

DESIGN PROJECT FOR THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF ECUADOR (MUNA)

Presentation to the Ecuadorian Institute of Architects

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College of Architects of Ecuador – Province of Pichincha

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Dear friends. We would like to express our THANKS for inviting us to present and explain the winning design project for the National Museum of Ecuador.

However, first and foremost, we would like to thank the jury for awarding us this prize.

Our thanks also go to architects Alejandro Zaera-Polo, Eduardo McIntosh, Diego Ordóñez Holguín and Luis López López. We hold Hernán Crespo Bermejo forever in our hearts. His memory and his legacy will always be linked to this project.

We would also like to thank the President of the Republic, Daniel Noboa Azín, and his technical representative, Roberto Luque Nuques; the Vice-President of the Republic, María José Pinto, and her technical representative, Carla Arellano Granizo.

To the Deputy Minister of Culture, Romina Muñoz, and the Director of the National Museum, Carlos Eduardo Montalvo – many thanks to you all for supporting this initiative.

I would like to say that you have a truly beautiful country and a truly beautiful culture, and that it is a great honor for both the Maoda team – including architects Santiago, Kenny, Marlon and Mateo – and my own team to be here with you at this time.

You possess artistic treasures of immeasurable value, and you have a responsibility to showcase that legacy to all Ecuadorians and to the whole world, as well as to preserve it and safeguard it for future generations.

In our project for the National Museum of Ecuador, we have taken the following functions very seriously:

To display and to preserve.

To educate and to safeguard.

To showcase but also to protect.

Based on our long years of experience, we are aware that some national museums in other countries have lost part of their heritage because they were unable to preserve it fittingly.

Thank you for this opportunity to explain our project, which we have summarized under the slogan 'ECHOES OF THE SUN'.

ECHOES OF THE SUN

We want to create for Ecuador the most beautiful museum in the world. A magic box to house its history and its most precious artistic treasures.

THE PARK, THE SQUARE AND THE BOULEVARD

Our building completes La Carolina Park to the north, at the junction of two major roads. In response to its setting, it is set back, creating a large urban square. This is the kind of spacious public area that every major museum needs: a square filled with trees, water and shade.

Then, on the south side, we have the grand pedestrian boulevard. That is why we have created a large lobby, as it were, that connects these two spaces, forming a wonderful green urban axis. A space open to the city. Anyone who wishes to can walk from La Carolina, make their way through the building and continue to stroll along the pedestrian boulevard and its gardens.

THE QUITO SKY

Quito is a city that reaches up to the sky. The history of Andean architecture also reflects this vertical connection with the sky and the sun. In the same spirit, our building embraces the verticality and scale of the site and its history. The site is surrounded by tall office blocks and residential towers. And Quito is surrounded by towering volcanoes and mountains. We would like the National Museum to be a vertical building, with open balconies and elevated viewing points from which to contemplate the stunning landscape of the city and its surroundings.

Moreover, we want to respond to the city's future urban development, with its five 100-metre-high towers included in the master plan. The museum must assert its presence in the face of these towering structures and become a prominent feature within the urban landscape, providing a focal point for the view from La Carolina Park.

ECUADOR'S LIGHT

Along with art and history, light also takes centre stage, as it always has throughout the history of Ecuadorian architecture. The sun plays a leading role, as can clearly be seen from Ecuador's flag. The color gold also plays a central role, as we have learnt from the Toli culture. You Ecuadorians carry the light of the sun in your hearts.

For this reason we have opted for a building with courtyards, excavated recesses and golden walls acting as a filter for the sun. A true box of light and shadow that opens out to the city and the majestic Andean landscape. What better material for the National Museum of Ecuador than light itself?

TYPICAL FLOOR PLAN

There are three very distinct zones.

- The first, to the north, 8 meters wide, which includes the four vertical circulation cores, the restrooms and the courtyards.
- A central area, for circulation, 4 meters wide.
- And a third zone, to the south, 20 meters wide, for the exhibition spaces.

The area on the left is reserved for bookings, offices and logistics. The area on the right is open to the public.

TYPICAL SECTION

The three zones are clearly visible in the section. On the one hand, it opens out to the city, creating a connection with the public space at street level, while on the other, framing the most distinctive views of the surrounding area.

PROGRAM. FLEXIBLE LOGIC

Based on our experience of working with curators of national museums, such as the Louvre in Paris, we came to the conclusion that storing items in the basement poses a significant risk. The damp-related issues that can arise from storing items in a basement can be very serious. Therefore, to circumvent this problem, we have placed storage areas above pavement level, on the western side of the building, from the ground floor to the sixth floor. This is a strategic location, linked to the goods entrance.

The lower floor houses the large lobby with the customer service counter. The auditorium, cinema, café, shop and retail units are also located here. All these facilities are open to the public.

The first floor will house the introduction to the permanent exhibition. The teaching rooms and workshop areas, the discovery room and the restaurant are also located here.

