



LILLA HAGA

A MUSEUM FOR DRAWINGS AND PRINTS

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“Nothing old arises again. But it does not disappear completely either. And what once was, will always return in a new form.”

Alvar Aalto, Maalarit ja muurarit, Jousimies, 1921

Introduction

With this project I want to make a proposal for a complementary museum to Nationalmuseum in Stockholm. An addition that is fully dedicated to their vast and exceptional, but ungenerously exhibited collection of drawings and prints. It's a two folded project with the architecture and its spatiality on one side, and the exhibition design on the other. With this as the outlook I would like to explore museum architecture both in macro and micro to further understand its nature.

Background

Nationalmuseum is a stately museum in Stockholm, it's also the biggest museum of Sweden. The collection consists of paintings, works on paper and sculpture dating from the 16th century till the end of the 19th century, as well as applied arts, interiors and furniture spanning from the 16th century till today.

The museum as it stands today was first publicly opened in 1866, but the planning, acquiring and to some extent exhibiting had been going on since the later part of the 18th century. Much of the collection in likeness to many other European art museums originate from the royal collection. The Swedish king of culture, Gustav III, is in many ways the initiator to what it would come to be.

During his travels through Europe, large parts of the important works were acquired. He also sent envoys who continuously brought up art from the Southern parts of Europe.

At that time there was no dedicated museum for the collection, only a sculpture gallery at the royal palace in Stockholm. There was however decided for a larger museum to be housed within the grand

palace that was being built in Haga, a royal park just North of Stockholm. The construction was well on its way, when in 1792 Gustav III was shot and killed at his own opera in Stockholm. Shortly after his death the construction was stopped, but the ruin of the fundament and basement still remains.

During the following years the collection was inherited by the state, and to some capacity also shown at the royal palace, although in private. As a last effort by some loyal companions of Gustav III, a very important group of works were acquired, consisting of pieces by Leonardo da Vinci, Rafael, Giorgione and Masaccio among others. The whole collection fell into oblivion for a while until the 1820's when interest for the arts once again bloomed, probably much thanks to a more stable economy. Now the interest had shifted, and was more focused on paintings, while earlier, the antique part of the collection had been the main draw. With this new attitude, the idea of a new museum finally came in to fruition. It would take 50 years to plan, and 15 years to build, but in 1866 the new museum was ready, just in time for the first Stockholm Exhibition.



Private "museum" at the Royal Castle in Stockholm. Pehr Hilleström, 1792.



Nationalmuseum seen from Skeppsbron. 1870-1879.



The entrance stairwell of Nationalmuseum at the opening. O.A. Mankell & G. Janet, 1866.

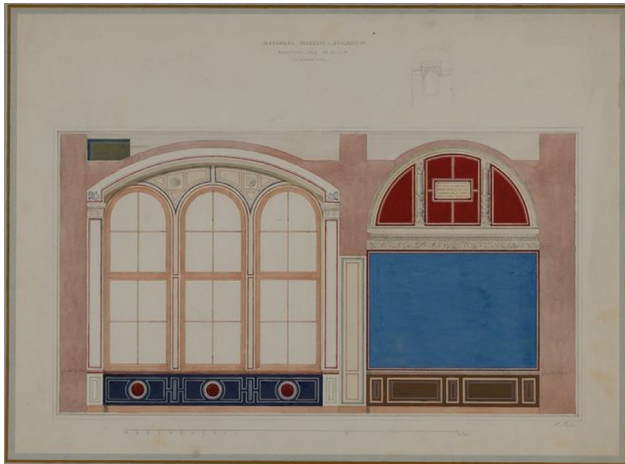
Stüler and his idea of the museum

The final and built proposal was made by the German architect Friedrich August Stüler, famed for Neues Museum and Alte Nationalgalerie in Berlin among many other prolific buildings in Europe. His proposal was based on the idea of seeing the museum as a work of art to interlace with the collection, and represent architecture along the other art forms represented. Together with the drawings of the museum he sent a text to Stockholm describing his thinking of the project:

“When building a museum, the decorations and the finer artistic ornamentation, that later will supply the building, are already represented in abundance by the collection itself. There is rather the richness than the shortage that is a constraint. And its foremost the architect’s responsibility to control and make order of that richness, so it’s shown in harmony together with the building, instead of being storage-like, monotonous and trivial.”

This is a statement and philosophy I wholeheartedly agree with, and that i’ve spent my theoretical assignment writing about.

The relationship between the architecture and the exhibited space, and how to deal with it in a sensible way. Stüler is foremost putting the emphasis on avoiding a sterility, but my belief is, that it’s as important to not create an architectonic monument that overshadow the content. Its a balance that need to be carefully considered.



Drawing of wall- and ceiling design for the middle floor, Friedrich Stüler, 1850's.



The Italian galleries. 1906.



During the extensive renovation of the museum 2013 - 2018.



The new exhibition design where paintings, sculpture and furniture are shown together,



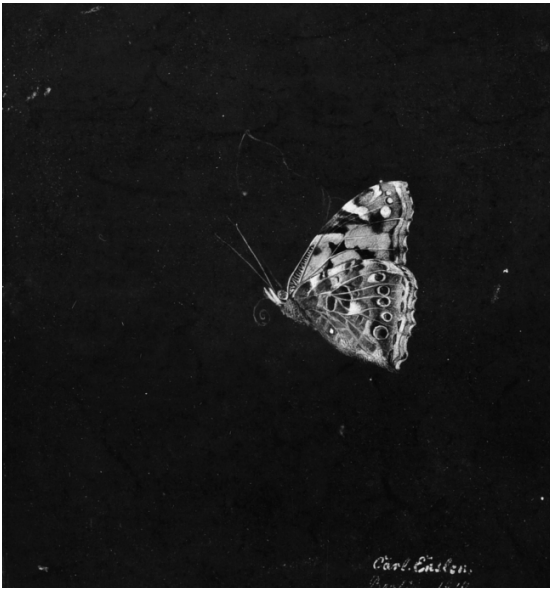
The same room shown during the previous configuration utilizing additional interior walls alongside the new configuration were those are removed.

Renovation

In 2013 the first major renovation of the museums since 1866 started, and was finished in October of 2018. The necessity for the renovation was obvious, much of the building had reached its lifespan, but this was also seen as an opportunity to expand the exhibition spaces, and be able to cater for both more visitors and show a larger part of the collection. The museum claims that it now can show three times the number of objects, however there is no description of what kind of objects. In the renovation many windows that earlier had been covered by walls for paintings were removed to get in more natural light. While this is great in many ways, and closer to the original plan, the thought of lost wall space is hard to avoid. In conjunction with the renovation there was also a major overhaul of the exhibition design; Now paintings, furniture, sculptures and interiors are shown together, instead of separately.

“Images were first made to conjure up the appearances of something that was absent. Gradually it became evident that an image could outlast what it represented; it then showed how something or somebody had once looked - and thus by implication how the subject had once been seen by other people. Later still the specific vision of the image-maker was also recognized as part of the record. An image became record of how X had seen Y. This was the result of an increasing consciousness of individuality, accompanying an increasing awareness of history.”

John Berger, *Ways of Seeing*, London 1972



The collection of drawings and prints

The collection consists of about 500.000 works on paper, spanning from late medieval to early 20th century. Some the most important works, and what is to be considered as the core of the collection, were acquired in Paris by the Swedish Nobleman and politician Carl Gustaf Tessin in 1742. But due to economical difficulties he had to sell it to the king, so it fell into the royal collection, and later Nationalmuseum. The collection is considered to be one of the most important in the world with many master works by artists such as Rafael, Domenico Ghirlandaio and Rembrandt. There is also an abundance of architectural and design drawings of very high international quality.

Considering the lack of space it's understandable that the museum don't prioritize these special interests in relation to what the general public expect to see. But there is no doubt that the collection deserves a more dignified presentation. The solution today is to show a few works on paper at the time mingled together with the rest of the collection. There is a reason for works on paper to not be shown permanently, in regard to conservation the rule is that works on paper are to be shown at a maximum of three months of the twelve at a time. This is also the argumentation that Nationalmuseum use to explain their rather blatant absence.

The Project

My idea is to create a separate space solely dedicated to this collection. I think it's important, both for Sweden and Internationally that this collection can be viewed more than sporadically and parsimonious. The museum can not cater the collection within its walls due to lack of space, and therefore I see it both as the solution and an opportunity to create an external space dedicated to it.

With the mentioned conservatory problems of a permanent exhibition, there would be a necessity to develop a space where exhibitions are under constant circulation, easy to configure without larger effort, and tailor made for the needs. With this in mind as well as the nature of the art works, i.e. generally smaller format and a lot of up close detail, there would be unwise to oversize the museum. I imagine two spaces that can run exhibitions concurrently and overlap each other.

Because of the concept of a separate building on a different location there are other spaces to consider. The exterior spaces, lobby, museum store, cafeteria, restrooms, library and to some extent storage and space for conservation. Nationalmuseum hold storage and conservation both in the museum and off site and these are of course to consider as well.

The Exhibition as a proof of concept

In the conclusion of my theoretical assignment I wrote:

“for museum architecture to fulfill its purpose of catering to what is shown satisfactory, there must be a great deal of curatorial understanding, sensitivity and responsiveness from both the architect and the client.”

To supplement the building and fully explain the concept I will work with and include an exhibition configuration. The exhibition will be based on works from the collection, and presented as realistic as possible. This will also serve as a tool to reach informed conclusions in the overall design in regard to wall space, light, circulation and spatial experience.



Large scale model used as the main tool to design exhibition for the 33rd Bienal de São Paulo, 2018.



**"While I have been building this,
I have been thinking about
autumn nights and yellow leaves"**

Gunnar Asplund, E.G Asplund in memoriam,
Arkkitehti, 1940.

Location/ Site

In the North of Stockholm, at the western shoreline of Brunnsviken bay lies the nature area "Haga", a combination of woods, parks and gardens. The area was established by Gustav III in the late 18th century with the English parks as inspiration. As mentioned before, Haga is also where the ruin of Gustav III's unfinished palace is located. Within the proximity of this ruin I'm placing the project.







The ruin consists of a massive foundation and basement, spanning the full length of the planned palace (150 x 50 m). Located in the middle of the park and surrounded by lush trees, makes it quite hidden from the pathways, therefore many don't know of its existence. Even though the construction was halted with only the basement built, the ruin has a lot of verticality. The massive walls, mostly at level with the ground outwards, functions as walkways above the dugout cellar rooms connected by tunnels and vaults. A slight incline of the landscape puts the eastwing much deeper in the ground than the west wing, where the walls are protruding from the ground only as a relief.

The idea is not to build on to or change the ruin in shape, but rather to connect and establish a relationship between the buildings. I see great opportunity in working with the ruin as a world for itself, where gardens, basins and outdoor rooms can reside, without obstructing or changing the existing structure.



Train of thought

The site is located with walking distance to the inner parts of Stockholm while still offering a scenic landscape and a tranquility that is hard to find in a city of this size. Furthermore, the ruin is a very intriguing and unique structure in itself, but it also has a direct connection to Nationalmuseum. The early collection was curated and envisioned for this site and building, this project is a continuation of that.

I want to avoid the project to be in too close proximity to Nationalmuseum, but rather activate a less culturally saturated location within Stockholm. Haga fits that criteria, there is the notion of bringing public traction to the northern parts of Stockholm. These parts lack the drawing force from cultural institutions the way other parts of the city do. A stately museum in conjunction to the park would surely put a different light on the situation.

The exact location on the site needs further investigation, but there is a glade just northwest of the ruin that looks promising for a couple of reasons. It's easy accessible from the main road going through the park, there is not much need of leveling or felling of trees, by being slightly higher situated on the site it will also soak more light from the south. Another important detail is that just south-east of the ruin lies the current Crown Princess Victoria's residence, a building complex with high security and large areas that are fenced off.

Notable points of interest in the park

There are a number of pavilions dating back to the late 18th century. Both in form of large copper tents, gazebos and furnished buildings. One of them in particular was used by Gustav III as one of his summer residences, and it was probably while staying there that he decided to build the palace within the park. There are certain architectural ideas found in this context that I would like to look closer at. If nothing else, but to bring coherence and sensibility to the project.



The Copper Tents, built 1787-1790 for the royal life guard.



The "Turkish Kiosk", built 1786-1788 as a royal pavillion. Famously used by Gustav III as war room during the Russo-Swedish War 1788.



More than the Collection

A well developed museum does not only serve as a vessel for its collection, but also functions as a social and public hub. I think that's a very important aspect to get into the project. Copenhagen have a few good examples of this. Glyptoteket in its central location have a major draw with its orangerie and cafeteria, residing within the context of its collection. Even if you visit for a lunch meeting in the cafeteria, you will inevitably be exposed to the museums content. The same goes for Louisiana and Ordrupgaard, with the difference that those museums are located in the periphery of the city, which makes their secondary functions even more important. This by granting both more allure and reason to linger.

In likeness to those examples, I want the museum to offer more than the focused exhibition visit, but by doing so also invite to that.

There is however a slight flaw in all the presented examples that I want to avoid. They lock their secondary functions behind the entrance fee.

I do understand that this is a necessity since some of those museums have their cafeterias, gardens and shops located in the middle of the exhibition spaces. But if avoidable, that's for the better.

Approach

The project will be divided into three phases corresponding to the critiques.

The first phase is dedicated to the survey of the collection, the site and the context, as well as specification of the project. This will be supplemented by photos, drawings and a model of the site. The goal is to get the design started during this phase and reach as far as possible with the general plan.

Deliverables for first crit:

- Program.
- Photos and registrations of the site and context.
- Photomontages, sketches and sketch models of the concept.
- Small scale working model of the site

The second phase is dedicated to the proposition, this includes continued work on the general plan, decision on materials, configuration of the exhibition spaces and interiors. This will be supplemented by detailed drawings, visualizations and models of the building as well as an updated site model.

Deliverables for second crit:

- All material from first crit.
- Drawings of plans, sections and elevations.
- Diagrammatic drawings.
- Visualizations.
- Model of building.
- updated site model.

The third phase is dedicated to getting the project to completion, beside that, the focus will be the implementation of an exhibition for the museum as well as the detailing of the outdoor area. This will be supplemented by drawings, visualizations, updates in models and a grand drawing of building, site and context.

Deliverables for third (final) crit:

- Program.
- Photos and registrations of the site and context.
- Photomontages, sketches and sketch models of the concept.
- Small scale working model of the site
- Drawings of plans, sections and elevations.
- Diagrammatic drawings.
- Visualizations.
- Model of building.
- Plans and visualizations of outdoor area.
- Grand drawing of plan in context.
- model of exhibition, larger scale.
- Visualizations of exhibition.

Research

As preparatory work for this project I dedicated the fall semester as well as the theoretical assignment to museum architecture. The fall project was a reconfiguration of the Royal collections at Amalienborg, a practise in how to optimize an existing plan for specific needs.

The theoretical assignment was a paper on architectures relationship with the exhibited space.

Furthermore I will interview and consult a number of people relating to Nationalmuseum as well as other institutions. This consultation is in regard to the collection itself, the exhibition spaces and source material.

Carl-Johan Olsson, Curator at Nationalmuseum.

Annika Gunnarsson, curator responsible for arts on paper, Museum of Modern Art, Stockholm. Former curator responsible for arts on paper at Nationalmuseum.

Pedro Westerdahl, Expert on 19th century paintings at Bukowskis, Stockholm.

Carl-Fredrik Hårleman, Freelance Curator

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