compared to the ground floor, reflecting the private nature of the activities that took place here. This level provided a quieter, more secluded counterpoint to the grandeur of the Piano Nobile, with spaces designed for relaxation, study, and personal contemplation. Windows on the first floor, while still generous, were designed to offer privacy as well as views, balancing the interior world of the Strozzi with its exterior surroundings. The materials and finishes, consistent with the rest of the building, continue to reflect the high craftsmanship and quality associated with Renaissance architecture, but the decoration might lean towards the personal tastes and needs of the family members.

In both the ground and first floors of Strozzi Palace, the architectural layout reflects a deep understanding of the social and functional requirements of Renaissance life, articulated through a vocabulary of symmetry, proportion, and harmony. Each level plays its role within the larger architectural narrative of the Strozzi, showcasing the sophistication and thoughtfulness that characterize this period of architectural history.

The basement floor or cellar level in historical buildings like Strozzi Palace, embodies a distinct aspect of the architectural and functional layout, diverging in purpose and design from the more public and private spaces above. In the context of Strozzi Palace, this level traditionally served utilitarian roles, essential for the day-to-day operations and maintenance of the palace, yet its adaptation in contemporary times has seen it transform into an integral part of the building's cultural and exhibition offerings. Originally, the basement of Strozzi Palace would have been used for storage, kitchens, and perhaps servant quarters—spaces that were fundamental to supporting the lavish lifestyle and extensive entertaining that took place on the floors above. Architecturally, this floor would be characterized by robust stone walls, arches, and limited natural light, designed more for durability and function than for aesthetic appeal. The layout would be pragmatic, with rooms organized based on their specific uses, from wine cellars to food preparation areas, all critical to the Palazzo's operations.



Figure 4.2 Palazzo Strozzi Basement Floor 'Your View Matter' Vr Installation, 21st January 2023

In recent years, the basement level of Palazzo Strozzi has undergone a significant transformation, repurposed to enhance the building's role as a contemporary cultural hub. This floor now frequently hosts exhibitions, workshops, and educational programs, making what was once a purely service area a vibrant space for art and learning. The architectural adaptation of these spaces has been carefully managed to preserve the historical integrity of the building while introducing the necessary modifications for modern use—such as improved lighting, climate control, and access. This conversion reflects a broader trend in the adaptive reuse of historic buildings, where previously overlooked spaces are reimagined to meet contemporary needs. In Strozzi, the basement's transition from a functional to a cultural space not only expands the building's capacity to engage with the public but also offers visitors a deeper and more layered experience of the palazzo. By integrating these lower levels into its cultural programming, Palazzo Strozzi demonstrates how every part of a historic building can contribute to its ongoing narrative, enriching the dialogue between past and present. This level's transformation from service areas to spaces of cultural engagement underscores the innovative spirit that defines Palazzo Strozzi, ensuring its continued relevance and vibrancy in the modern era.

Table 4.3 Spatial Analysis of Strozzi Palace by several features

Spatial Hierarchy	Layout Plan	Visual Connectivity	Size and Scale	Accessibility
Hierarchical, defined rooms	Traditional, Symmetric	Limited, focused on individual rooms	Moderate, constrained by historical structure	Unrestricted for the ground level

The controlled layout of the museum within Strozzi Palace integrates modern museum practices with the building's historic architecture. This planned visitor circulation guides the experience, ensuring a coherent journey through the exhibitions while respecting the constraints of the Renaissance design. The original layout, with its symmetrical arrangement around a central courtyard and a sequence of grand and intimate spaces, naturally directs movement within the building. Renaissance architects designed these spaces to transition from public to private areas. As a museum, this layout now supports a controlled visitor route, preserving the building's historical integrity and enhancing the art-viewing experience (Table 4.3).

Palazzo Strozzi's design, rooted in its Renaissance heritage, is flexible enough to host various contemporary exhibitions. This adaptability is seen in the different spaces within the palazzo, from the open-air courtyard to the ground and upper floors, each providing unique environments for art. The central courtyard, historically a place of social interaction, is now an innovative space for art installations. Its open sky and surrounding arcades create a distinctive backdrop for artworks, suitable for large installations and sculptures that need an open setting, blending the courtyard's historic ambiance with modern narratives.

The ground floor provides an accessible and continuous setting for exhibitions, connecting the urban environment of Florence with the Strozzi's courtyard. The rooms can host various exhibition styles, from dense, narrative-driven displays to sparse, conceptual installations. Architectural features like vaulted ceilings and stone archways add depth and character, enhancing the viewer's experience by contrasting modern art with historical elements. The upper floors, once private living quarters, now serve as adaptable galleries for different exhibition needs. The natural light from Renaissance windows illuminates artworks, highlighting textures and colors and contributing to the exhibition atmosphere.

Overall, Strozzi Palace's architectural flexibility allows it to maintain a dynamic role in Florence's cultural scene, hosting a wide range of exhibitions. This adaptability

honors the building's historical legacy while keeping it relevant as a space for dialogue between art, architecture, and history. Through careful curation and innovative use of its spaces, Strozzi Palace offers visitors immersive experiences that reflect the evolving nature of art and its presentation.

4.1.2 Display Analysis of Strozzi Palace

According to Press Release of Fondazione Palazzo Strozzi (2022), *Nel Tuo Tempo* "In Your Time" is Olafur Eliasson's most significant exhibition in Italy to this point, utilizes the Renaissance design of Strozzi Palace to present an impactful narrative of ethereal creations, focusing on individual perceptions and collective experiences. The exhibition assembles a collection of works, both recent and earlier ones, highlighting elements such as illumination, shadows, mirror images, intricate designs, and deep hues. It also debuts a substantial new installation specifically designed for the courtyard, along with a pioneering digital artwork created with virtual reality technology, both unveiled to visitors for the very first time at Strozzi Palace.

The exhibition, which is curated by Arturo Galansino, consists of pieces that directly engage with the spaces and architecture of Strozzi Palace. Both recent and historical pieces challenge and refract perceptions, employing the museum structure as an instrument for the creation of the art. The architecture, windows, ceilings, corners, and walls of the Renaissance building come to life as a living entity. Small modifications that make use of screens, spotlights, and color filters highlight what is already present. From the exhibition's supporting architecture to the viewing rituals, Eliasson offers a multitude of potential stories. Moreover, press release indicates the words of Eliasson as (2022), "Nel tuo tempo represents a convergence of artworks, visitors, and the Palazzo Strozzi itself. This remarkable Renaissance structure has journeyed through time to meet us in the present, the twenty-first century, serving not just as a backdrop for the art but as a collaborative creator of the exhibition. However, it's not only Palazzo Strozzi that has traversed through time. You, as visitors, have embarked on your own unique journeys, bringing distinct minds and bodies from varied backgrounds and experiences. It is in this moment, on individual journeys – with diverse backgrounds and experiences – that we gather in the current ambiance of the exhibition." *Nel tuo tempo* (In your time) challenges the boundaries and physical restrictions of a space by questioning the differences between perception, reality, and representation.

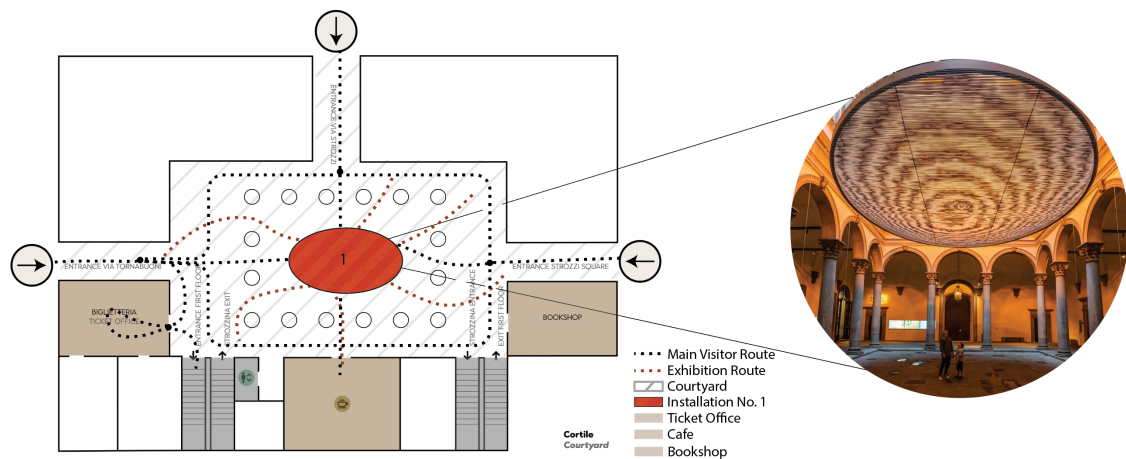
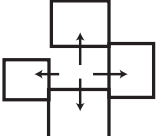
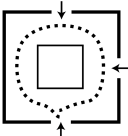
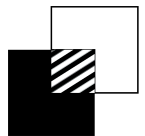
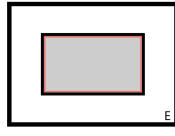


Figure 4.3 Ground Floor Map of Strozzi Palace indicating visitor route and function of the spaces

The first installation in the exhibition is a site-specific piece called *Under the weather* (2022) located at the courtyard of Palazzo Strozzi. It is a massive circular structure that is over 10 meters tall and hung 8 meters above the ground. The installation creates a moiré effect that challenges the steady, unchanging historical structure of building by destabilizing visitors' perceptions of Palazzo Strozzi's rigorous orthogonal form. (Figure 4.3) The moiré pattern interacts with each visitor uniquely as they move around the courtyard and look up at the artwork; it is the interaction between the viewer's movement, which activates the piece, and their individual visual experience, which completes it. The ellipse appears round only when viewed from particular vantage points at each end of the courtyard. Visitors move in circles unintentionally while looking upwards and exploring the installation's moiré pattern.

Table 4.4 Spatial analysis of ground floor of Strozzi Palace

Visitor Route	Exhibition Layout	Art & Architecture Hierarchy	Adaptive Reuse Type
			
Courtyard, Freedom	Main object focused	Display contrasting with historical background	Preserve existing with new use

Within this temporary installation, the visitor flow in Palazzo Strozzi's courtyard has also changed temporarily (Figure 4.3). Since the ground level of Palazzo Strozzi is unrestricted, it interacts with people walking through the street, adding a stop to their

journey. It can be said that the courtyard becomes an art corridor for Via degli Strozzi, as the palace has three wide openings on each façade (Table 4.4). The courtyard transforms into an open-air museum, creating a unique visitor flow solely due to the temporary installation. As visitors enter the Palazzo from the courtyard, visitors find Eliasson engaging in a direct dialogue with the architecture, which he questions with the help of artificial lighting, transient shadows, reflections, moiré effects, and vibrant colors. Instead of only serving as a container or a background, the structure takes on a creative role in the artworks, connecting with viewers' perceptions (Table 4.4). (Press Release of Fondazione Palazzo Strozzi, 2022)

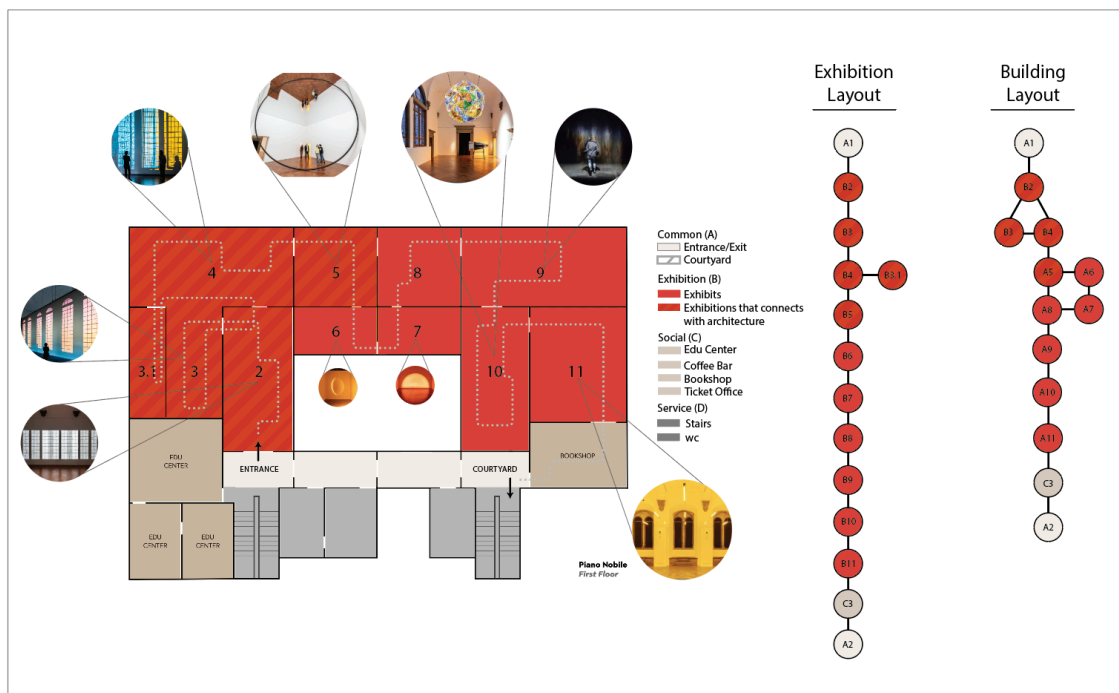
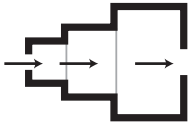
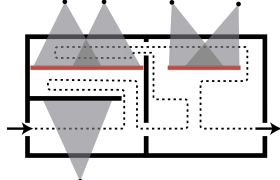
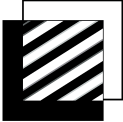
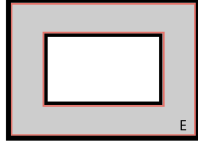


Figure 4.4 Strozzi Palace First Floor Spatial Analysis Map

When analyzing the first floor's spatial layout, the exhibition creates a very organized visitor flow, unlike the ground floor's unorganized, natural flow from multiple openings. The first floor, originally designed as a more secluded area, still serves as a more private space compared to the courtyard. The existing plan of the first floor shows multiple openings in some rooms, creating various interactions with other rooms. Simplistic spatial graphs show that the exhibition has slightly changed the building's layout temporarily (Figure 4.4). The exhibition layout follows a sequential order and has a serial progression, whereas the original design of the spaces allows for multiple interactions. In the curatorial intention of "Nel Tuo Tempo," every gallery is numbered and meant to be visited in order, rather than allowing for free flow. Although free flow is

not restricted, it is generally not preferred, as this curatorial intention creates a unique and neat narrative for the visitors.

Table 4.5 Spatial analysis of first floor of Strozzi Palace

Visitor Route	Exhibition Layout	Art & Architecture Hierarchy	Adaptive Reuse Type
 <p>Serial Progression</p>	 <p>Site-Specific Temporary installations</p>	 <p>Blends together, architecture as an art form</p>	 <p>Preserve Existing with new use</p>

Upon entering the exhibition, visitors receive an explanatory guide to follow the carefully designed route. This exhibition employs a serial progression, ensuring each artwork is experienced individually with its own unique background. The first four installations are site-specific, utilizing the architectural features of Palazzo Strozzi. This seamless blend of art and architecture transforms the building itself into an art form. These installations not only enhance the existing elements of the building but also give them new perspectives, offering a fresh and captivating visitor experience (Table 4.5).



Figure 4.5 Triple Seeing Survey Installation, Palazzo Strozzi First Floor, 21st January 2023

Eliasson uses installations utilizing light, color, and shadow to change the windows in the first three rooms of Strozzi Palace's first floor. Through his work, the artist challenges our preconceived notions about architecture and asks us to view it in new

ways. Despite making few changes to the Strozzi's rooms, Eliasson creates powerful and captivating atmospheres where the relationship between the exterior and interior spaces is the main focus, as exemplified by Strozzi Palace's large windows that overlook the street and courtyard. Lights highlight the imperfections in the glass, such as bubbles, scratches, and dust, which draw attention to the materiality of the windows and encourage viewers to see the glass as an element dividing the interior from the exterior. This fundamental "mediating" surface allows for both visual communication and shelter, evoking the great Gothic and Renaissance windows found in the city's churches, where the light was regarded as a metaphor for spiritual elevation and a visible representation of the divine. (Press Release of Fondazione Palazzo Strozzi, 2022)

The first installation of the exhibition at first floor is named "Triple Seeing Survey." The massive existing windows have been trimmed and reframed to let in light from three spotlights on the other side of the courtyard. Consequently, they project a pattern of light onto the wall, creating the illusion of a series of substitute windows that emphasize the imperfections in the centuries-old glass. The way the huge windows overlooking the courtyard interact with the outside area generates a continually changing light throughout the day, which is a characteristic of the installation. Within this, visitors experience a conversation between projected and actual spaces and openings, as well as between artificial and natural light, as they move across the area (Figure 4.5)



Figure 4.6 Tomorrow installation, Strozzi Palace First Floor, 21st January 2023

The second installation, named "Tomorrow," features a screen that splits the space in half and is patterned like a window by light coming through Palazzo Strozzi's windows from a building across the street. Special filters attached to the spotlights give the

projection a colorful fading that resembles a sunset or dawn. As visitors enter the area, they can see the ankles and shadows of individuals on the other side of the screen, but it's unclear how they can get there until they move on to the next room. (Figure 4.6) According to the Press Release (2022), this piece embodies Eliasson's long-standing interest in the atmospheric effects of light, converting it into a physical and visual dissection of Palazzo Strozzi as an architecture of fluctuating and adaptive light, where guests are invited to take center stage. This installation is the only one that interferes with the building's original plan layout. The screen located in the middle of the room temporarily creates a wall in room number 2, reducing the direct connection between rooms 3 and 4 and dividing room number 2 into two spaces (Figure 4.4)



Figure 4.7 Just Before Now Installation, Strozzi Palace First Floor, 21st January 2023

The third installation is called "Just Before Now." Several spotlights inside the room shine through the windows onto mirrors positioned just outside Palazzo Strozzi's windows. The light reflects off the mirrors and is projected onto an inside screen, revealing the imperfections of the centuries-old glass along with a range of colors created by films added to the spotlights. Depending on the angle, different colors appear: orange from one side and blue from the other. When viewed directly, the colors blend in the middle. The changing tones compel visitors to walk around the room to study the projections up close, making them more aware of how their bodies interact with light and space (Figure 4.7).

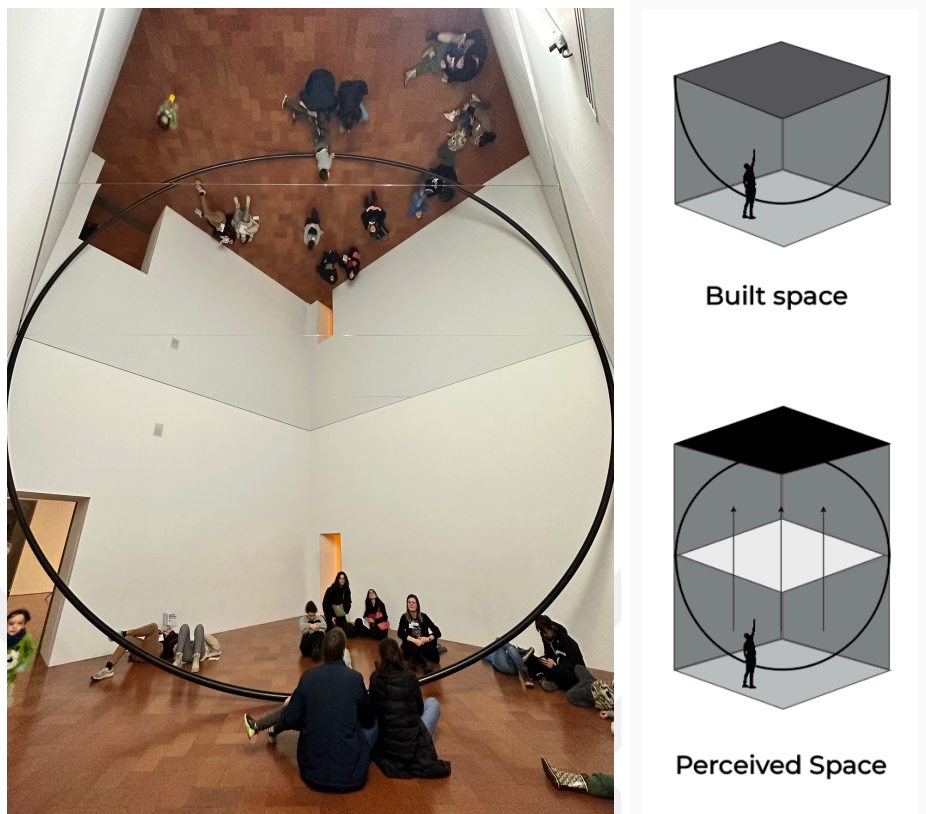


Figure 4.8 How do we live together installation, Palazzo Strozzi First Floor, 21st January 2023

The fourth installation, "How Do We Live Together," consists of a black, semicircular arc fixed to a ceiling mirror, reaching down to touch the floor at a single spot. The semicircle optically unites the reflected area with the real space of the room, creating the appearance of a massive ring across the surface of the mirror. Visitors experience a moment of uncertainty and alienation when they realize they are hovering upside down in the mirror above, occupying the same space as the ring that appears to be bridging the two worlds. This installation, characteristic of Olafur Eliasson's style, engages viewers by transforming their perception of space and light. By changing the material of the ceiling, Eliasson alters the way the room is perceived, creating a new dimension and fostering a unique interaction with the architecture. This interplay of reflection and reality exemplifies Eliasson's ability to create immersive environments that challenge the viewer's sense of space and self (Figure 4.8).



Figure 4.9 Beauty Installation, Strozzi Palace First Floor, 21st January 2023

Lastly, the beauty installation which placed in a dark room, a misty veil reveals colored light bands shimmering in it. The light emitted from a perfectly oriented spotlight must contact the viewer's sight through reflection and refractive effects from the water droplets. Depending on the viewer's position, a different rainbow appears; no two viewers see the same rainbow. According to Eliasson, "it is a matter of fluctuating between two positions: seeing and not seeing, seeing the rainbow, and not seeing the rainbow." Eliasson's theory that the audience member is always an essential co-producer of the artwork is articulated in aesthetics. (Figure 4.9)

4.1.3 Art and Architecture Hierarchy in Strozzi Palace

Table 4.6 Art and Architecture Hierachy in Strozzi Palace

White Cube Concept	Art& Architecture Hierarchy	Exhibition Space Flexibility	Display Background	Exhibition - Building Concept
Traditional	Art complements historical setting	Limited by historical architecture	White walls with Renaissance Architecture	Contrasting yet complementary

When examining the art and architecture hierarchy in Palazzo Strozzi, the interplay between the two elements is thoughtfully balanced to create a unique visitor experience. The exhibition design adopts a traditional yet adaptable approach, where art complements the historical setting without overshadowing it. This dynamic is crucial, as the flexibility of exhibition space is inherently limited by the building's Renaissance architecture. Consequently, the courtyard becomes a pivotal area for accommodating large-scale installations that would otherwise be constrained by the indoor spaces. The display background plays a significant role in this balance. By using white walls alongside the original Renaissance architectural elements, the exhibition spaces offer a "White Cube" concept within a historical framework. This combination provides a clean, neutral canvas that allows the artworks to stand out while simultaneously highlighting the architectural beauty of Palazzo Strozzi. The contrast between the contemporary art and the historical backdrop creates a visually stimulating environment that engages visitors on multiple levels. The exhibitions are designed to integrate seamlessly with the building's historical features, ensuring that the art does not disrupt the architectural integrity. This approach allows for a contrasting yet complementary relationship between the art and the architecture, where each element enhances the other. Temporary installations within this space lead to varying levels of visitor interaction, shaped by the evolving layouts and the dialogue between the old and new. (Table 4.7)

When we examine the preservation of historical features at Strozzi Palace, it becomes clear that the exhibition space is limited due to the constraints of the existing architecture. Large installations can only be placed in the courtyard, highlighting its crucial role in the exhibition. The first floor, with its white walls, provides a neutral background that allows the artworks to stand out without distraction from the historical architecture.

Overall, the exhibition-building concept at Strozzi Palace is one of harmonious coexistence. The art and architecture are not in competition but rather work together to create a cohesive and immersive environment. The thoughtful integration of historical and modern elements ensures that visitors can appreciate the rich architectural heritage of the Palazzo while engaging with cutting-edge contemporary art. This balanced approach highlights the importance of preserving historical features while adapting to the needs of modern exhibitions, ultimately enriching the cultural landscape of Florence.

4.2 Arsenale di Venezia

The Venice Arsenal is an industrial heritage site of immense value, deeply intertwined with the city's history. Known across Europe as the "workshop of wonders," it was the foundation of Venice's maritime power for centuries, enabling the city's economic and commercial growth. The Arsenal was crucial during the golden age of the Venetian Republic and, despite numerous changes over time, it retained its military importance, supporting shipbuilding activities until World War II.

The construction of the Arsenal began in 1104. As the military production base of the Venetian Republic, it evolved into the largest industrial complex in Europe. Additionally, the Arsenal produced most of the merchant ships used in Venice's trade, contributing significantly to the city's wealth and power. Over nearly 1000 years, the Arsenal underwent typological transformations, developing step by step. The complex was enclosed by a 2-mile wall, expanding from the original castle to include the shipyards and gradually developing the northeastern part of the site.

Today, the gradual abandonment of some areas and their military uses raises new questions about the site's recovery and reuse. While these issues are common at similar sites, some challenges are unique to the Arsenal. This is partly due to the high costs of securing and repurposing the entire complex and the technical difficulties posed by the large size of individual buildings. Throughout the postwar decades, many projects have been undertaken, interspersed with periods of neglect, all within the context of Venice's complex problems. This situation brings tensions and the risk of the Arsenal being listed as an endangered UNESCO site. (Zan, 2022)

The Arsenal has always been a vast site, complemented by its status as one of the world's oldest naval production areas, which remained operational until relatively recently. Unlike many other sites, it has retained its expansive grandeur. (Figure 4.10)



Figure 4.10 Arsenale di Venezia Aerial View, Venice, Italy

In recent years, the Venice Arsenal has transformed into a cultural hub, hosting the Venice Biennale, one of the most prestigious cultural events in the world. This biennial event attracts artists, architects, and visitors from around the globe, revitalizing the space with contemporary art and cultural exhibitions. The integration of the Biennale has not only breathed new life into the Arsenal but has also highlighted its historical significance, creating a dynamic dialogue between its rich past and vibrant present. This transformation underscores the potential of adaptive reuse in preserving industrial heritage sites, ensuring that the Venice Arsenal remains a vital part of the city's cultural landscape. (Table 4.7)

Table 4.7 Identity Card for Arsenale di Venezia, detailing location, architect, establishment year, key features, and architectural significance.

Name	Arsenale di Venezia
Location	Venezia, Italy
Architectural Style	Historic Naval Architecture
Construction Completed	16 th Century
Architect	Antonio Da Ponte
Key Features	Expansive shipyard spaces, high vaulted ceilings, historical naval architecture
Current Use	Major venue for the Venice Biennale
Significance	One of the largest pre-industrial production centers of the world now a major cultural venue for art

The Venice Arsenal offers a unique case study in the adaptive reuse and architectural transformation of historical spaces into dynamic contemporary art venues. The Arsenale, originally a naval shipyard, has evolved into one of the most influential exhibition spaces in the world. This transformation highlights specific architectural and curatorial strategies that balance the site's historical integrity with the demands of hosting large-scale international art exhibitions. By examining the interplay between its storied past and contemporary function, we can understand the Arsenale's significant role in shaping the dialogue between historical preservation and modern art presentation within the global cultural landscape. The Arsenale's ability to maintain its rich historical fabric while adapting to new uses exemplifies the potential of adaptive reuse in preserving industrial heritage sites and ensuring their continued relevance in today's cultural scene.

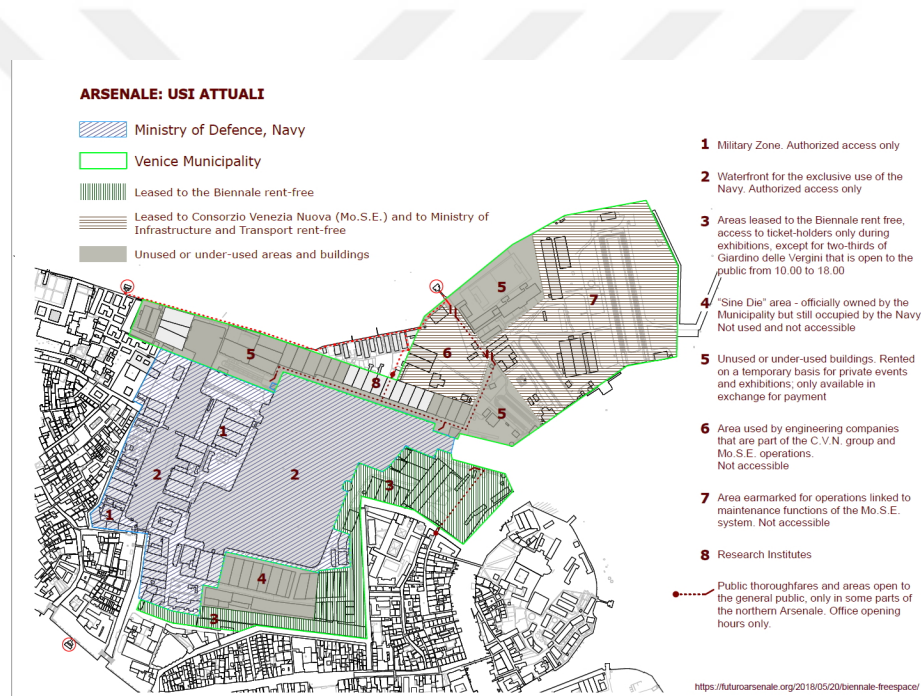


Figure 4.11 Functional Analysis of whole Arsenale

The Arsenale's decline began after World War I. Although many recovery initiatives were proposed between the 1960s and 1980s, none were implemented, leading to the abandonment of a significant portion of the site. Restoration efforts began in the 1980s, overseen by the Superintendency and funded by the Ministry for Cultural Heritage. The first major reuse of the Arsenale was for the 1st International Architecture Exhibition by the Venice Biennale in 1980. In 1999, the Biennale secured a concession for 50,000 m² in the southeastern part of the Arsenale and worked with the Superintendency on building restorations. (Menichelli, 2014)

The area designated for the Venice Biennale is categorized as number 3 in Figure 4.11. During the 1990s, with few other initiatives in place, the company Thetis SpA played a crucial role in the site's recovery. Since 1997, this maritime technology company has been based in the Arsenale, demonstrating how the space can be repurposed for activities similar to its original function.

The adaptive reuse of the Venice Biennale's Arsenale offers a profound example of how historical maritime infrastructure can be transformed into a pivotal contemporary art venue. Originally serving as a shipyard and armory for the Venetian Republic, the Arsenale's architectural and historical significance is unparalleled. Its transformation into a venue for one of the most significant art exhibitions globally showcases innovative reuse that respects and highlights the site's historical essence while adapting it to meet contemporary cultural demands.

The Arsenale's vast, cavernous halls and extensive outdoor areas, once filled with the sounds of shipbuilding, now host art installations and large-scale exhibitions. This transition required minimal structural changes to preserve the integrity of the original architecture, allowing the raw, industrial aesthetics to become a backdrop that adds depth and context to contemporary artworks. The space's adaptability is one of its greatest assets—its large, uninterrupted spans allow for the display of ambitious, large-scale works that would be constrained in more conventional gallery spaces.

Moreover, the adaptive reuse of the Arsenale includes not only the preservation of its physical structure but also the revitalization of its purpose and place within the community. By hosting the Venice Biennale, the Arsenale has shifted from a naval industrial site to a cultural landmark, driving tourism and cultural engagement within Venice. This shift has not only contributed to the cultural economy but also sparked a broader discussion on the potential for other historical sites globally to be repurposed as cultural venues. In essence, the adaptive reuse of the Arsenale illustrates a successful marriage between conservation and innovation, allowing historical narratives and architectural forms to coexist with contemporary artistic expression. This approach provides a sustainable model for other heritage sites, proving that respecting historical integrity can go hand-in-hand with embracing modern purposes. (Figure 4.12)

4.2.1 Architectural Analysis of the Arsenale di Venezia



Figure 4.12 Arsenale di Venezia, 21st October 2022

Table 4.8 Architectural Analysis of Arsenale di Venezia

Architectural Style	Building Iconic Status	Adaptive Reused	Integration with Surrounding	Material
Industrial	Historical, Central Landmark	Naval Shipyard and Armory	Harmonizes with Historical Setting	Brick and Wood

The original industrial structure of the Arsenale features robust masonry, vast open spaces, and high ceilings supported by heavy wooden trusses, elements that were essential for the construction and maintenance of naval vessels. These architectural features have been carefully preserved, allowing the space to retain its raw, industrial aesthetic, which now serves as a dramatic backdrop for contemporary artworks. The scale and openness of the Arsenale make it particularly suited for large-scale installations and ambitious projects that require significant spatial depth and breadth. (Table 4.8)

The combination of the Arsenale's monumental scale, historical ambiance, and versatile spaces enables a dynamic interaction between the architecture and the displayed artworks, enhancing both the aesthetic and conceptual impact of the exhibitions. This unique spatial arrangement not only respects the historical narrative of the building but also redefines it as a modern cultural venue, illustrating the potential of architectural adaptation in enriching contemporary art presentation.

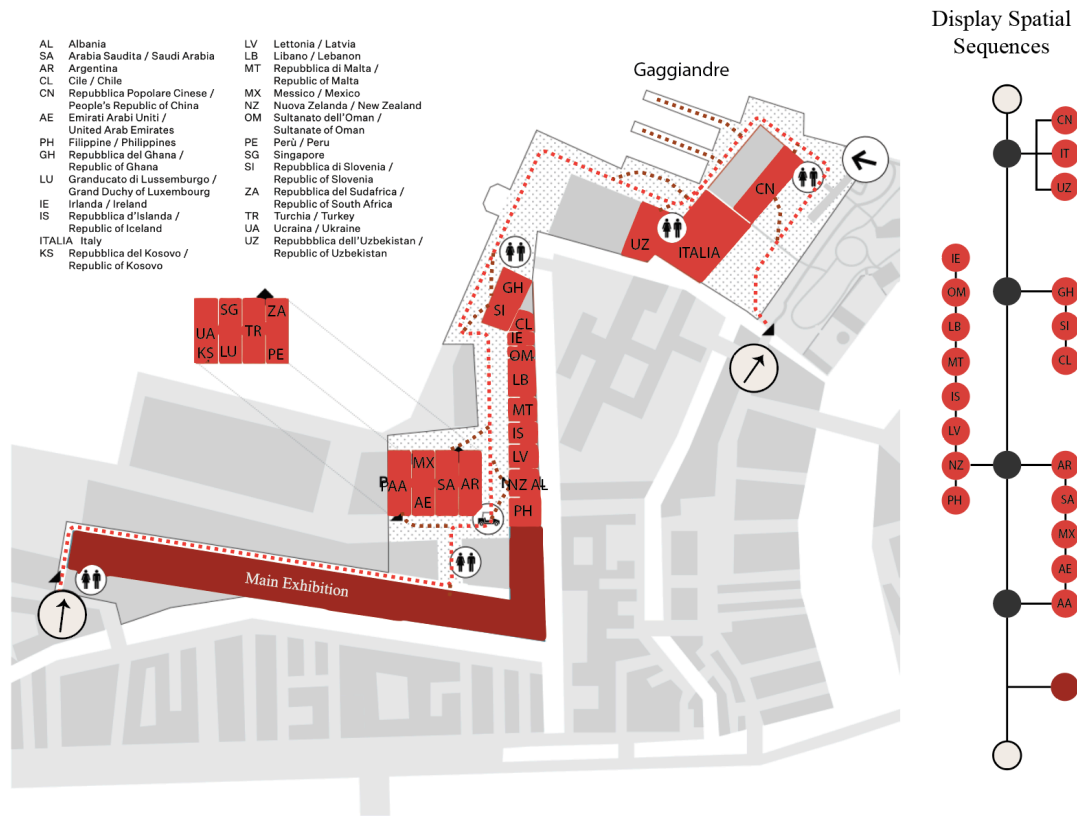
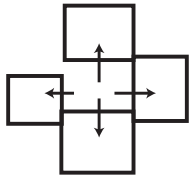
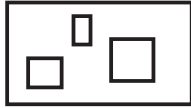
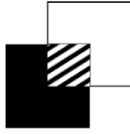
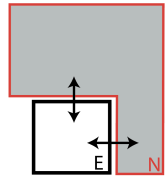


Figure 4.13 Spatial Analysis of Arsenale di Venezia including Spatial Sequences

When analyzing the spatial layout to understand the exhibition design, it becomes clear that the area consists of separate volumes that serve as independent exhibition galleries. This existing layout at the Arsenale is well-suited to the spirit of the Venice Biennale, which hosts international exhibitions and displays them according to nationality. As shown in Figure 4.13, all the volumes connect through the courtyards of the Arsenale. These courtyards create a main thoroughfare, with exhibition spaces attached along it. This arrangement is reminiscent of Tzortzi's analysis of common space morphology in Tate Modern and other museums, where the common area here is represented by the courtyards. Although the main exhibition area is one large volume, it contains internal separations that enhance the concept of individuality, allowing each exhibition to stand on its own while uniting under a single theme. For instance, in 2022, the Biennale's exhibitions collectively embraced the concept of "The Milk of Dreams," illustrating how the Arsenale's spatial configuration supports both independent displays and a cohesive overall theme. This thoughtful spatial organization not only respects the historical integrity of the Arsenale but also provides a flexible and dynamic setting for contemporary art exhibitions.

Table 4.9 Spatial Analysis of Arsenale di Venezia by several features

Visitor Route	Exhibition Layout	Art & Architecture Hierarchy	Adaptive Reuse Type
			
<p>Courtyard, Freedom</p>	<p>Temporary Installations</p>	<p>Contrasting and enhancing each other</p>	<p>Build Adjacent to Existing</p>

The spatial configuration of the Arsenale is primarily defined by its expansive, uninterrupted halls, which stretch over significant lengths, providing a continuous exhibition experience. This layout enables a coherent, immersive visitor experience, where art pieces are not only viewed in isolation but as parts of a broader thematic exploration. The vastness of the space allows for diverse curatorial strategies, from dense, clustered arrangements that create intimate pockets of interaction to sparse placements that highlight individual works' scale and impact.

One of the defining features of the Arsenale is its ability to host various temporary installations for each Biennale. The grand, open areas of the Arsenale accommodate large-scale artworks and installations without the need for additional architectural modifications. This flexibility allows curators to transform the space uniquely for each event, creating a fresh and distinctive environment for every Biennale. The temporary nature of these installations contributes to a dynamic and ever-changing atmosphere, ensuring that each exhibition offers a new and engaging experience for visitors. (Table 4.9) Additionally, the outdoor areas of the Arsenale, including the historic dockyards and connecting courtyards, have been integrated into the exhibition layout, offering opportunities for outdoor installations and performances. These areas link the indoor and outdoor exhibition spaces, providing a fluid, engaging environment that encourages visitors to explore the interplay between the artworks and their historical context. The use of transitional zones between the indoor galleries and outdoor courtyards creates a seamless flow, enhancing the visitor's overall experience and interaction with the space. (Table 4.9)

Table 4.10 Spatial Analysis of Arsenale di Venezia by several features

Spatial Hierarchy	Layout Plan	Visual Connectivity	Size and Scale	Accessibility
Equal Spaces	Expansive, linear	Open, unobstructed views	Very large, expansive	Unrestricted

The Arsenale's spatial configuration is characterized by its expansive, linear layout and unique non-hierarchical spatial hierarchy, offering a sense of equality among all its spaces. Unlike other exhibition venues with a clear primary area or focal point, the Arsenale distributes importance evenly across its vast halls and courtyards. This egalitarian arrangement ensures that no single area dominates, allowing each gallery and courtyard to stand out equally. This balance provides curators with the flexibility to design exhibitions without being constrained by a dominant central space. (Table 4.10) The temporary installations built for each Biennale further reinforce this non-hierarchical structure. These installations transform the Arsenale into a unique environment for the Venice Biennale, ensuring that no single space permanently dominates the others. Instead, the entire complex functions cohesively, with each exhibition area contributing to the overall experience in a balanced manner.

The design emphasizes open, unobstructed views, fostering visual connectivity across the expansive spaces. The very large, expansive areas are ideal for hosting a wide range of installations, from intimate displays to grand, immersive environments, highlighting both individual artworks and their collective impact. Unrestricted accessibility ensures that visitors can easily navigate the exhibition, enhancing their overall experience. (Table 4.10)

4.2.2 Display Analysis of The Arsenale

The historical features of the Arsenale, such as the rugged brick walls, massive wooden beams, and the remnants of maritime infrastructure, are often incorporated into the display strategy. These elements are not merely preserved as part of the architectural heritage; they are actively integrated into the exhibition design, serving as contextual backdrops that enhance the artworks. This integration ensures that the history of the space contributes to the narrative of the art, providing a deeper layer of meaning and a richer sensory experience. Despite its historical architecture, the Arsenale offers a high degree of flexibility in its display configurations. Temporary walls, screens, and lighting setups can be introduced to modify the space according to specific curatorial needs. This adaptability makes it possible to alter the ambiance and functionality of the halls, accommodating a wide range of artistic expressions and exhibition designs. The ability to transform such a robust, defined space is a testament to the versatility of the Arsenale as a contemporary art venue.

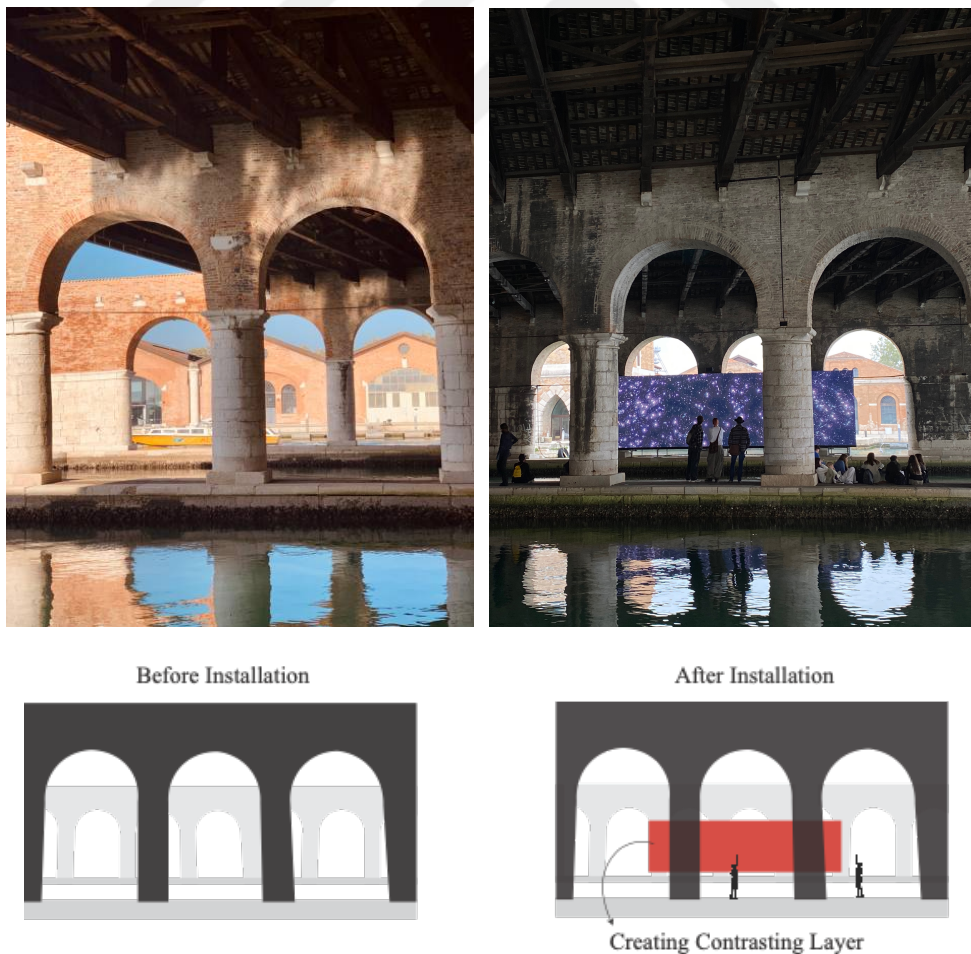


Figure 4.14 Gaggiandre, Arsenale di Venezia, before and after installation, 21st October 2022

When considering the Arsenale's historical setting as a backdrop for artworks, it may initially appear contrasting and inflexible for every occasion. However, the Venice Biennale's contemporary art installations consistently succeed in bringing a new perspective to this dynamic. Rather than overshadowing the historical background, the artworks create an additional layer, as illustrated in Figure 4.14.

For instance, the Gaggiandre's structure has been transformed from simple arches into the frame of an art installation, creating a striking contrast that enhances both the installation and the historical setting. This interaction exemplifies how art and architecture can enhance each other. The Gaggiandre, which might not draw much attention on its own, is given new depth and significance through the installation. Conversely, the installation, which might seem like just another LED screen in a different context, gains unique character and impact from its historical surroundings.



Figure 4.15 Dixit Algorizmi – The Garden of Knowledge, Uzbekistan National Pavillion, 21st October 2022

The monumental scale of the Arsenale's interior allows curators to experiment with large-scale installations and ambitious projects that would be constrained by the spatial limitations of traditional museums. The height and breadth of the halls enable dramatic, towering installations and the use of expansive multimedia presentations, transforming the space and creating powerful visual and auditory experiences. This capability to host grand-scale works not only maximizes the impact of individual pieces but also amplifies the overall thematic resonance of the exhibitions.

For instance, the "Garden of Knowledge" installation shown in Figure 4.15 exemplifies this potential. The height of the existing historical structure allows for vertical interplay of volumes, accommodating such an installation seamlessly. This flexibility permits perceptual games with curatorial works, where contemporary materials contrast strikingly with the historical background, creating a compelling combination. The juxtaposition of modern installations within the ancient architecture enhances both elements, showcasing the Arsenale's unique ability to merge the past with the present in a harmonious and impactful manner.

In conclusion, the display analysis of the Arsenale reveals how its architectural and historical attributes are leveraged to create a distinctive exhibition environment. The interplay between the art and the space not only enhances the visitor's experience but also reinforces the Arsenale's role as a dynamic platform for presenting contemporary art. Through innovative display strategies that engage with the building's unique characteristics, the Arsenale continues to define itself as a crucial node in the international art scene.

4.2.3 Art and Architecture Hierarchy in The Arsenale



Figure 4.16 Wu Tsang Of Whales installation view from Venice Art Biennale 2022: The Milk of Dreams, 21st October 2022

The Arsenale, a pivotal venue for the Venice Biennale, showcases a fascinating interplay between art and architecture, creating a hierarchy that influences both the presentation of contemporary art and the visitor's experience. This hierarchy is shaped by the historical and architectural significance of the Arsenale and the manner in which contemporary artworks are curated within this space.

Table 4.11 Art & Architecture Hierarchy in Arsenale di Venezia

White Cube Concept	Art & Architecture Hierarchy	Exhibition Space Flexibility	Display Background	Exhibition - Building Concept
Traditional, Changeable	Industrial backdrop enhances art	Large, Versatile	Brick walls, Industrial Background	Contrasting yet Complementary

The Arsenale's architecture, with its origins in the 12th century as a naval shipyard, provides a robust historical backdrop that significantly influences the display and perception of art. The vast, linear spaces, high ceilings, and raw industrial elements of the structure naturally impose a powerful architectural presence. The preservation of these elements maintains the authenticity of the Arsenale, making it not only a venue for art but also a living artifact of Venetian naval history.

The integration of modern installations within the historic framework of the Arsenale allows for a rich dialogue between the past and the present. The ancient walls and expansive halls serve not merely as a backdrop but as active participants in the storytelling process. Each piece of art is framed by the history embedded in the architecture, adding layers of meaning and context that would be impossible to achieve in a more conventional setting. The contrast between modern materials and historic architecture also serves to highlight the unique qualities of both. This juxtaposition not only emphasizes the modernity of the installations but also brings renewed attention to the historical features, encouraging visitors to view them through a fresh lens. This symbiotic relationship between art and architecture is what makes the Arsenale a unique and powerful venue. The historical and contemporary elements do not compete but rather complement and elevate each other, creating an environment where both the artwork and the architectural space are appreciated more deeply. This interplay transforms the entire space into a cohesive work of art, demonstrating the profound influence that thoughtful curation and adaptive reuse can achieve. (Table 4.11)

Moreover, the adaptability of the Arsenale's space enables curators to push the boundaries of traditional exhibition design. The vast interior spaces can accommodate installations that play with scale and perspective, engaging visitors in ways that are both intellectually and emotionally stimulating. The towering heights and broad expanses allow for the creation of immersive environments that envelop the viewer, making them a part of the artistic narrative. In addition, the Arsenale's ability to host temporary installations ensures that the space remains dynamic and ever-changing. Each Biennale brings a new wave of creativity, with artists and curators reimagining the possibilities of the space. This constant renewal prevents the site from becoming static, instead fostering a sense of perpetual evolution and innovation.

Ultimately, the symbiotic relationship between art and architecture at the Arsenale creates a multi-layered experience that transcends the ordinary. Visitors engage with the space on multiple levels, appreciating the intricate dance between the old and the new. This harmonious blend of eras and styles demonstrates the enduring power of thoughtful design and the endless possibilities that arise when history and modernity intersect.

In conclusion, the art and architecture hierarchy within the Arsenale is a dynamic and complex interrelation that enhances the depth and richness of the Venice Biennale. This venue exemplifies how historical spaces can be effectively adapted for contemporary use, not only by accommodating but by accentuating modern art through its profound architectural context. The Arsenale thus stands as a model for exploring how art and architecture can coexist and enrich each other, offering layered narratives that are both visually and intellectually stimulating.

4.3 Fondazione Prada

Fondazione Prada, established by Miuccia Prada and Patrizio Bertelli in 1995, stands as a towering beacon of contemporary art and culture in Milan, Italy. Housed within a complex that masterfully blends restored industrial structures with new constructions, the foundation's architectural canvas is as much a part of its identity as the artworks it houses. Designed by the renowned architecture firm OMA, led by Rem Koolhaas, the Fondazione Prada's Milan venue, unveiled in 2015, is a testament to the transformative power of architecture in the realm of art (Figure 4.17). The complex features a series of discrete spaces, including a striking gold-leaf-covered tower, which together create a dynamic and versatile environment for exhibitions and cultural events.



Figure 4.17 View of Fondazione Prada Torre Building from Haunted House, 24th February 2023

The construction that was completed in 2015. Designed by OMA / Rem Koolhaas, the foundation showcases contemporary art exhibitions in versatile spaces suited for both permanent and temporary displays. One of its key features is a gold-leaf covered tower, which stands out as an architectural highlight. Additionally, the foundation houses Bar Luce, designed by filmmaker Wes Anderson, which adds a unique cultural touch to the venue. Renowned for its innovative exhibitions and significant contributions to the

contemporary art scene, Fondazione Prada has established itself as a pivotal institution in the art world. (Table 4.12)

Table 4.12 Identity Card for Fondazione Prada, detailing location, architect, establishment year, key features, and architectural significance.

Name	Fondazione Prada
Location	Milan, Italy
Architectural Style	Contemporary
Construction Completed	2015
Architect	OMA / Rem Koolhaas
Key Features	Contemporary art exhibitions, a gold-leaf covered tower, Bar Luce designed by Wes Anderson, versatile exhibition spaces for permanent and temporary exhibitions.
Current Use	Art and culture foundation focusing on contemporary art
Significance	Renowned for its innovative exhibitions and contributions to the contemporary art scene

Fondazione Prada's commitment to exploring and understanding contemporary culture through the lens of art has positioned it as a pivotal institution within the global art community. Its exhibitions, ranging from contemporary art to cinema and philosophy, challenge and engage audiences, inviting them to partake in a dialogue that transcends traditional boundaries of art and thought. The foundation not only serves as a sanctuary for artists to experiment and express but also acts as a catalyst for cultural discourse, pushing the envelope of what is possible within the context of an art institution.

The significance of Fondazione Prada extends beyond its contributions to the art world; it embodies a broader vision of cultural enrichment and innovation. Through its diverse programs and pioneering spirit, Fondazione Prada continues to redefine the landscape of contemporary culture, cementing its place as an enduring symbol of innovation and exploration in the heart of Milan.

The adaptive reuse of Fondazione Prada represents a compelling narrative in the reimagining of industrial spaces for cultural and artistic endeavors. Situated in Milan, a city known for its rich history and vibrant contemporary scene, the Fondazione has skillfully transformed a 20th-century distillery into a modern cultural complex. This transition, orchestrated by the visionary architecture firm OMA led by Rem Koolhaas, showcases the innovative potential of repurposing existing structures to meet the evolving demands of art exhibition and cultural engagement.

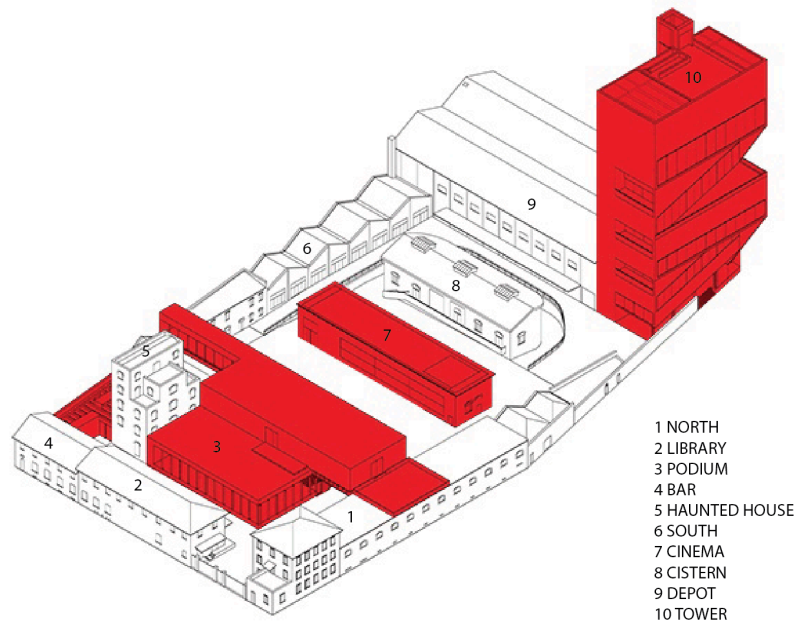


Figure 4.18 Volumes separated by its functions and showcasing the new built parts in Fondazione Prada

At the heart of Fondazione Prada's adaptive reuse strategy lies a profound respect for the original architectural essence of the distillery, combined with a bold ambition to infuse the space with contemporary significance. The project carefully balances preservation with transformation, maintaining the industrial character of the buildings while introducing modern elements that redefine their purpose and aesthetic. The preservation of the original brick, exposed beams, and concrete structures honors the site's industrial past. In contrast, the introduction of modern materials like gold leaf, polished steel, and glass introduces a contemporary layer to the narrative.

The spaces colored in red in Figure 4.18 represent the newly built parts of the complex, introducing a new design language through the addition of modern materials. While structures numbered 3 and 7 adapt and harmonize with the horizontal level of the complex, the building numbered 10 (Torre) brings a new perspective with its height and dominant contemporary design language.

The complex's courtyards, previously utilitarian spaces, have been transformed into integral parts of the exhibition narrative. These areas now serve as transitional zones that blur the boundaries between indoor and outdoor, extending the exhibition space and offering visitors a moment of reflection amidst the art and architecture.

4.3.1 Architectural Analysis of Fondazione Prada

The location, originally a 1910 distillery in a gritty part of the city, includes seven spaces such as warehouses and three large brewing cisterns, all retaining a raw industrial quality. The Dutch architectural firm OMA preserved these features while adding three new buildings made of glass, white concrete, and aluminum foam. One of these new structures, the centrally located Podium, is designed for temporary exhibitions. Another, the nine-story Torre, houses the foundation's archives, art installations, and a restaurant. The third building, a theater with a mirrored facade, features folding walls that can open onto a courtyard. Altogether, these buildings provide nearly 120,000 square feet of exhibition space. (Table 4.15) (Press Release of Fondazione Prada, 2015)



Figure 4.19 Facade of Fondazione Prada from the road

Central to this narrative is the "Haunted House," cloaked in gold leaf, standing as a metaphor for the extraordinary amidst the foundation's more muted industrial surroundings. This building challenges the norms of museum spaces, offering intimate galleries that provoke a reevaluation of the visitor's engagement with both the artwork and its architectural context. (Figure 4.19)

Table 4.13 Architectural Analysis of the Fondazione Prada by several features

Architectural Style	Building Iconic Status	Adaptive Reused	Integration with Surrounding	Material
Contemporary, Industrial	Landmark design, enhances exhibit appeal	Distillery	Blends old with new	Brick, Concrete, Glass

The Torre adds a striking vertical counterpoint to the site's predominantly horizontal layout. Its modern lines and transparent façade offer a fresh perspective, both literally and metaphorically, housing flexible exhibition spaces that interact dynamically with the cityscape of Milan. "For some reason art feels different on the ground than it feels on the 10th floor," remarked Rem Koolhaas. "What will be unique about this tower is that every next floor will be one meter taller, so that will have a very varied effect on the artistic content." This innovative design ensures that the experience of viewing art changes with each level, enhancing the overall impact of the exhibitions. (Shaw, 2022)

The Cisterna, with its trio of interconnected tanks repurposed from the distillery era, embodies the essence of adaptive reuse within Fondazione Prada. The raw, untouched quality of this space serves as a canvas for installations that require a sense of enclosure and introspection, highlighting the foundation's industrial heritage. In contrast, the Podium, with its expansive layout and ample natural light, facilitates large-scale artworks and installations, blurring the lines between the interior and the courtyards beyond. These outdoor courtyards, integral to the complex's spatial strategy, not only provide a breath of openness but also extend the dialogue of art into the open air, acting as stages for outdoor installations and public engagement. The minimalist design of these spaces, punctuated by reflective mirrors and sparse vegetation, enhances the foundation's ethos of creating a seamless flow between the indoor galleries and the external environment. In weaving together these varied elements—each with its distinct character and purpose—Fondazione Prada emerges as a testament to the potential of architectural creativity to foster new forms of cultural expression and engagement. The design philosophy that underpins the foundation's spatial configuration embodies flexibility, innovation, and the narrative capacity of architecture, positioning Fondazione Prada as a dynamic, evolving entity.

Table 4.14 Spatial Analysis of Fondazione Prada by several features

Spatial Hierarchy	Layout Plan	Visual Connectivity	Size and Scale	Accessibility
Defined Spaces with Character	Varied, includes new and renovated spaces	Selective visibility, integrated interior and exterior views	Large, Sprawling Complex	Modern Facilities

The layout of Fondazione Prada is characterized by a series of interconnected spaces, each distinct in its function and atmosphere, yet unified by a common thread of architectural coherence and flexibility. The spatial hierarchy is defined by spaces with distinct character, each contributing to the overall experience. The varied layout plan includes both new and renovated spaces, seamlessly integrating the historical and contemporary elements. Selective visibility ensures visual connectivity, with integrated interior and exterior views that enhance the visitor's journey through the complex. The large, sprawling complex offers a sense of scale that accommodates grand installations and intimate displays alike. Accessibility is further enhanced by modern facilities, ensuring that visitors can easily navigate and engage with the diverse range of exhibitions. From the outset, visitors are drawn into a choreographed sequence of spaces, beginning with the openness of the courtyards, which serve as both a welcoming area and an introduction to the foundation's dialogue between the external urban landscape and its internal cultural sanctuary. (Table 4.14)



Figure 4.20 Podium, Recycling Beauty Exhibition (left), Courtyard 1 (right), 4th February 2024

As visitors progress from the courtyards, they encounter the Podium, with its glass façade and aluminum foam ceilings, passing through the striking gold-coated Haunted House façade before reaching the ticket office. The contrast between the gold-coated Haunted House and the modern aluminum foam façade immediately indicates that an unconventional museum experience awaits them. Upon entering the Podium, visitors find a gallery that deviates from the traditional white cube concept in favor of a transparent background. This architectural choice allows visitors to see the surrounding architectural patterns, integrating the art displays with the historical context visible outside. The glass façade creates a seamless connection between the contemporary exhibits and the site's rich heritage, presenting the art against a backdrop of historical architecture. (Figure 4.20)

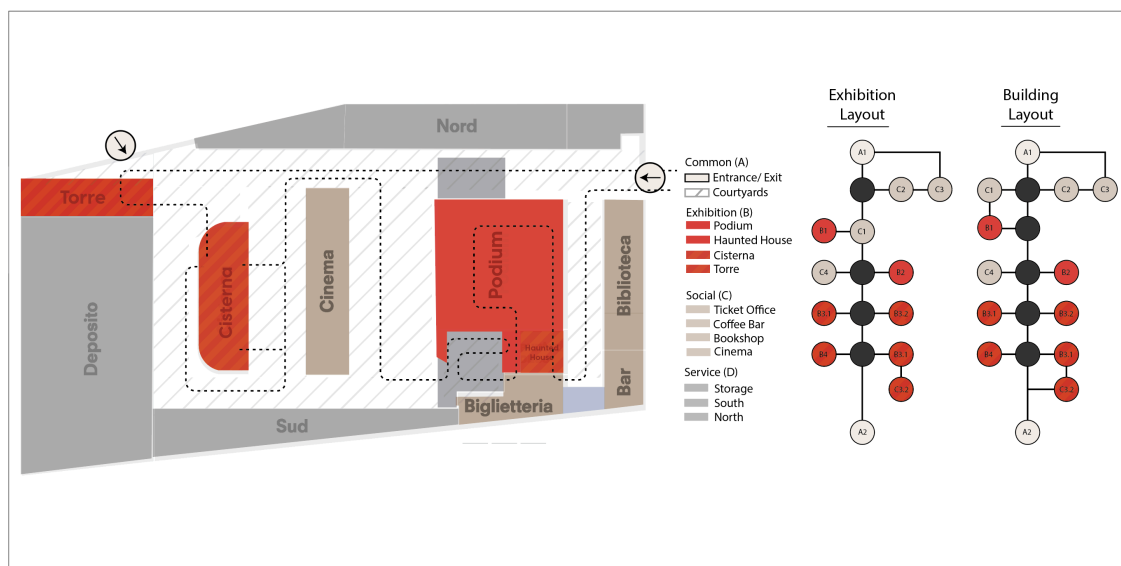
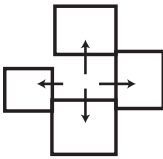
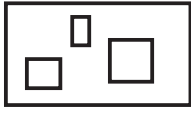
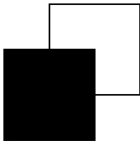
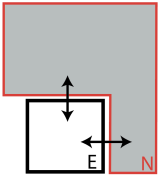


Figure 4.21 Spatial Diagram of Fondazione Prada

When we examine the visitor flow of the complex, it becomes clear that, despite the courtyards giving an impression of open access, the area is not entirely open to the public. Visitors first need to enter through the ticket office, which is near the Haunted House. This alters the building's original visitor flow, transforming it into a different version which is showed in Figure 4.21. The interconnected courtyards are interrupted by Fondazione Prada's program to ensure an appropriate museum experience. By reducing accessibility between spaces, the foundation secures its collections from public access. Additionally, the map indicates that the complex includes ten buildings, but within the exhibition program, only four are accessible to the public. This limitation further narrows the visitor flow.

Table 4.15 Architecture and Display Analysis of Fondazione Prada Ground Floor

Visitor Route	Exhibition Layout	Art & Architecture Hierarchy	Adaptive Reuse Type
			
<p>Courtyard, Freedom</p>	<p>Temporary Installations</p>	<p>Clear Differences Between Art & Architecture</p>	<p>Build Adjacent to Existing</p>

Although the complex has two entrances, tickets are sold at a single point, which funnels all visitors through nearly the same route, branching from a central focal point. This controlled flow ensures that visitors experience the exhibitions in a specific sequence, enhancing the overall curation while protecting the integrity of the artworks and the historical site.

The visitor route at Fondazione Prada begins in the courtyard, creating an initial impression of openness and freedom. However, visitors must first pass through the ticket office, transforming the original visitor flow into a more controlled and curated experience. Hence after the ticket purpose the flow in the complex is free within the courtyards. The exhibition layout features temporary installations, ensuring a dynamic and evolving display. There is a clear distinction between the art and architecture, with the modern installations contrasting sharply with the historic structures. This deliberate contrast enhances the appreciation of both elements. The adaptive reuse of the site involves building adjacent to existing structures, preserving the historical integrity while introducing contemporary spaces. This blend of old and new creates a cohesive environment that enriches the visitor experience. (Table 4.15)

4.3.2 Display Analysis of Fondazione Prada

The displaying layout of Fondazione Prada, meticulously orchestrated to harmonize with both its historical roots and contemporary architectural enhancements, plays a crucial role in shaping the visitor's engagement with the exhibitions. This layout, a deliberate design choice by OMA led by Rem Koolhaas, utilizes the spatial dynamics of the complex to create a unique narrative journey through the art on display, seamlessly integrating the artworks with the architectural fabric of the foundation. (Fondazione Prada Press Release, 2015) At Fondazione Prada, the spatial configuration is not just about showcasing art; it's about creating an immersive dialogue between the visitor, the art, and the space itself. The flexibility of the exhibition areas, from the raw industrial charm of the Cisterna to the modern transparency of the Tower and the expansive openness of the Podium, allows for a diverse range of display strategies. This adaptability ensures that each exhibition can be uniquely tailored to optimize the interaction between the artwork and its environment, enhancing the perceptual and emotional impact on the viewer.

When examining the Torre building, it is evident that the aim was to create a vertical structure adjacent to the complex, providing a stark contrast to the existing horizontal layout. While the other volumes have an industrial background and largely neglect the white cube concept, the Torre focuses on creating a neutral background for the artworks, fully embracing the white cube concept from a new perspective. This vertical addition juxtaposes the historical industrial aesthetic with a modern, minimalist approach, enhancing the presentation of contemporary art within the Fondazione Prada complex.

In his interview, Rem Koolhaas mentioned that by introducing numerous spatial variables, the architecture's complexity promotes an unstable, open programming where art and architecture benefit from each other's challenges. The Torre exists to develop a repertoire and options for display with different scales of interpretation. Koolhaas emphasized the importance of creating diverse conditions, noting that a vertical element was essential for various reasons. He explained that art feels different on the ground than in the air, and the varied effect on the artists' content due to different levels is unique. Each of the ten stories has progressively taller floors, contributing to the diversity of exhibition spaces and the dynamic interaction between art and architecture. (Shaw, 2022)

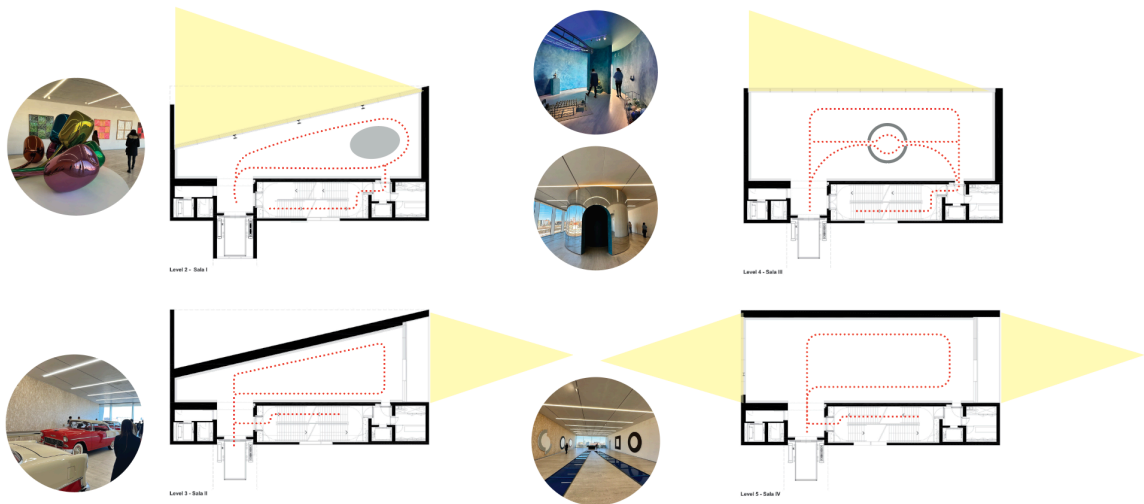
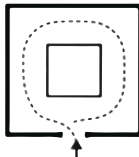
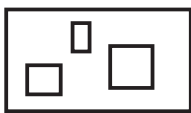
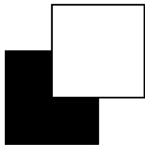
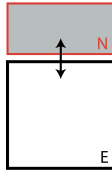


Figure 4.22 Architecture and Display Analysis of Fondazione Prada Ground Floor

When the display layout of the Torre building is considered, each floor is designed with different angles, creating a unique display background for the artworks. Because the form of the space varies on each floor, the pattern of visitor flow also changes, breaking the monotony of the traditional white cube display concept. Each floor presents a surprising opportunity at the entrance, enhancing the visitor experience. Several floor plans, as shown in Figure 4.22, illustrate these visitor flow patterns. Additionally, the windows on each floor are positioned differently. Some floors offer a full view of the cityscape, allowing visitors to pause and take in the view of Milan. This design choice makes the city silhouette an integral part of the exhibition, framing it as an artwork within the walls of Fondazione Prada. This interplay between the interior exhibition spaces and the exterior urban landscape enriches the visitor experience, blending art, architecture, and the city into a cohesive narrative.

Table 4.16 Architecture and Display Analysis of Fondazione Prada Torre Building

Visitor Route	Exhibition Layout	Art & Architecture Hierarchy	Adaptive Reuse Type
 <p>Arterial (each floor)</p>	 <p>Permanent Installations Independent From Space</p>	 <p>White Cube Dominancy</p>	 <p>Separate New Building Adjacent to Existing</p>

When considering the Tower building's display layout, each floor features an arterial visitor route that guides visitors through the space uniquely. The exhibition layout includes permanent installations that are independent of the architectural space, maintaining a clear art and architecture hierarchy. The white cube concept dominates, providing a neutral background that highlights the artworks. This approach ensures that each piece is viewed without distraction, allowing for pure artistic appreciation. The Tower, a separate new building adjacent to the existing structures, exemplifies adaptive reuse by integrating modern exhibition spaces within the historical context of the Fondazione Prada complex. This juxtaposition of old and new creates a dynamic environment where contemporary art can thrive alongside historical architecture. (Table 4.16)

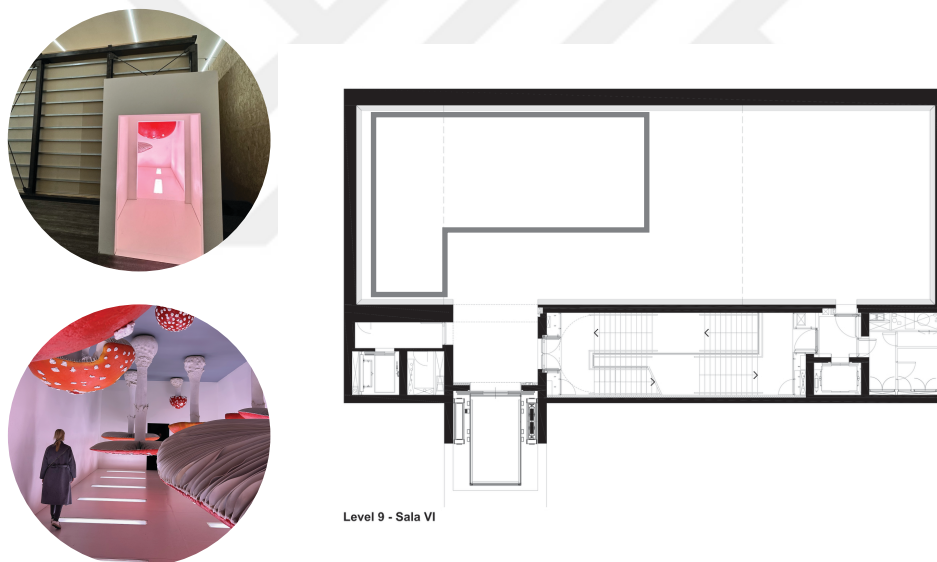


Figure 4.23 Plan of the Level 9 of Torre Building

The ninth level of the Torre building diverges from the other floors, creating a "box in a box" situation. By placing a separate box within the building, the perception of space is altered and neutralized from its surroundings. Serving as the last exhibition space in the tower, it provides a fitting conclusion to the narrative. This installation welcomes visitors into a completely black space, deactivating all of their senses. There is no sound or light, effectively neutralizing the environment and isolating visitors from all external stimuli. (Figure 4.23)

As visitors move through this sensory deprivation, they encounter an upside-down installation emerging from a gate. This design allows them to perceive the space as a utopia where everything is inverted, eliminating the sense of reality. The curatorial intention behind this installation is to change the visitors' perception of reality, offering a unique and transformative experience that differs from the other floors in the Torre building. This approach not only creates a compelling and memorable ending to the exhibition but also showcases the diverse curatorial strategies employed throughout the tower.

The displaying layout of Fondazione Prada, meticulously orchestrated to harmonize with both its historical roots and contemporary architectural enhancements, plays a crucial role in shaping the visitor's engagement with the exhibitions. This layout, a deliberate design choice by OMA led by Rem Koolhaas, utilizes the spatial dynamics of the complex to create a unique narrative journey through the art on display, seamlessly integrating the artworks with the architectural fabric of the foundation. (Fondazione Prada Press Release, 2015) At Fondazione Prada, the spatial configuration is not just about showcasing art; it's about creating an immersive dialogue between the visitor, the art, and the space itself. The flexibility of the exhibition areas, from the raw industrial charm of the Cisterna to the modern transparency of the Tower and the expansive openness of the Podium, allows for a diverse range of display strategies. This adaptability ensures that each exhibition can be uniquely tailored to optimize the interaction between the artwork and its environment, enhancing the perceptual and emotional impact on the viewer.

4.3.3 Art and Architecture Hierarchy in Fondazione Prada

The study "Recycling Beauty," created by Rem Koolhaas/OMA, is devoted entirely to the repurposing of Greek and Roman artifacts in post-antique settings, ranging from the Middle Ages to the Baroque era. The exhibition is a part of a larger investigation that Fondazione Prada has been conducting since 2015. During that time, the institution has simultaneously shown two exhibitions, "Serial Classic" and "Portable Classic," in its locations in Milan and Venice. Salvatore Settis organized the exhibitions (with Anna Anguissola in Milan and Davide Gasparotto in Venice), and Rem Koolhaas/OMA designed them. The fundamental idea behind this study is that we should see the classical not just as a legacy from the past but also as an important component that has the capacity to influence our current and future. (Fondazione Prada Press Release, 2022). Themes in art like seriality, reuse, and recycling provide witness to the remarkable endurance of some classical ideas, categories, and models, while also bearing a strong connection to our understanding of modernity. Ancient history, particularly Greco-Roman legacy, becomes, in Settis' words, "a key that provides access to the multiplicity of cultures in the contemporary world" through an inventive interpretative approach and experimental exhibition forms.

The Podium and the Cisterna, two of Fondazione Prada's buildings, hosts the exhibition design, which was created by Rem Koolhaas/OMA in collaboration with Giulio Margheri. It is a process of historical investigation, discovery, and creativity. The Podium's scenography encourages viewers to interact with the displays at various rates. Office chairs are positioned within the cubicle-like constructions to promote a closer look, and a landscape of low-rise acrylic plinths allows the works on show to be regarded as an ensemble. The exhibits are progressively revealed to visitors in the Cisterna through a series of areas designed to allow viewing from various vantage points, such as the rooftop of a balcony or the cramped viewpoint of a chamber enclosed within an already-existing room. A portion of the design is derived from components from Fondazione Prada's past shows; the acrylic bases were originally used in 2015 for "Serial Classic," which gave the notion of "Recycling Beauty" a spatial component. One of the most significant pieces of late ancient Roman art, the enormous figure of Constantine (4th century CE), is the subject of two rooms of the Cisterna. Alongside a full-scale replica of the Colossus will be two massive marble parts, the right hand and foot, which are ordinarily on exhibit in the courtyard of the Palazzo dei Conservatori in Rome. This shows how the statue was

the result of the reconstruction of an older cult statue, most likely of Jupiter, and is something that has never been tried before. Claudio Parisi Presicce, the Capitoline Supervisor of Cultural Heritage, oversaw the scientific supervision of this project, which was a collaborative effort between the Musei Capitolini, Fondazione Prada, and Factum Foundation. (Fondazione Prada Press Release, 2022).

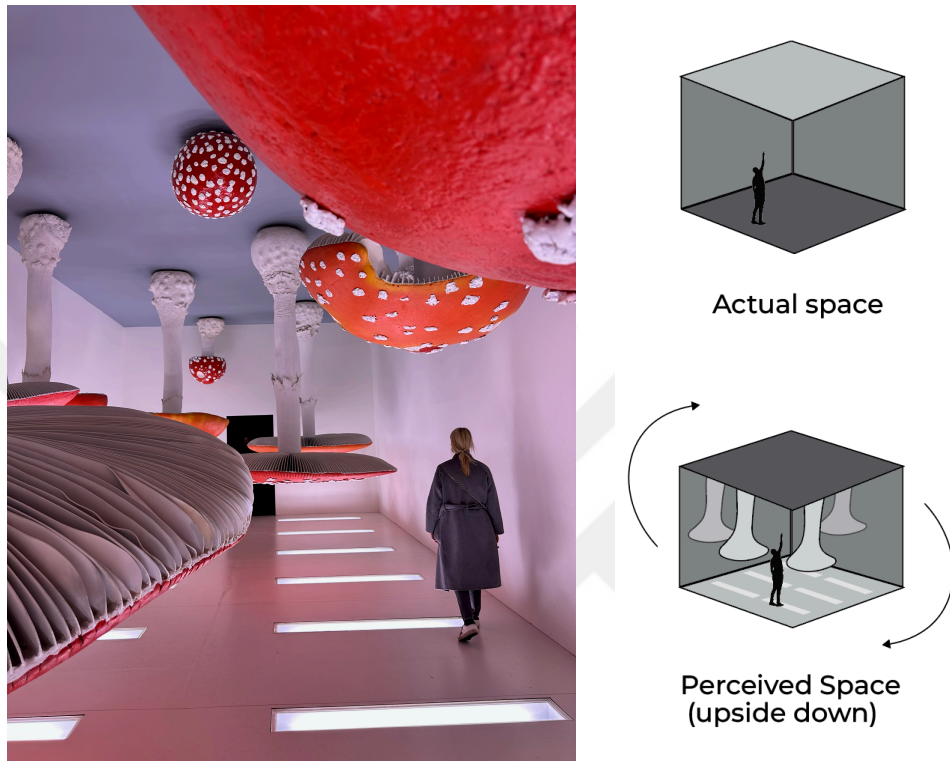


Figure 4.24 Exhibition Atlas in Fondazione Prada Torre Building and its Diagram, 4th February 2023

Table 4.17 Art & Architecture Analysis of Fondazione Prada

White Cube Concept	Art & Architecture Hierarchy	Exhibition Space Flexibility	Display Background	Exhibition - Building Concept
Mix of traditional and contemporary	Unique Integration, contrasts elements as display	Highly Adaptable	White walls, big windows	Contrasting yet complementary

Moreover, the integration of outdoor courtyards and transitional spaces into the exhibition narrative expands the possibilities for display, blurring the boundaries between indoor and outdoor. These areas offer a contrasting backdrop for sculptures and installations, inviting visitors to experience the art in relation to the natural elements and the urban context of Milan. The flow between these diverse spaces is seamlessly

managed, ensuring a cohesive and enriching visitor experience that highlights the foundation's architectural features while placing the art at the forefront. (Table 4.17)

In summary, the displaying layout at Fondazione Prada exemplifies the foundation's innovative approach to exhibition design, where the spatial configuration becomes an active participant in the presentation and appreciation of contemporary art. This layout, characterized by its flexibility, diversity, and integration with the architectural narrative of the complex, underscores Fondazione Prada's role as a pioneering institution in the cultural landscape, where the fusion of space, art, and architecture invites a deeper exploration and understanding of the artworks display.



4.4 MAXXI

MAXXI - National Museum of 21st Century Arts, located in Rome, Italy, is an architectural masterpiece of futuristic and curvilinear design. Completed in 2010, this iconic museum was designed by the visionary architect Zaha Hadid. MAXXI stands as a testament to contemporary art and architecture, featuring an open-plan layout and a non-linear visitor route that guides guests through its innovative spaces. The museum harmoniously blends natural and artificial lighting, integrates interactive multimedia technology, and utilizes eco-friendly materials. Emphasizing urban harmony, MAXXI has transformed from a post-war military barracks into a dynamic center for contemporary culture, showcasing cutting-edge exhibitions and fostering artistic innovation. (Table 4.18)



Figure 4.25 MAXXI Courtyard, 7th December 2022

MAXXI, Museo Nazionale delle Arti del XXI Secolo, is a remarkable fusion of contemporary art and avant-garde architecture, located in the Flaminio district north of Rome's city center. The museum occupies the site of a former military barracks, repurposed to become a beacon of contemporary culture after World War II. Designed and constructed between 2003 and 2010 by the renowned British-Iraqi architect Zaha Hadid, the museum transcends conventional boundaries by housing two distinct institutions within its innovative structure: MAXXI Arte and MAXXI Architettura. More than just a showcase, MAXXI exemplifies the seamless integration of diverse artistic expressions, effectively bridging the realms of architecture and art. (Figure 4.25)

Table 4.18 Identity Card for MAXXI, detailing location, architect, establishment year, key features, and architectural significance

Name	MAXXI - National Museum of 21st Century Arts
Location	Rome, Italy
Architectural Style	Futuristic, Curvilinear
Construction Completed	2010
Architect	Zaha Hadid
Key Features	Open-plan layout, Non-linear visitor route, Natural and artificial lighting blend, Interactive multimedia technology, Urban harmony integration, Eco-friendly materials
Current Use	Contemporary Art and Architecture Museum

Pio Baldi, the director of MAXXI Foundations, envisions the museum as a dynamic creative hub—a modern-day factory or laboratory. This perspective highlights MAXXI's role in fostering new contemporary art, serving as a fertile ground where a myriad of ideas and techniques converge. The museum's collections, curated from global talents in both architecture and art, are displayed dynamically within its foyer, five galleries, and additional rooms dedicated to exhibitions, education, and archival studies. With a blend of permanent displays and dynamic temporary exhibitions, MAXXI stands as both an architectural marvel and a living canvas, inviting visitors to explore ever-evolving landscapes of artistic innovation. According to Simonsson (2014), MAXXI's unique design places it within a larger trend of 20th and 21st-century art museums that utilize innovative architecture to express their purpose. While MAXXI's appearance is distinct, it follows the path of museums breaking from tradition. In MAXXI's case, the building itself becomes a living representation of the art it holds, merging the museum's mission with the architect's artistic vision.

Transforming from its origins as a post-war military barracks, MAXXI now serves as a testament to the city's dedication to contemporary culture and innovation. This transition from a historical site of conflict to a modern center of creativity underscores the museum's role in not only preserving but also reimagining Rome's rich artistic legacy. The MAXXI Museum in Rome is a prime example of adaptive reuse, blending contemporary architectural innovation with the historical context of its location. While the museum itself is a new construction, designed by Zaha Hadid and completed in 2010, its development conceptually embraced the idea of adaptive reuse through the integration and transformation of the site's pre-existing military barracks.

The area surrounding MAXXI, previously occupied by the Italian military, featured several barracks buildings. Rather than completely removing all traces of the site's past, Hadid's design preserved one of these barracks, integrating it into the museum complex. This decision not only pays homage to the historical layering of Rome but also demonstrates a sustainable approach to urban development. The barracks, once symbols of military order and confinement, have been repurposed as spaces for artistic expression and public engagement, embodying the museum's commitment to contemporary art and architecture. The adaptive reuse aspect of MAXXI goes beyond mere physical integration. It represents a conceptual bridge between past and future, where the historical context of the site is not erased but reinterpreted through the lens of modern design. This approach aligns with Hadid's architectural philosophy, which often emphasizes fluidity, dynamism, and the interaction between architectural spaces and their urban environments. Moreover, the adaptive reuse of the barracks within the MAXXI complex serves as a catalyst for urban regeneration in the Flaminio district. By transforming a military area into a cultural hub, MAXXI has contributed to the revitalization of its neighborhood, attracting visitors and fostering a vibrant cultural scene. This transformation showcases the potential of adaptive reuse in contemporary architecture to repurpose existing structures in ways that enrich the urban fabric and promote cultural continuity. In summary, the adaptive reuse of the military barracks at the MAXXI Museum underscores the project's innovative approach to blending historical elements with avant-garde design. It reflects a broader trend in architecture and urban planning that values sustainability, cultural heritage, and the dynamic relationship between new constructions and their historical contexts. Through this integration, MAXXI stands not just as a museum of 21st-

century arts but as a testament to the enduring relevance of history in shaping our built environment.(Figure 4.26)

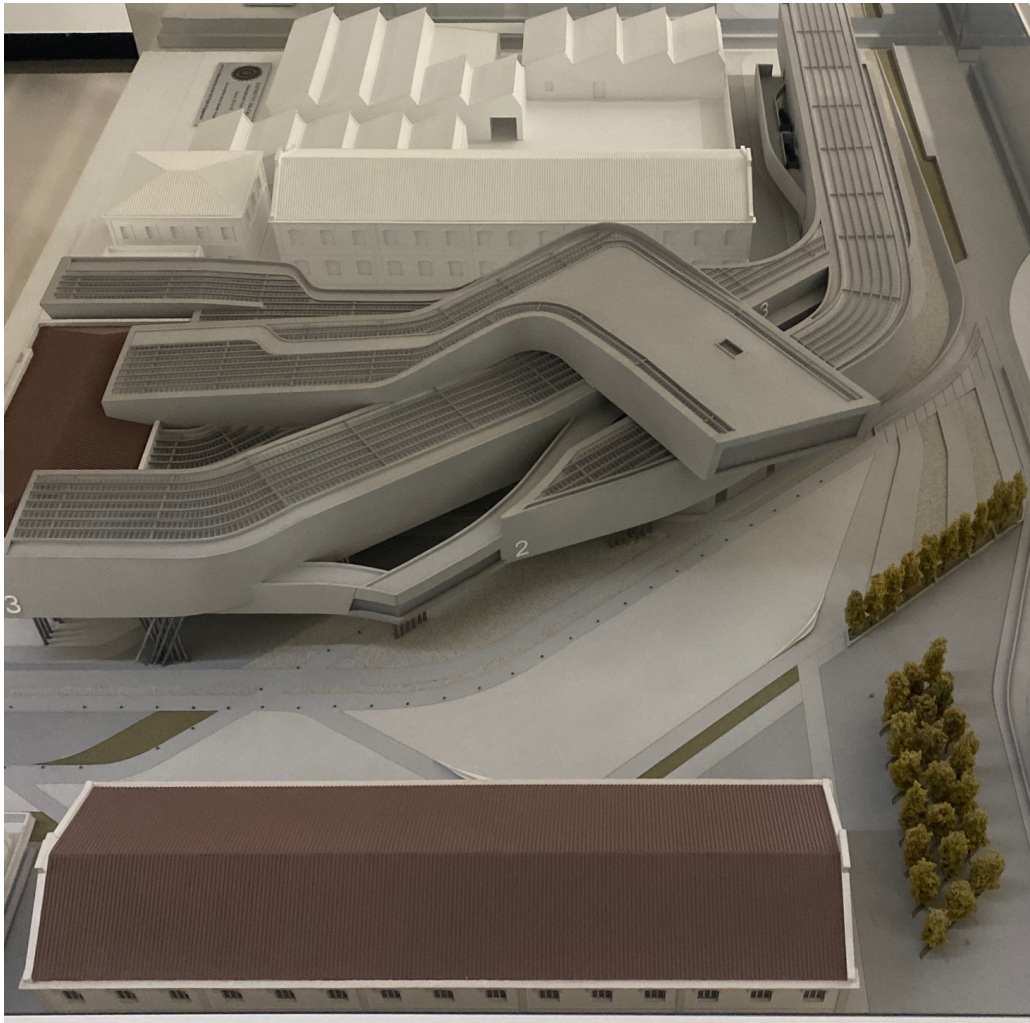


Figure 4.26 MAXXI real life model located in the museum, 7th December 2022

MAXXI is situated in the Flaminio district, an area that has undergone substantial transformation over the last century. Originally an industrial zone, Flaminio evolved into an entertainment hub following Rome's 1942 World Fair. The district's role was further solidified by hosting events during the 1960 Summer Olympics at Foro Mussolini, now known as Foro Italico. Presently, Flaminio is a vibrant cultural center, featuring sports stadiums, music venues, and major art museums. Its location outside the city walls exempts it from the stringent building restrictions imposed on central Rome, thus fostering the growth of modernist architecture. Essentially, Flaminio represents a fusion of entertainment, culture, and sports, contributing to its dynamic character within the Roman landscape.

According to Simonsson (2014), Zaha Hadid meticulously considered the location and its surroundings when designing MAXXI. The site on Via Guido Reni, previously occupied by army barracks, posed spatial constraints for the new structure. Hadid addressed these challenges by demolishing some of the barracks, integrating one into the museum, and renovating others into additional exhibition halls. This thoughtful approach allowed for the seamless incorporation of contemporary architecture within the historical context of the Flaminio district. The building's floor plan was curved to harmonize with the site's shape and urban structure, and concrete, blending seamlessly with the surroundings, emerged as the primary construction material. A courtyard at the front provides space for outdoor exhibitions. While MAXXI adapts to the conditions of the Flaminio district, its design stands out as a prominent showcase of avant-garde elements, making it a distinctive landmark in the area. As discussed earlier in this article, MAXXI aligns with global contemporary art museums like the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao, the Groninger Museum in Groningen, and Tate Modern in London. These renowned institutions are distinguished not only for their exhibitions but also for their avant-garde and unconventional architectural designs. Like MAXXI, they transcend conventional museum paradigms, where the art perspective is intricately woven into the building's design. MAXXI thus represents a genre within contemporary art museums where architecture serves as a dynamic expression of the museum's unique concepts, contents, and profiles, positioning it firmly within the global conversation on innovative and art-centric architectural achievements.

4.4.1 Architectural Analysis of MAXXI



Figure 4.27 MAXXI Courtyard (left), MAXXI Interior (right), 7th December 2022

MAXXI's design clearly showcases a futuristic and ultramodern style, with little reference to historical architectural elements. The predominant use of concrete gives the building a solid and sleek look, adding a sense of timelessness and permanence. Concrete has been a key material in Roman architecture, used in iconic structures like the Pantheon and detailed in Vitruvius' writings. By using concrete as its main material, MAXXI bridges the past and future. While it acknowledges historical techniques, its futuristic elements are what truly define its architectural identity. Even though it will eventually be considered a historical landmark, MAXXI's modern design and lasting materials currently keep it looking fresh and timeless. (Table 4.19)

Table 4.19 Architectural Analysis of the MAXXI by several features

Architectural Style	Building Iconic Status	Adaptive Reused	Integration with Surrounding	Material
Futuristic, curvilinear	Landmark design, enhances exhibit appeal	Military Barracks	Urban Harmony	Glass, Steel, Concrete

According to Simonsson (2014), To have the architecture reflect a correlation between interior and exterior design while considering the surrounding environment is crucial. Considering Hadid's futuristic style and her attention to the locations that inspire her works, MAXXI is undoubtedly a standout museum in the northern Rome environment

while also blending in with its urban structures. Its site-specific characteristics, typical of Hadid's architecture, allow it to integrate with the street systems of the Flaminio area and the remaining barracks on the site. However, it still retains an element of otherness.



Figure 4.28 Gallery 2 (left), Second floor viewing Gallery 1 (right) in MAXXI, 7th December 2022,

Psarra (2005) argues that museum design needs spatial elements to help visitors orient themselves and create a cohesive connection between the building and the exhibitions. In MAXXI, these aids are minimal, but there is a coherence in its avant-garde design, which houses contemporary art displayed in unconventional ways. (Figure 4.28)

Table 4.20 Spatial Analysis of MAXXI by several features

Spatial Hierarchy	Layout Plan	Visual Connectivity	Size and Scale	Accessibility
Interconnected spaces, varying scales	Open-plan, flexible	Open sightlines, integrated interior and exterior views	Expansive	Open sightlines, integrated interior and exterior views

Museum's layout is integral to the building's adaptability. Although the themes in materials and forms are consistent, MAXXI's architecture is dynamic and unpredictable. The spaces feature a mix of narrow corridors and large halls of various shapes and sizes, causing continuous adjustments in pace. Moreover, all the galleries are interconnected and are mostly expansive and flexible to accommodate various installations. While the galleries have an open plan, the connected halls or stairs create

divisions. Additionally, the connecting spaces are used for displaying artworks, enhancing the visitor's experience throughout the entire museum. (Table 4.20)

According to Simonsson (2014), the stair grates resemble those that cover street and pavement openings leading to underground systems in urban areas. Similar grates can be seen on the sidewalks around MAXXI. Hadid designed the building's lines and shapes to mirror the surrounding streets' structures, drawing inspiration from geology, landscapes, and topography. The building features rows of concrete tracks with ceiling-mounted flat bars that flow continuously through the rooms, mimicking the shapes of Rome's streets. These material and design choices are related to urban planning and traffic patterns. In other words, the museum's design reflects the characteristics of modern urban Rome, aligning with MAXXI's mission as a museum of modern and contemporary art and architecture. (Figure 4.29)

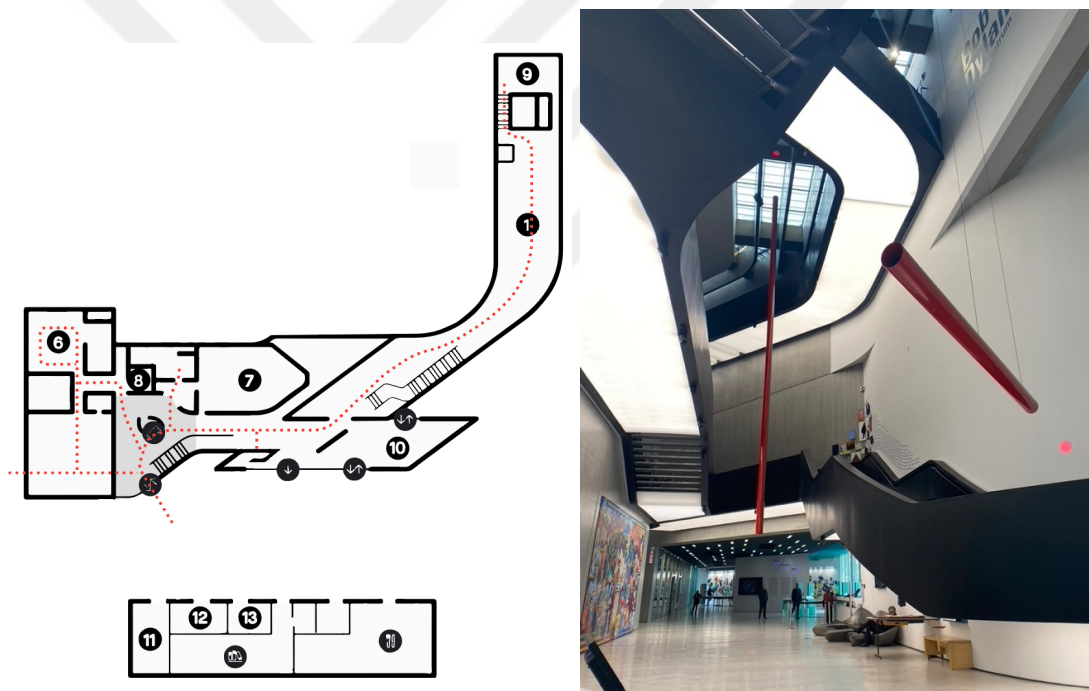



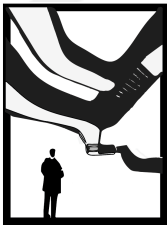
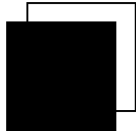
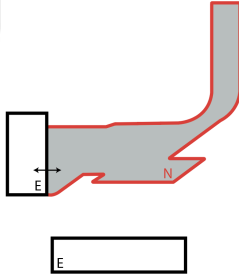
Figure 4.29 MAXXI Ground Floor Visitor Circulation Map (left), Foyer of the Museum (right), 7th December 2022

The visitor walking route at the MAXXI Museum embodies Zaha Hadid's innovative approach to architecture, offering a unique journey through space and art. From the expansive foyer, visitors are drawn into an immersive experience where traditional navigation gives way to exploration. The curvilinear design guides visitors through interconnected spaces, seamlessly blending indoor galleries with outdoor exhibition areas. This pathway serves as a narrative journey, unveiling the museum's

collections and temporary exhibitions in a well-choreographed sequence. The layout encourages spontaneous encounters with art, fostering dynamic interactions. Ramps and stairways that appear to float enhance the sense of movement, making transitions between galleries engaging. These elements are functional and contribute to the architectural expression, enhancing spatial perception and the overall interior aesthetic.

According to Simonsson (2014), the sense of flotation and weightlessness, as described by Pallasmaa in contemporary architecture, is notably present in MAXXI. This sensation is accentuated by the unconventional forms and spatial arrangements, which highlight the futuristic aspects of the design. Interestingly, the materials used in the building evoke both futuristic and historical references simultaneously, creating a unique blend that pays homage to the past while looking forward to the future. This duality in materiality and design further emphasizes MAXXI's position as a landmark of innovative architectural expression.

Table 4.21 Architecture and Displaying Analysis of MAXXI Ground Floor

Visitor Route	Exhibition Layout	Art & Architecture Hierarchy	Adaptive Reuse Type
			
Controlled Freedom	Spatial Focus	Architecture as an Art Dominancy	Parasites- Juxtapositions

MAXXI employs different design approaches on each floor. The ground floor, which includes the entrance, foyer, and Gallery 1, embodies a concept of controlled freedom, largely due to the museum's ticket system. Visitors are first welcomed and obtain their tickets before encountering the dominant feature of the foyer—the stairs. These stairs are not just functional but serve as an art form, highlighting the idea of architecture as an art itself, and reflecting the museum's status as an icon. Although the foyer occasionally hosts installations, these are often overshadowed by the prominence of the stairs, sometimes necessitating their removal to maintain the architectural focus. (Table 4.21)

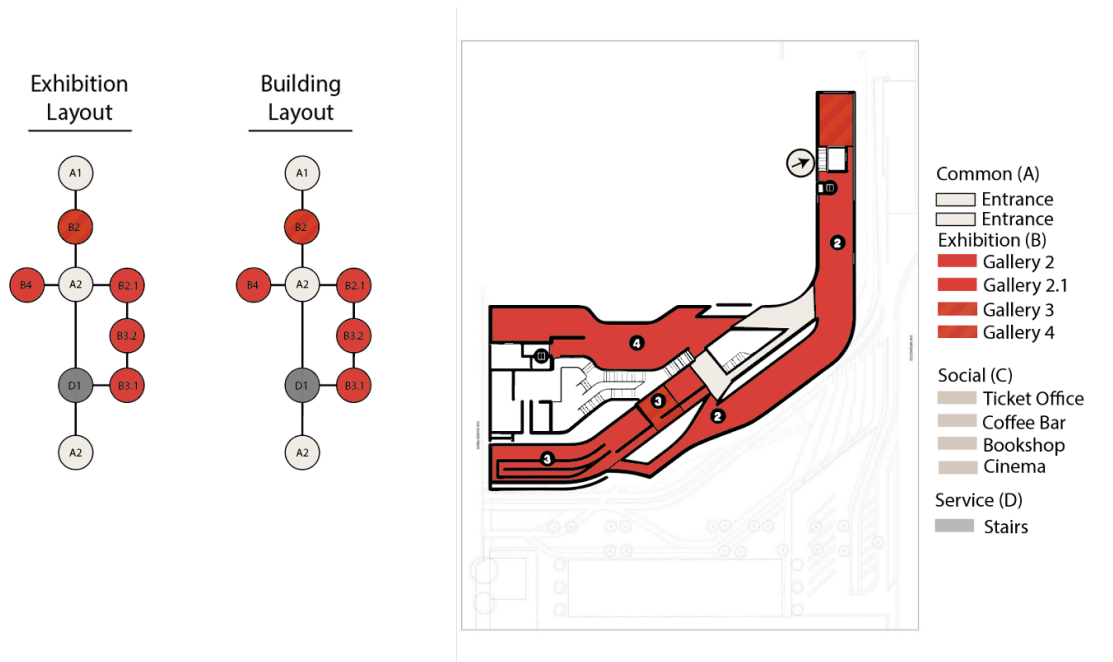


Figure 4.30 Spatial Layout of the galleries of MAXXI

When examining the spatial layout of MAXXI, the museum's open design significantly influences the overall experience. While the layout is expansive and fluid, it maintains clear distinctions between individual galleries. This structural clarity ensures that transitions between exhibits are seamless, yet each gallery retains its distinct identity, preserving the integrity of the exhibitions. The architectural design ensures that the visitor's route through the galleries is unaffected by the exhibitions themselves since the galleries are separated from each other. In Figure 4.30, the separation of galleries can be seen, all connecting from the common area located at the core. This layout facilitates a natural flow, guiding visitors smoothly through the space and allowing them to engage with each exhibit independently, without interference from adjacent displays. This separation enhances the viewer's ability to fully experience each gallery's unique theme or artistic focus, reinforcing the museum's commitment to a clear and coherent presentation of art. (Figure 4.30)

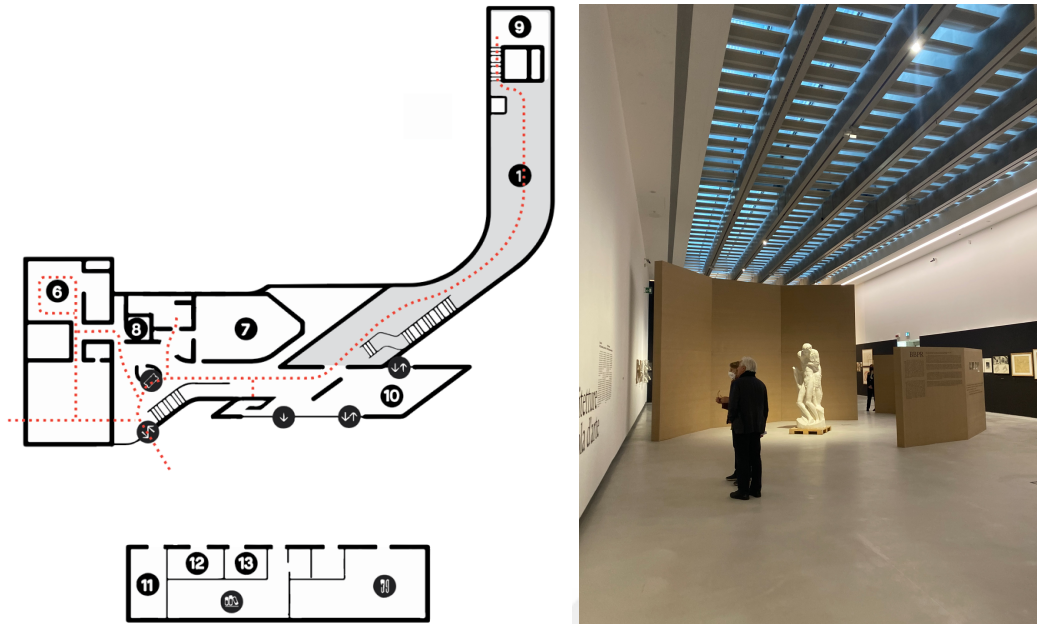

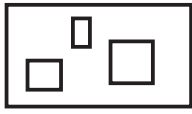
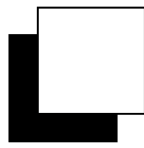
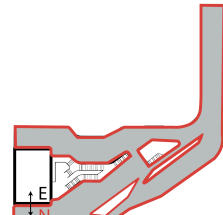


Figure 4.31 MAXXI Ground Floor Visitor Circulation Map (left), Gallery 1 (right), 7th December 2022

When examining the upper floor where most of the galleries are located, the museum design embodies a dynamic integration of architectural planning and exhibition strategy, marked by free visitor routing. The layout's focus on temporary installations ensures the museum remains responsive to evolving artistic trends, maintaining freshness and adaptability with its massive flexible spaces (Figure 4.31). This setup allows for a free-flow visitor experience, enabling spontaneous and personalized exploration without a prescribed path, thereby enhancing engagement and curiosity. (Table 4.22)

Table 4.22 Architecture and Display Analysis of MAXXI

Visitor Route	Exhibition Layout	Art & Architecture Hierarchy	Adaptive Reuse Type
 <p>Free</p>	 <p>Temporary Installations</p>	 <p>White Cube Dominancy</p>	 <p>Parasites-Juxtapositions</p>

The dominance of the White Cube model emphasizes minimal architectural interference, spotlighting the artworks against neutral backgrounds to maximize aesthetic appreciation. Additionally, the adaptive reuse strategy employs a Parasites-Juxtapositions approach, where modern architectural elements are integrated into the historical fabric,

creating a compelling blend of old and new that respects the building's heritage while introducing contemporary dynamism. Collectively, these elements forge a museum environment that balances open exploration with structured aesthetic clarity, offering a continually renewing and rich cultural experience. (Table 4.22)

4.4.2 Display Analysis of MAXXI

When analyzing MAXXI, the architectural features have been more deeply examined than the display analysis due to the museum's dominant role in the display narrative. The architecture of MAXXI often attracts more attention than the exhibitions it houses. The spatial design of MAXXI aligns closely with contemporary architecture in art museums, aiming for timelessness despite being inherently time-specific. Anna Mattiolo, MAXXI's director of arts, highlights that the museum's exhibition galleries significantly depart from the traditional notion of "sterile and closed-off white cubes." The fluid design of the spaces allows for experimental settings where artworks can be suspended from ceilings or concealed behind curved walls, as seen in certain galleries, open spaces, and the foyer. Conversely, in other areas, displays follow a more traditional approach, with artworks arranged in straight lines along the walls. (Simonsson, 2014)

Experiencing exhibitions at MAXXI involves adapting to new ways of seeing art, where the space around you is very noticeable. Space always matters during a museum visit, whether we realize it or not. Even though designs like the white cube aim to provide a "neutral" background for art, true neutrality is hard to achieve. At MAXXI, the design affects how visitors move and feel, which in turn influences how they see and understand the art. As you walk through MAXXI, you notice unexpected curves and height changes in the space while also looking at the artworks. In MAXXI, the concept of blurring the boundaries between spatial design and artworks is key. This strategy prioritizes unconventional shapes and layouts over color settings. Form and structure are central, especially in how art interacts with the space. Artworks are strategically placed in relation to architectural forms to create surprise or to visually frame and highlight individual pieces. The curved and sectioned spaces of most galleries allow for individual viewing of artworks without distractions from other parts of the space, unlike areas offering a clear overview. While elements like slopes, steps, and separate walls might sometimes divert attention from the art, they also complement the exhibitions, creating an intriguing combination rather than intruding on each other.

4.4.3 Art and Architecture Hierarchy in MAXXI

Table 4.23 Art and Architecture Hierarchy Analysis in MAXXI

White Cube Concept	Art& Architecture Hierarchy	Exhibition Space Flexibility	Display Background	Exhibition Concept-Building Concept
Non-traditional	Fluid connection, architectural elements as display	Open plan wide galleries, flexible	White, Clean Background enhances the display.	Harmonious, integrated

MAXXI embraces different display preferences and approaches on each floor. For instance, on the ground floor in the foyer, the architectural features of the museum, such as the angled grand black stairs with lighting from below, become an art form. According to Simonsson (2014), there are occasionally some artworks in the entryway, such as video art displayed on ceiling-mounted monitors. However, the artwork in the entryway does not automatically draw attention in the same way that the ramps and steps do. Therefore, the hall can be viewed as a unique form of architectural art display venue. In this case, the ramps and steps serve more purposes than just facilitating movement between various galleries. They also appear to have been designed to represent artworks, fusing architecture, art, and utility into a single design. The extended red cylinders that hang from the ceiling and occupy the spaces between the ramps and stairs are additional features that have been transformed into artworks in the entryway.

On the other hand, the first floor, which hosts several galleries, serves as a white cube for the artworks. While incorporating MAXXI's fluid forms and organic shapes, these galleries embrace the concept of a neutral white background. The architectural features of MAXXI do not draw as much attention here compared to the ground floor foyer. Most galleries on the first floor blend art and architecture to create a cohesive whole, but some rooms focus solely on the artworks without any experimentation or interaction with spatial forms. This contrast in display approaches demonstrates that a single museum can utilize multiple strategies within its different spaces. MAXXI's ability to shift from a striking architectural art form in the foyer to a more subdued, art-centric environment in the galleries illustrates its versatility and adaptability in enhancing the visitor experience.

4.5 Chapter Review

In the chapter dedicated to analyzing four prominent contemporary art museums—Fondazione Prada, Palazzo Strozzi, MAXXI, and the Venice Biennale’s Arsenale—this thesis presents an in-depth examination of how these institutions leverage architectural innovation and curatorial strategy to enhance the presentation of art and engage audiences. Each case study has been selected for its unique approach to integrating architectural design with exhibition practices, offering insights into the dynamic dialogue between physical space and curatorial content. All of the institutions have been analyzed in two main categories to understand the relationship between art and architectural hierarchy.

Firstly, the institutions have been analyzed through their architectural features to understand their spatial configurations and how they facilitate visitor flow within the building. Visitor flow is an integral part of the experience inside the building. The analysis reveals that the visitor flow in these museum spaces can be categorized, as they provide similar paths for visitors. Additionally, the use of simplistic space syntax graphs has helped to understand the spatial morphology of the museums. These interrogations have created a reference point for understanding the exhibition’s impact on the existing building layouts, as we can observe the building layout before and after the exhibition through the simplistic space syntax graphs.

Secondly, the institutions have been analyzed based on their display preferences. It is clear that the artworks interact with the existing architectural features, creating unique outcomes in each case. In all examples, the historical settings provided by these institutions create a unique experience for visitors, facilitated by the contrast between the art and the architectural context. This host-and-guest relationship between art and architecture varies across each institution. Within these museums, the dominance of art and the language of art display can also vary within different rooms and spaces of a single museum building. As this dominance changes, it becomes clear that the methods of displaying art in museum spaces can also be compared, as their ways of showcasing art are similar under certain conditions. By examining these dynamics, we can better understand how architectural settings influence curatorial practices and how this interaction enhances the overall visitor experience.

Table 4.24 Architectural Features Comparison Table

Architectural Features	Fondazione Prada	Palazzo Strozzi	MAXXI	Arsenale
Courtyard Layouts	✓	✗	✗	✓
Unified Volumes of Spaces	✗	✓	✓	✗
Historical Architecture Dominancy	✗	✓	✗	✓
Contemporary Architectural Additions	✓	✗	✓	✗

In architectural feature comparison (Table 4.24), the volumes of spaces have been analyzed in terms of their connection to other spaces. This includes examining courtyard layouts where visitors constantly reach the courtyard during their exhibition visit, with separate volumes of exhibition galleries connected through courtyards. This is contrasted with a unified building concept, where visitors stay within the same building throughout the exhibition visit. Additionally, architectural additions to historical buildings have been compared to understand the adaptive reuse approaches taken by each museum.

Table 4.25 Display Preferences Comparison Table

Display Preferences	Fondazione Prada	Palazzo Strozzi	MAXXI	Arsenale
White Cube Mentality	✓ (Torre)	✗	✓	✗
Historical Background for Display	✗	✓	✗	✓
Dialogue with Art	✓	✓	✓	✓
Flexibility for Art Displays	✓	✗	✓	✓

In comparing the display preferences (Table 4.25) of the adaptively reused institutions, the analysis focused on the display language employed by each museum. This includes assessing whether the institutions adopt a white cube mentality, which enhances the artwork by providing a neutral background that directs focus solely on the artwork itself, minimizing the architectural influence. Alternatively, some institutions use a historical background for displays, leveraging the contrast between the architectural setting and the artwork to create a unique and engaging display language. Additionally, the flexibility of the exhibition spaces and their ability to engage in a meaningful dialogue with the art were also key aspects of the comparison.

Architectural Features

When examining the Arsenale di Venezia and Fondazione Prada, it is evident that they adopt very different adaptive reuse approaches. Fondazione Prada, transformed from a distillery, integrates contemporary extensions that blend with the old structure, creating a harmonious fusion of historical and modern elements.

Table 4.26 Architectural Features Comparison Table

Architectural Features	Courtyard Layouts	Unified Volumes of Spaces	Historical Architecture Dominancy	Contemporary Architectural Additions
Arsenale di Venezia	✓	✗	✗	✓
Fondazione Prada	✓	✗	✓	✗

In contrast, the Arsenale di Venezia retains its historical appearance, preserving its shipyard look and identity. The transformation has not altered its character, allowing it to continue serving the Venice Biennale without compromising its original architectural integrity. (Table 4.26).

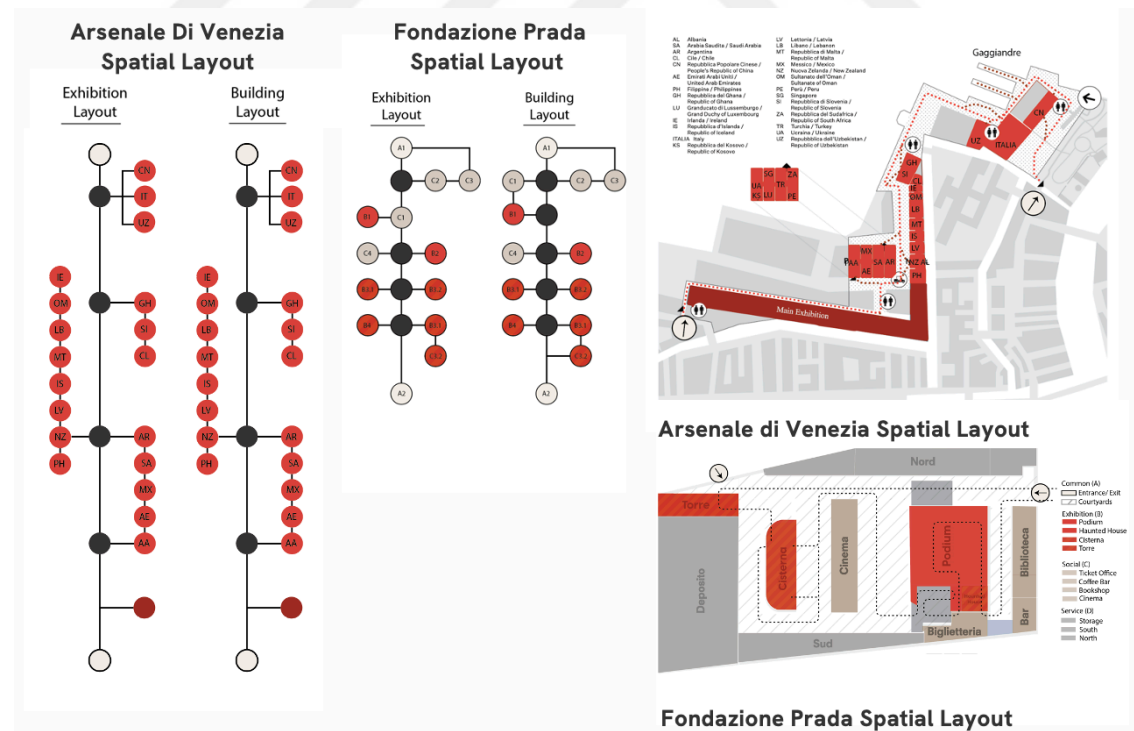


Figure 4.32 Comparison of Arsenale di Venezia and Fondazione Prada in order to spatial layout

Even though the buildings have different approaches to adaptive reuse, their morphological layouts are quite similar as both rely on courtyards. All of the galleries are

organized around courtyards, requiring visitors to go outside frequently, which helps to neutralize their vision for art. The galleries consist of separate volumes rather than being combined in a programmed way, allowing visitors to experience the exhibitions more freely. (Figure 4.32)

Table 4.27 Architectural Features Comparison Table

Architectural Features	Courtyard Layouts	Unified Volumes of Spaces	Historical Architecture Dominancy	Contemporary Architectural Additions
Strozzi Palace	✗	✓	✓	✗
MAXXI	✗	✓	✗	✓

When comparing the architectural features of Palazzo Strozzi and MAXXI, it becomes evident that they share the form of being single buildings that host all exhibitions within one unit. However, despite the similarities in their layouts, the approaches to adaptive reuse are quite different. Palazzo Strozzi preserves its historical features, with alterations that do not overshadow the original identity of the building. In contrast, MAXXI, designed in a contemporary style, juxtaposes the military barracks and overshadows them with new, contemporary additions. (Table 4.27)

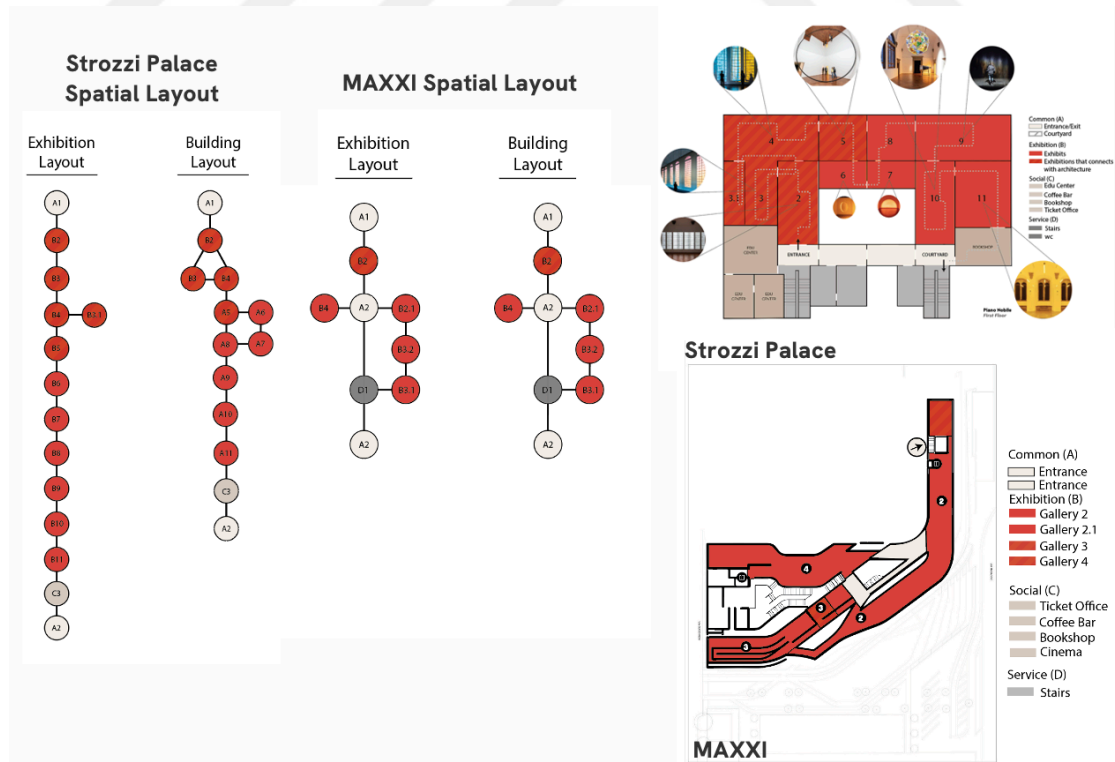


Figure 4.33 Comparison of Strozzi Palace and MAXXI in order to spatial layout

Even though they have different approaches to adaptive reuse and embrace different types of architectural design, their single-unit forms create a similar flow in the visitor route. This means visitors do not need to go inside and outside frequently, unlike the courtyard layouts previously discussed. Both buildings offer a more or less programmed route inside, guiding the visitor through the exhibitions. The key difference is that the curatorial strategies can affect the spatial layout of Palazzo Strozzi, which is flexible in this regard. In contrast, MAXXI’s spatial layout is defined by several separate galleries, making the overall layout less changeable since each gallery independently hosts its exhibitions. (Figure 4.33)

Display Preferences

When attempting to compare the institutions based on their display preferences, the similarities between their display approaches are actually the opposite of their architectural features. The display approach and dialogue with the art have been compared in this section. Some institutions preserve their historical structures to create a contrasting background for the artwork, while others embrace the white cube concept, which provides a clear background to enhance the artwork. We can see that these approaches are comparable, allowing us to classify art museums from several perspectives. By examining these different strategies, we can understand how museums employ their unique display methods to enhance the interaction between the artwork and the architectural setting.

Table 4.28 Display Preferences Comparison Table of Strozzi Palace and Arsenale di Venezia

Display Preferences	White Cube Mentality	Historical Background for Display	Dialogue with Art	Flexibility for Art Displays
Strozzi Palace	X	✓	✓	X
Arsenale di Venezia	X	✓	✓	✓

Firstly, when we compare the display preferences of Palazzo Strozzi and Arsenale di Venezia, it can be seen that both institutions preserve their original structures and identities to provide a contrasting background for contemporary artworks. In these settings, the dialogue between the artwork and the architecture is not merely a matter of aesthetics but becomes a dynamic interaction that influences the interpretation and emotional impact of the art. The historical elements—whether the polished stone of

Palazzo Strozzi or the rustic brickwork of the Arsenale—add layers of meaning, making the art exhibitions more meaningful and engaging. (Table 4.28)



Figure 4.34 Strozzi Palace Courtyard (left), Arsenale di Venezia Gaggiandre (right)

When we take a look at the exhibition settings of both Palazzo Strozzi's courtyard and Arsenale di Venezia's Gaggiandre, we can see that there is a similar display approach where the historical background provides a unique environment with the arches framing the artwork. Within the layer of arches, there is an unexpected contemporary installation which is completely distinct from the historical environment, creating a contrasting layer. With the help of this contrast, the exhibition narrative enriches, creating a unique museum experience for the visitors. This contrasting dialogue between art and architecture creates a one-of-a-kind environment where both elements enhance each other and draw more attention together than they do individually. When we look at both Palazzo Strozzi and Arsenale di Venezia, the historical settings combined with the contemporary artwork create a similar view, even though the buildings originally served different functions. (Figure 4.34)

Table 4.29 Display Preferences Comparison Table of Fondazione Prada and MAXXI

Display Preferences	White Cube Mentality	Historical Background for Display	Dialogue with Art	Flexibility for Art Displays
Fondazione Prada	✓	✗	✓	✓
MAXXI	✓	✗	✓	✓

When we move on to the next institutions, Fondazione Prada and MAXXI, we can see that their adaptive reuse approach is quite different. Both embrace contemporary additions, where gallery spaces primarily serve as white cubes, creating a neutral background for the artworks. These white cube spaces are designed to enhance the focus on the art itself, minimizing any distractions from the architecture focusing the visitor's attention purely on the pieces without external interference. Additionally, both institutions feature large spaces that offer flexible environments for various artworks, allowing for a wide range of exhibition layouts and artistic expressions. (Table 4.29)



Figure 4.35 Display Preferences Comparison of Fondazione Prada (above), MAXXI (below)

In Figure 4.35, it can be seen that the galleries of Fondazione Prada and MAXXI nearly create the same image, appearing almost identical due to the display approach they embrace. Even though the material choices are not entirely the same, the gallery spaces provide neutral, bright backgrounds for artworks to get the attention they need. Moreover, it can be observed both galleries take a contemporary twist on the white cube ideology, using stark, open, and bright spaces to draw attention to the artworks without historical architectural distractions. Both galleries have large windows that allow sunlight to enter and also frame the cityscape, creating a stopping point for visitors to appreciate the view. It can be said that the cityscape also becomes an artwork through the frames of the large windows of the museums.

To sum up, it can be said that both research variables, architectural features and display preferences, demonstrate that museum spaces can be comparable in terms of their design and display choices. The comparison shows that while the institutions may share similarities in architectural features, their display preferences can vary significantly. Even though the architectural layout and spatial morphology of the institutions are similar, their display preferences can differ. The design approach for the conservation of the institution has been a key factor in determining display preferences. Contemporary additions embrace a white cube concept with a neutral, clean background for the artwork. On the other hand, preserving the original historical structure creates a unique display language where historical architecture and contemporary artworks contrast and present a unique narrative.

This chapter synthesized the findings from these case studies to draw broader conclusions about the relationship between architecture and exhibition design in contemporary art museums. It explores how each institution's architectural strategy not only influences curatorial decisions but also shapes the overall visitor experience, contributing to a richer understanding of how space and art interact in diverse museum contexts. Through these comparative analyses, the chapter contributes to the discourse on the evolving role of museum architecture in the curation and presentation of contemporary art. By examining these dynamics, we gain a comprehensive view of how architectural settings influence curatorial practices and how this interaction enhances the overall visitor experience.

Chapter 5

Conclusions and Future Prospects

5.1 Conclusions

In conclusion, this thesis has delved into the complex relationship between contemporary art exhibitions and architectural design within museum contexts, focusing on the mutual influence of these elements and their collective impact on the visitor experience. By thoroughly examining how exhibition narratives influence architectural designs and how architectural structures affect the viewing experience of art, this study sought to uncover the intricate interactions between spatial design and artistic content. Each element influences and responds to the other within the museum environment.

The thesis addresses three main research questions, each explored through different sections and strengthened by case studies. firstly, the role of museums in presenting art and facilitating interaction with audiences was examined. It was found that museum architecture often acts as a dynamic participant in the exhibition narrative, with museums categorized as monuments, instruments, or icons, shaping and being shaped by the art they house. Secondly, the relationship between art and architecture in adaptively reused contemporary art institutions was explored. The findings revealed a mutual influence where the design of museums, particularly in historical settings, enhances both the aesthetic and functional qualities of the space and the art, while respecting the building's historical significance. Third question has an intention to investigate the impact of exhibition design on spatial layout and visitor circulation within contemporary art museums. It was concluded that strategic exhibition layouts guide visitor movement and interaction, significantly shaping the overall art experience. (Table 5.1)

Table 5.1 Research Questions, Objectives, Evaluations

Research Questions	Objectives	Evaluations
What roles do museums play in presenting art and facilitating its interaction with audiences?	Categorizing the hierarchy of dominance between art and architecture in museums, where each feature exhibits different levels of dominance depending on the case.	There are three main categories in the hierarchy of art and architecture: museums as monuments, museums as instruments, and museums as icons. In contemporary times, museums often serve as iconic structures that shape and are shaped by the art they house.
What is the relationship between art and architecture in adaptively reused contemporary art institutions, and how do they influence each other?	Investigating how contemporary art and architecture shape each other in a historical setting.	The design of a museum, particularly when preserving its original identity through adaptive reuse, both shapes and is shaped by the art it showcases. The contrast between old and new elements creates a unique narrative, with each aspect deliberately crafted to enhance the other, improving both aesthetic and functional qualities while honoring and emphasizing the building's historical significance.
How does the design of exhibition display impact the spatial layout and visitor circulation within contemporary art museums?	Analyzing the morphological impact of exhibition design on the utilization of museum space and the flow of visitor traffic.	Curatorial intentions can significantly impact the visitor route within the building, either directing visitors in a more structured and ordered manner or creating alternative paths that allow for a freer, more exploratory experience. This approach can influence the overall experience and perception of the displayed art.

These evaluations were strengthened by analyzing four iconic Italian institutions—Fondazione Prada, Strozzi Palace, MAXXI, and the Venice Biennale’s Arsenale—has provided a comprehensive understanding of how adaptive reuse and architectural innovation can transform historical spaces into vibrant contemporary art venues. These case studies illustrate the transformative power of architecture in shaping the display preference and perception of art, emphasizing the museum's role as an active participant in the display narrative rather than a passive container for art.

Furthermore, the findings from this study contribute to a broader understanding of the evolving role of museums in contemporary society, positing these institutions as crucial cultural hubs where historical and modern elements converge to foster public engagement with art. By adopting innovative architectural solutions, museums can continue to adapt to the changing cultural landscape, offering spaces that actively

contribute to and reflect contemporary cultural dialogues. This thesis also highlights the ongoing need for museums to innovate and evolve in response to global cultural shifts and the challenges of modernity. The integration of historical preservation with contemporary design not only respects and revitalizes architectural heritage but also redefines it, enabling museums to remain relevant and influential in today's art world.

By advocating for a holistic approach to museum design that embraces the complex interactions between architecture, art, and audience, this research reaffirms the museum's vital role as an interpreter of both cultural heritage and contemporary artistic expressions. As museums continue to navigate the intricacies of globalization and technological advancements, their success will increasingly rely on their ability to merge architectural ingenuity with sophisticated curatorial practices. The insights provided by this study encourage further exploration into adaptive reuse and innovative design strategies, ensuring that museums remain at the forefront of cultural and educational engagement in the global art scene. This thesis not only enriches the academic discourse on museum architecture and exhibition practices but also offers practical guidance for future developments in museum design, positioning these institutions as pivotal platforms for cultural interaction and understanding in the contemporary world.

5.2 Societal Impact and Contribution to Global Sustainability

As mentioned in the previous chapters, museum spaces have increasingly embraced the concept of repurposing historical buildings, settling into these existing structures and often redefining their identities. This adaptive reuse leverages the contrast between contemporary art and historical settings, providing a unique museum experience where art and architecture are intertwined. This relationship is symbiotic, as many abandoned industrial buildings are repurposed and reintegrated into society. The societal impact of these adaptively reused museums offers a new perspective on abandoned industrial areas, contributing significantly to the concept of sustainable cities. By breathing new life into these spaces, museums not only preserve architectural heritage but also promote sustainable development and cultural revitalization within urban environments. These contributions are related with the United Nations sustainability development goals shown in the Figure 5.2.



Figure 5.1 United Nations Sustainability Development Goals

The case studies of Fondazione Prada, Palazzo Strozzi, MAXXI, and the Venice Biennale’s Arsenale each demonstrate how museums act not only as custodians of artistic and architectural heritage but also as active participants in the contemporary cultural dialogue. Adaptive reuse of historical structures as art museums helps in preserving the architectural legacy while injecting new vitality into aging spaces. This approach not only saves these structures from potential decay but also revitalizes surrounding areas, contributing to urban renewal. For instance, the transformation of a distillery into Fondazione Prada has not only preserved a piece of Milan’s industrial history but also transformed it into a vibrant cultural venue, attracting visitors and stimulating local businesses.

By reusing and repurposing existing structures, these museums inherently support sustainability goals, but their impact extends far beyond mere conservation of materials and energy. Adaptive reuse of historical buildings significantly reduces the environmental footprint associated with new constructions. This approach saves on the energy and resources typically required for demolishing old buildings and constructing new ones from scratch. By maintaining the existing structural shell and improving interiors to meet modern needs, these projects minimize waste and decrease the demand for raw construction materials.

In conclusion, the sustainability of adapting historical buildings into contemporary art museums represents a holistic approach that addresses environmental conservation, social equity, and economic viability. These projects exemplify how cultural institutions can lead by example in the pursuit of sustainability, demonstrating that historical preservation and modern usage can coexist in a manner that benefits both the environment and society.

5.3 Future Prospects

This study aims to serve as a reference guide for future museums or already existing institutions considering adaptive reuse. It can be the starting point for creating guidelines for museums that have been adaptively reused. Understanding the relationship between art and architecture more thoroughly can lead to more effective exhibitions. Additionally, making museums comparable on common grounds can help classify them, providing various benefits such as improved curatorial practices and enhanced visitor experiences.

Moreover, the scope of this research can be expanded beyond Italy to include more case studies across Europe and the rest of the world. While this thesis has focused on Italy due to its prominent role in museology and conservation, the morphological and display analysis methodology developed here can be applied globally. This study serves as a starting point, but similar analyses can provide valuable insights into adaptive reuse practices and museum design worldwide.

In this thesis, the approaches for adaptive reuse initiatives have been observed and discussed, providing a valuable starting point to understand these strategies and develop more of them in the future. Future research could focus on the increasing role of digital technology in art and cultural experiences as an avenue for growth. Adaptive reuse projects could incorporate advanced digital tools, such as augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR), to create immersive experiences that complement physical exhibitions. This technology could help visualize the historical context of the building or enhance interaction with artworks, making the museum experience more enriching and accessible. Additionally, future projects might focus more intensely on creating spaces that are not only museums but also community centers offering a range of activities and services that engage diverse local populations, as cultural hubs. These initiatives could include educational programs, workshops, community art projects, and more, fostering a deeper connection between the museum and its community.

There is potential for greater collaboration between architects, historians, artists, and technologists in future adaptive reuse projects. Such collaborations can lead to more holistic and innovative approaches that respect the historical integrity of the buildings while dynamically supporting contemporary cultural engagement.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Abt, J. (2007). *The origins of the Public Museum*. In Blackwell Publishing Ltd eBooks (pp. 115–134). <https://doi.org/10.1002/9780470996836.ch8>
- Alberro, A. (2009). *Periodizing Contemporary Art*. October, vol. 130, 2009, pp. 3-22.
- Belting, H. (2012). *Contemporary Art in the Global Age*. Art Journal, vol. 62, no. 2, 2003, pp. 16-29.
- Bounia, A. (2017). *The Nature of Classical Collecting: Collectors and Collections, 100 BCE – 100 CE*. Routledge.
- Cole, Arda L. and McIntyre M. (2014). *Installation Art as Research*. Art Education, vol. 67, no. 2, 2014, pp. 38-43.
- Dumbadze, A. (2015). *Contemporary Art: 1989 to the Present*. Oxford Art Journal, vol. 38, no. 1, 2015, pp. 137-154.
- Findlen, P. (1989). *The Museum: Its Classical Etymology and Renaissance Genealogy*. Journal of the History of Collections, 1(1), 59–78.
<https://doi.org/10.1093/jhc/1.1.59>
- Fondazione Prada (2022). *Fondazione Prada Presents ‘Recycling Beauty’, an Exhibition Curated by Salvatore Settis*. (Press Release).
https://www.fondazioneprada.org/wp-content/uploads/Fondazione-Prada_Recycling-Beauty_PR-1.pdf
- Fondazione Prada (2015). *On May 9 2015, Fondazione Prada Opens its New Permanent Milan Venue and Presents a New Exhibition in Venice* (Press Release). https://www.fondazioneprada.org/wp-content/uploads/Fondazione-Prada_In-Part_Press-release.pdf

- Giebelhausen, M. (2006). *Museum Architecture : A Brief History*. S. MacDonald (Ed.),
A Companion to Museum Studies. Wiley- Blackwell
- Greenhalgh, P. (1988). *Ephemeral vistas: The Expositions Universelles, Great Exhibitions and World's Fairs, 1851-1939*.
- Günay, B. (2012). *Museum concept from past to present and importance of Museums as centers of art education*. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 55, 1250–1258. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2012.09.622>
- Kelly, N. A. (2010). *What is Installation Art?*. Irish Museum of Modern Art
- McClellan, A. (2003) *Art and its Publics*. *The Art Bulletin*, vol. 85, no. 1, 2003, pp. 3-18
- Menichelli, C. (2014). *The Arsenale yesterday and today. History of the complex in transformation*, *Heritage and Architecture of Urban Landscape under Production*.
- Merleau-Ponty, M. (2002). *Phenomenology of perception*. In *Routledge eBooks*.
<https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203994610>
- Nieroba, E. (2018). *Museums change lives. The role of museums in the creation of the democratic public sphere*. *Studia Migracyjne Przegląd Polonijny*, 2, 229–238.
<https://doi.org/10.4467/25444972smpp.18.027.9153>
- Palazzo Strozzi (2022). *Olafur Eliasson Nel Tuo Tempo* (Press Release).
https://www.palazzostrozzi.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Press-Release_Olafur-Eliasson_ENG.pdf
- Physick, J. (1982). *The Victoria and Albert Museum, the history of its building*.
- Prior, N. (2002). *Museums and modernity: Art Galleries and the Making of Modern Culture*. Berg Publishers.
- Psarra, S. (2005). *Spatial culture, way-finding and the educational message: The*

- impact of layout on the spatial, social and educational experiences of visitors to museums and galleries.* S. MacLeod (Ed.), *Reshaping Museum Space: Architecture, Design, Exhibitions.* London & New York: Routledge
- Pointon, M. (1994). *Art apart : art institutions and ideology across England and North America.* <http://ci.nii.ac.jp/ncid/BA23907863>
- Shaw, C. (2022). *Rem Koolhaas talks Prada and Architecture's relationship to art.* Metropolis. <https://metropolismag.com/viewpoints/rem-koolhaas-talks-prada-architecture-relationship-art/>
- Simonsson, Märit. (2014). *Displaying Spaces: Spatial Design, Experience, and Authenticity in Museums.*
- Sözen, M., & Tanyeli, U. (1986). *Sanat kavram ve terimleri sözlüğü: Resim-heykel-mimarlık, geleneksel Türk sanatları, uygulamalı sanatlar ve genel sanat kavramları.*
- Staton C. (2021). *Manufacturing Heritage: Hidden Stories of Palazzo Strozzi.* Coalition of Master's Scholars on Material Culture. <https://cmsmc.org/publications/hidden-histories>
- Tzortzi, K. (2007). *Museum Building Design and Exhibition Layout: Patterns of Interaction* 072.
- Tzortzi, K. (2016). *Museum space: Where Architecture Meets Museology.* Routledge.
- O'Doherty, B. (1999). *Inside the White Cube: The ideology of the gallery space.* University of California Press
- Zan, L. (2022). *The Venice Arsenal: Between History, Heritage, and Re-use.* Taylor & Francis.

APPENDIX

Figure Reference List

Figure 2.1 Cabinet of Curiosities developed during 17th and 18th centuries.

<https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Curiosity%2C-Collecting%2C-and-the-New-World%3A-The-of-in-West/866321737d67b861c8ca16ede64f9c5e04a4d29a/figure/0>

Figure 2.2 Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum Interior View

<https://www.guggenheim.org/articles/findings/lighting-great-museum>

Figure 2.3 Acropolis Museum Main Exhibition Area, Athens, Greece

<https://news.gtp.gr/2023/06/27/acropolis-museum-marks-14th-anniversary-with-record-breaking-visitor-numbers/>

Figure 2.4 The Guggenheim Museum designed by Frank Gehry, Bilbao, Spain

<https://www.guggenheim-bilbao.eus/en/about-the-museum/the-museum>

Figure 2.6 Groninger Museum designed by Alessandro Mendini, facade and interior view, Groninger, Netherlands

<https://www.groningermuseum.nl/en/museum>

Figure 2.7 Centrale Montemartini, ancient sculptures in the powerplant, Rome, Italy

https://www.centralemontemartini.org/en/il_museo/storia_del_museo

Figure 2.8 Tate Modern Turbine Hall before and after restoration, London, United Kingdom

<https://www.tate.org.uk/visit/tate-modern/look-behind-art-tate-modern>

Figure 3.9 Spatial Morphologies in Museum's Theoretical Framework by Tzortzi
Tzortzi, K. (2016). *Museum space: Where Architecture Meets Museology*. Routledge.

Figure 4.10 Arsenale di Venezia Aerial View, Venice, Italy

<https://www.labiennale.org/it/news/visite-guidate-gratuite-dell%E2%80%99arsenale>

Figure 4.11 Gaggiandre, Arsenale di Venezia before figure

<https://www.istockphoto.com/tr/search/2/image-film?phrase=venice+biennale>

Figure 4.18 Facade of Fondazione Prada from the road

<https://www.dezeen.com/2015/05/03/oma-fondazione-prada-art-centre-gold-leaf-cladding-wes-anderson-cafe-milan/>

Figure 4.35 Display Preferences Comparison of Fondazione Prada (above), MAXXI (below)

<https://www.designboom.com/architecture/fondazione-prada-torre-opens-milan-oma-04-19-2018/>

<https://www.maxxi.art/en/events/il-maxxi-come-non-lo-avete-mai-visto-omaggio-a-zaha-hadid-5/>

Figure 5.1 United Nations Sustainability Development Goals

<https://sdgs.un.org/goals>

CURRICULUM VITAE

2016 – 2021	B.Sc., Architecture, Abdullah Gül University, Kayseri, TURKEY
2019 – 2020	Erasmus + , Architecture, Technical University of Ostrava, Ostrava, CZECHIA
2021 – 2024	M.Sc., Architecture, Abdullah Gül University, Kayseri, TURKEY
2022 – 2023	Erasmus + , Architecture, University of Naples Federico II, Naples, ITALY