The second, third and fourth floors will house the permanent exhibits.

Temporary exhibitions will be located on the fifth floor. And on the top floor, designed as an open-air terrace, are the library, the media centre and the rooftop restaurant.

We have made every effort to incorporate the extensive program we were asked to deliver, providing the building with public spaces that foster interaction with the wider community and the public at large.

ACCESSES

The building is very well connected to all the city's transport networks. We have situated the bus stop in Plaza del MUNA, right next to Avenida Eloy Alfaro. We also recommend a subway exit in the same square, beneath La Tolita Terrace platform. Finally, the entrances to the car park, as well as to the logistics and cultural heritage areas, are located on Calle San Salvador.

A TOUR OF THE MUSEUM

We arrive at the Museum from La Carolina Park.

Muna Square welcomes us.

And once we have passed through the shade, we arrive at the large central hall. Museum visitors can then take the escalator up to the first floor.

There they will find a triple-height space, the main hall that serves as an introduction to the permanent exhibition.

The museum route is designed as a linear walk through the interior galleries housing the permanent and temporary exhibitions.

Here we find a series of interior rooms with carefully controlled lighting, and galleries and courtyards with a very special quality of light.

These courtyards can also be used for outdoor art installations, video projections and recreation areas. Artworks displayed here will be visible from the city through the large openings.

One can imagine visitors strolling through the permanent exhibition, pausing to take in the light streaming into the courtyards, lingering in the shade of the galleries and marveling at the stunning views of Pichincha or El Panecillo, proud of their national treasure.

VIEWPOINTS

High above it all is the Mirador Terrace, more than fifty meters above street level from which we can take in the views of Pichincha, Cotopaxi and Panecillo.

From the courtyards, too, we can enjoy stunning views of Quito or La Carolina Park itself. After all, the landscape of Quito is also a national treasure and like any such treasure, it should form part of the Museum's exhibition routes.

THE SQUARE, THE GARDEN AND THE TOLA

Muna Square with its water features, trees and garden of tropical plants acts as a buffer against the traffic from the avenues. In addition, we have placed a large Tola platform there which both provides shade and creates an open space for cultural events.

Terraced seating connects the two levels and provides an ideal space for rest, relaxation or enjoying theatre productions and open-air concerts.

A VIABLE AND TECHNICALLY PRECISE DESIGN PROJECT

As preventive conservation strategies, we propose an outer shell with high thermal inertia, controlled exposure to direct natural light, and an architectural layout that ensures dry conditions in both exhibition and storage areas.

Storage areas should not be located in damp places and therefore should not be in the basement, where they would be subject to potentially fluctuating groundwater levels. This would ruin Ecuador's artistic heritage. Neither should storage areas be near damp rooms; any fault would put them at serious risk. Nor should they be near irrigation water, since this is subject to potential failures and water leaks.

The collections also require strictly controlled temperature and radiation. They cannot be exposed to direct sunlight. Protecting and preserving this national treasure is a serious responsibility. And it is in this spirit that we have approached our design.

We also aim to create an accessible, inclusive and safe building, tailored to the needs of all users and featuring clear circulation routes to ensure its efficient operation.

Finally, we propose a building that is technically and economically viable, with optimized floor areas and a restrained design that enables us to stay within the budgetary guidelines, utilizing local technology and materials.

ECO-EFFICIENCY AND ENVIRONMENTAL COMFORT

We devised the most logical but also the simplest systems to create an energy-efficient and sustainable museum building. The deep terraces, with their natural ventilation, and the thermal mass of our walls allow us to dispense with mechanical air-conditioning in corridors and areas with high footfall, thereby complying with LEED certification standards and aligning with the energy efficiency to meet present-day demands. We propose efficient water and waste management, and the use of photovoltaic systems to create an energy-efficient building.

RATIONAL CONSTRUCTION ADAPTED TO HIGH SEISMIC ACTIVITY

We use eco-friendly concrete and have designed a structure tailored to the complex geotechnical and seismic conditions in Quito. We already have experience of sites with high seismic activity, such as Armenia and Granada. What's more, we use local materials that require very little maintenance.

CONCLUSION

Light is a material that is accessible to everyone. So how could the architecture of the National Museum of Ecuador be anything other than an architecture of light? An architectural design featuring open courtyards, terraces, balconies and viewing points, a design that embraces vegetation and water. Yet at the same time, this is protective architecture, serving as a guardian of Ecuador's treasures.

You have artistic treasures of inestimable value, and you have a responsibility not only to showcase that legacy to all Ecuadorians and to the whole world, but also to preserve it and safeguard it for future generations.

To display and to preserve.

To educate and to safeguard.

To showcase but also to protect.

And that is what we will do with this magical box of light and shadow. We believe that the Ecuadorian sun will be happy in these courtyards and on these golden walls. We believe that Ecuadorians, and all those who come to visit this beautiful country, will also be very happy when they bathe in this light.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH.