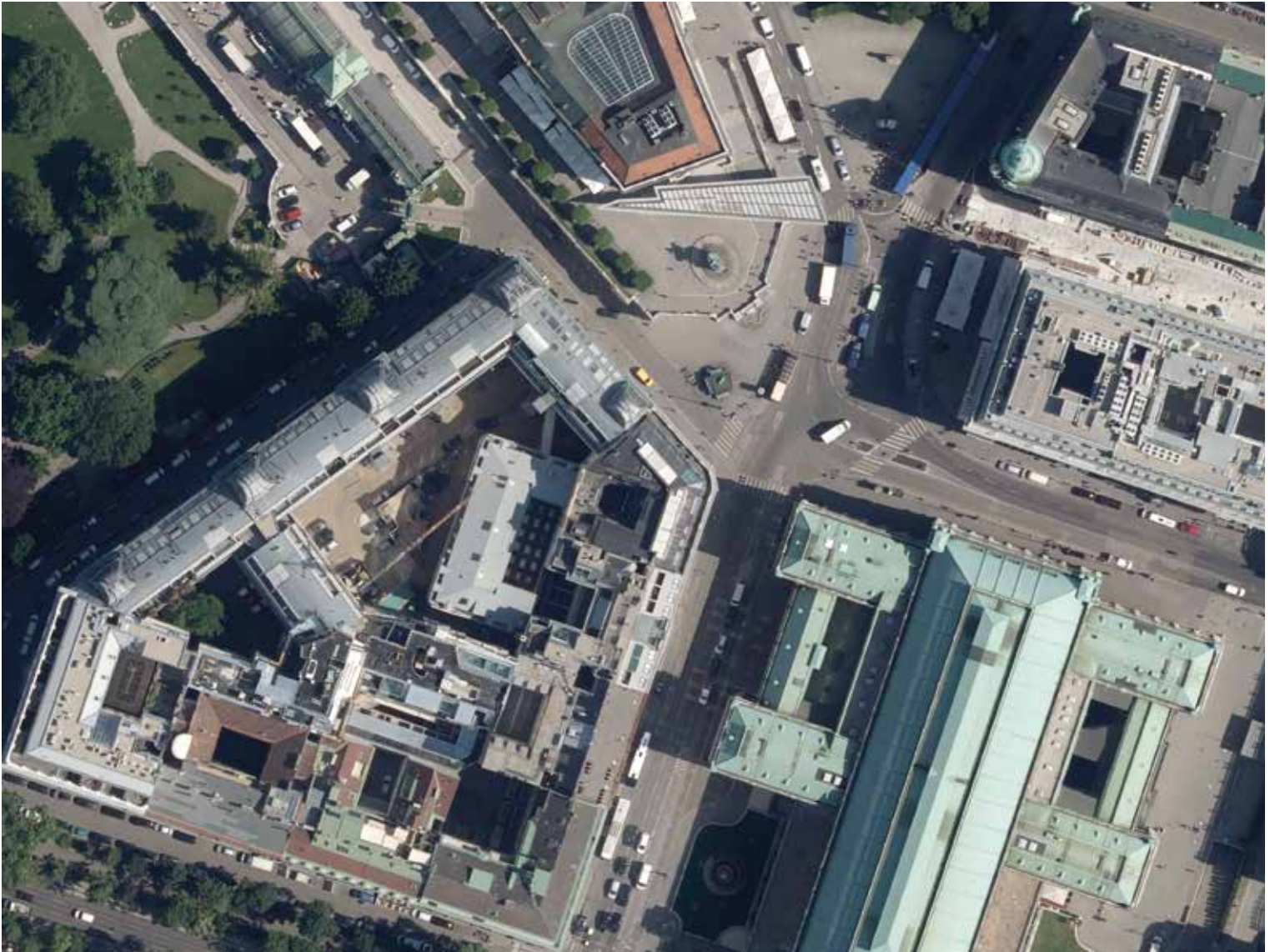


A Stage for Art

The Heidi Horten Collection

Marie-Therese Harnoncourt-Fuchs and Ernst J. Fuchs



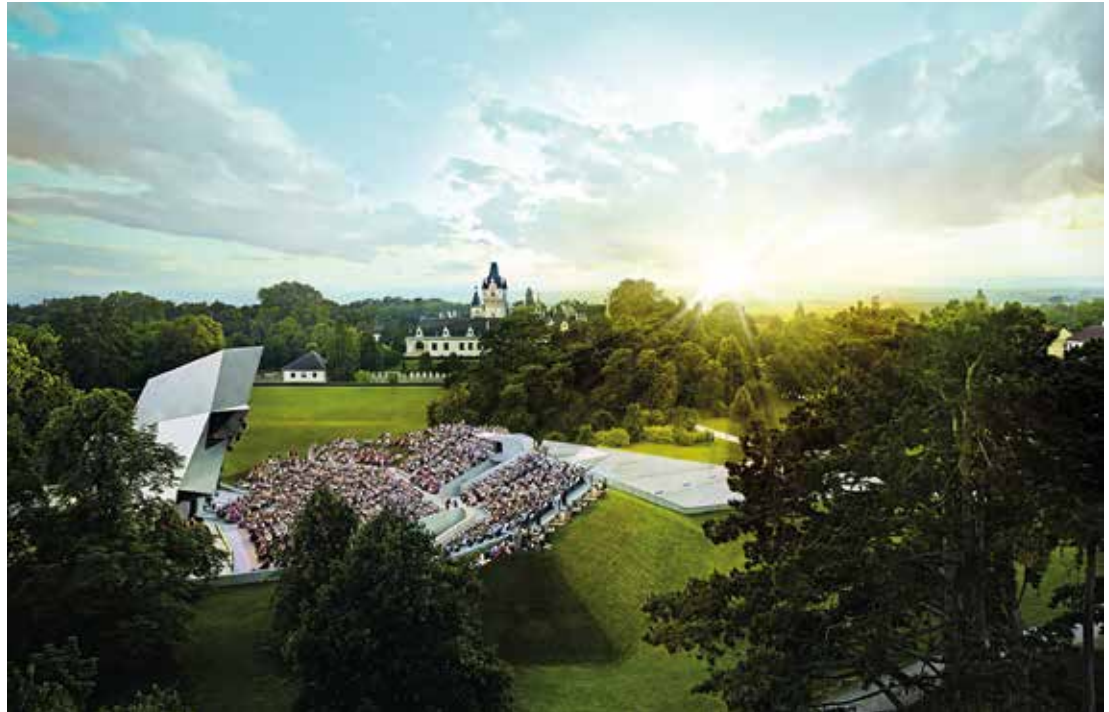
When we first visited the building site, we immediately realized that fresh air and a spirited intervention would be needed to rouse this place from its deep slumber and transform it into a museum of international appeal.

The building, the historic rear wing inside the Hanuschhof complex, was invisible from the street; wedged between other edifices, it was accessible only through two narrow carriage gateways, and parked vehicles blocked the view. The structure itself, raised by Archduke Friedrich in 1914 as a multistorey office building with indoor parking, presented itself with a pleasantly restrained façade in the style of its time. The conditions of the competition called for plans that would maintain the appearance and outline of the charming building, which had drawn little attention from historians.

Our approach begins with an effort to register the subtle distinctive characteristics of a site before developing potential qualities and features out of its context. Additions and adaptations evolve in dialogue with the existing structure, a concurrence of old and new that yields a communicating and multifaceted whole, an integral custom-tailored design condensing the identity of the place.

FIG. 1 AERIAL VIEW OF THE HANUSCHHOF AND THE FORMER OFFICE BUILDING

FIG. 2 “CLOUD TOWER” OPEN-AIR STAGE IN GRAFENEGG



Drawing up our conception for the open-air stage in Grafenegg (fig. 1), for instance, we took guidance from the landscaped garden with its fluid sequences of spaces between topographic, vegetative, and constructive elements. The soaring “Cloud Tower” derives from this constellation of references. In the project “Missing Link” (fig. 2), an extension and alteration on the campus of the University of Applied Arts was to complement Heinrich von Ferstel’s stately late-nineteenth-century building with its clearly arrayed volumes as well as the open loft structures of Karl Schwanzer’s annex from the 1970s. We proposed a specific upright structure, the “vertical forum,” to effect a signal reorganization of the ensemble. As we envisioned it, the multiplicity of different spatial qualities would enhance the complex’s flexibility and range of possible uses.

Searching for traces on the scene

With a view to the project’s situation in the urban fabric, we believed that it was vital to valorize the courtyard, which most recently had been in exclusive use by the residents as a parking lot and to access the buildings. We wanted to turn it into an attractive public space and integrate it into the surrounding web of streets, alleys, and squares.

Despite the constraints of the setting inside the courtyard, the museum’s entrance was to be generously dimensioned and—this was key—readily visible from both gateways leading into the complex so that it would greet arriving visitors, the flagship feature of the Heidi Horten Collection’s new home. We also noted that some rooms in the existing structure were suitable for adaptation as comparatively intimate galleries; by contrast, the building did not have larger rooms with vistas unobstructed by pillars that could readily be converted into ample exhibition spaces, and creating such spaces would entail considerable complexity and expense.

We were fascinated by the fact that virtually all the works of art in the collection were currently



FIG. 3 VISUALIZATION OF THE MUSEUM ENTRANCE

housed in and around the collector’s private homes—that she was in effect living with them. The museum, we thought, should be designed so as to share with the visitors this sense of a very personal engagement with the art.

As we worked out our vision of what the museum’s spaces would look and feel like, we also found inspiration in the ambiance captured in stills from the motion pictures *2001: A Space Odyssey* (Stanley Kubrick 1968) and *The Best Offer* (Giuseppe Tornatore 2013). We accordingly sought ways to realize these aspects, in conjunction with the complex functional and safety-related requirements, in a cogent overall conception.

FIG. 4 FILM STILL *A SPACE ODYSSEY* BY STANLEY KUBRIK, 1968

FIG. 5 FILM STILL *THE BEST OFFER* BY GIUSEPPE TORNATORE, 2013



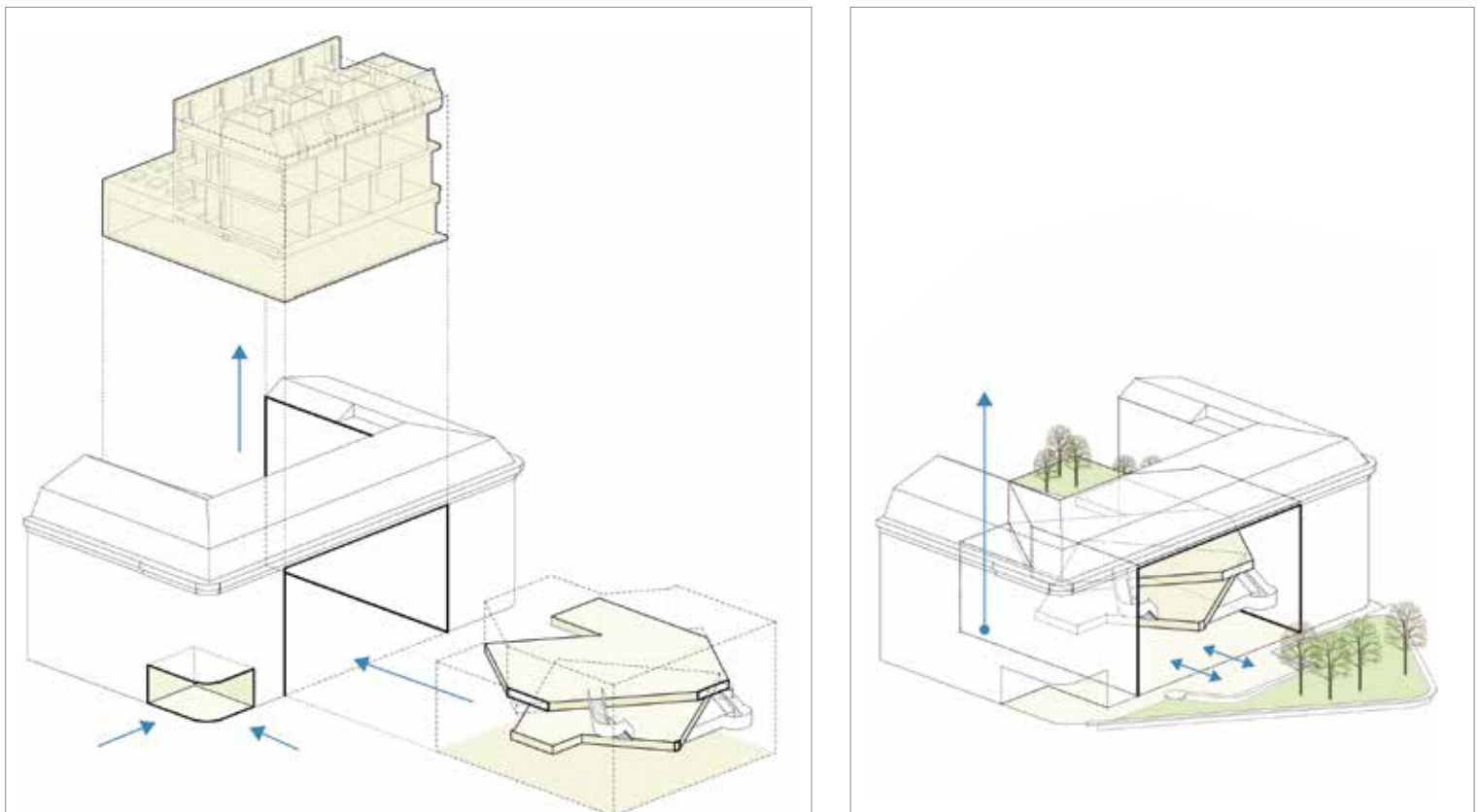
Three interventions—from office building to museum

Three points emerged as essential to the implementation of our ideas for how to bring fresh air into the structure and transform its atmosphere and spatial configuration.

Intervention 1—Weaving in the surroundings

Instead of considering the building and the space around it as separate entities, we conceived of them as interpenetrating bodies. A dialogue unfolding between the building and the courtyard situation was to enhance the Hanuschhof's appeal as a place to spend time in and position the museum as an island of art in the heart of the city.

The previously neglected small greenspace in the courtyard is raised, planted with trees, and staged as a sculpture garden. The building itself is given a greened façade, with grape ivy and wisteria, strengthening the allure of the charming historic office wing. The courtyard becomes a publicly accessible setting where nature and culture meet, beckoning with a pleasant atmosphere and cli-



FIGS. 6, 7 THE THREE INTERVENTIONS IN THE FORMER OFFICE BUILDING

mate. A continuous bench running along the edges of the sculpture garden frames it and extends a generous gesture of welcome to the visitors, inviting them to rest under the trees. Greened terraces on the second and third floors reprise this idea, while also acting as exterior extensions of the museum's spaces and looking out toward the neighboring buildings.

Intervention 2—Unbounding space

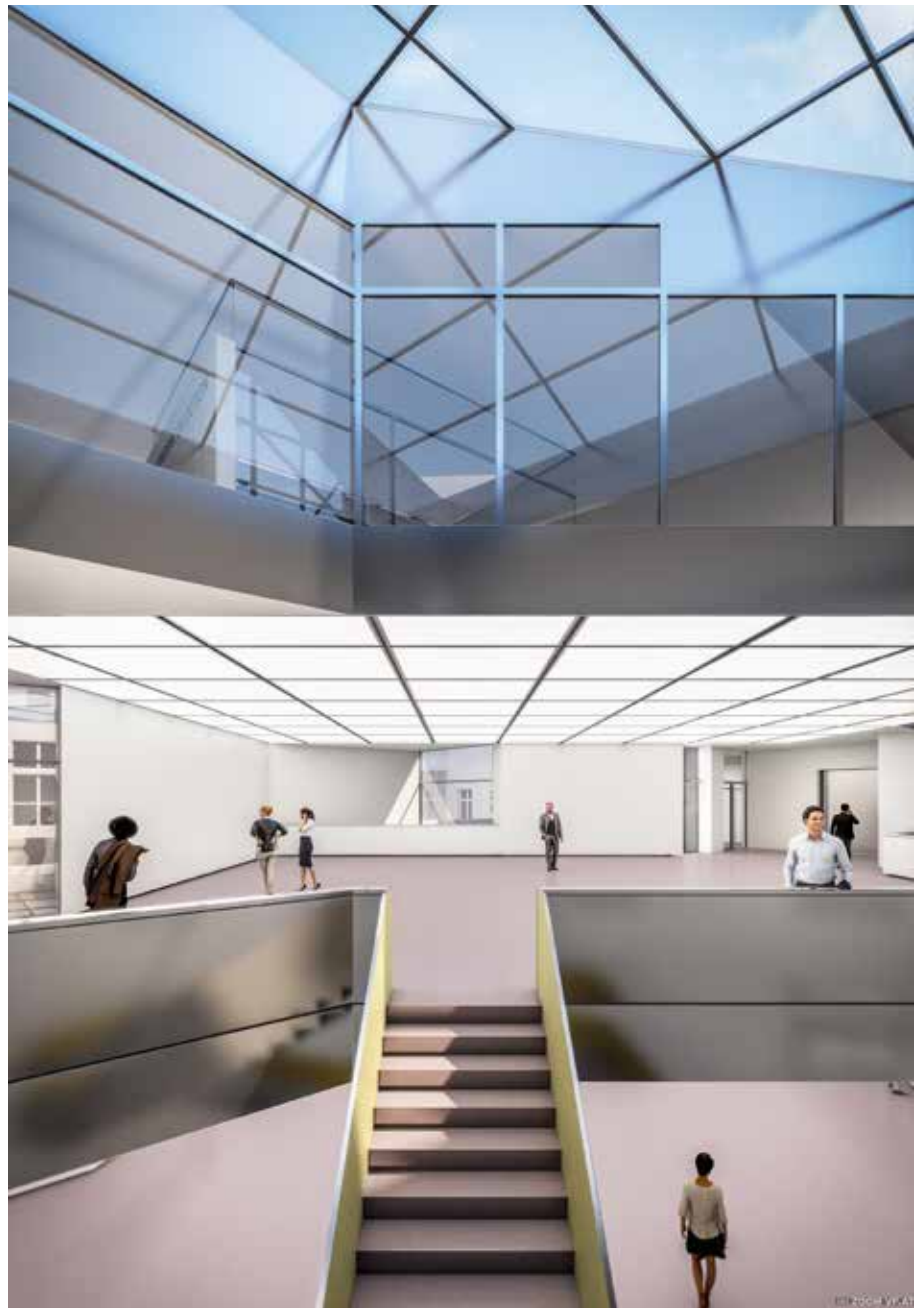
Despite the confined situation, the museum was to have a spacious clearly visible entrance. The idea we came up with was to cut a room-height corner in the dimensions of the small gallery above it out of the northern wing. The resulting open yet sheltered entrance area and the lobby make for an understated transition between courtyard and museum, allowing for a first glimpse of the scene behind the historic façade, and sparks the desire to discover the building's interior. Walking along the golden-yellow wall emblazoned with the letters "Heidi Horten Collection," the visitors are guided into the museum.

Intervention 3—Volume within blank volume

The architectonic organization of the space is designed to encourage an open and freely circulating flânerie and a sense of weightlessness. The two lateral wings with the stairwells and infrastructural facilities remain in place in their basic arrangement and function; the multistorey central wing, by contrast, is gutted: that is the third intervention. The expansive volume it frees up, totaling ca. 3600 cubic meters, accommodates the insertion of two floating exhibition plateaus of ca. 240 square meters each; set at a slight angle to each other, they are connected by two sculptural flights of stairs. An architecture in three dimensions unfolds that articulates the exhibition levels as central exhibits in their own right. Generous vertical empty spaces along the edges measuring up to 18 meters in height open lines of sight from the ground floor toward the glazed roof and into the sky.

The wall surfaces and blank volumes released by these alterations can be used to stage art and can be experienced by the visitors from widely different angles. This idea of volumes within a larger volume is our response to the early-twentieth-century office building's structure. Its compartmentalized interior is replaced by an open ensemble of spaces that serves as a platform for the art. Clear of interior supports, expansive, and extraordinarily flexible, it allows for diverse exhibition formats and circulations of people. A stimulating environment for art emerges that promotes communication, prompts associations, and animates visitors to go explore.

FIG. 8 VISUALIZATION: VOLUME WITHIN BLANK VOLUME



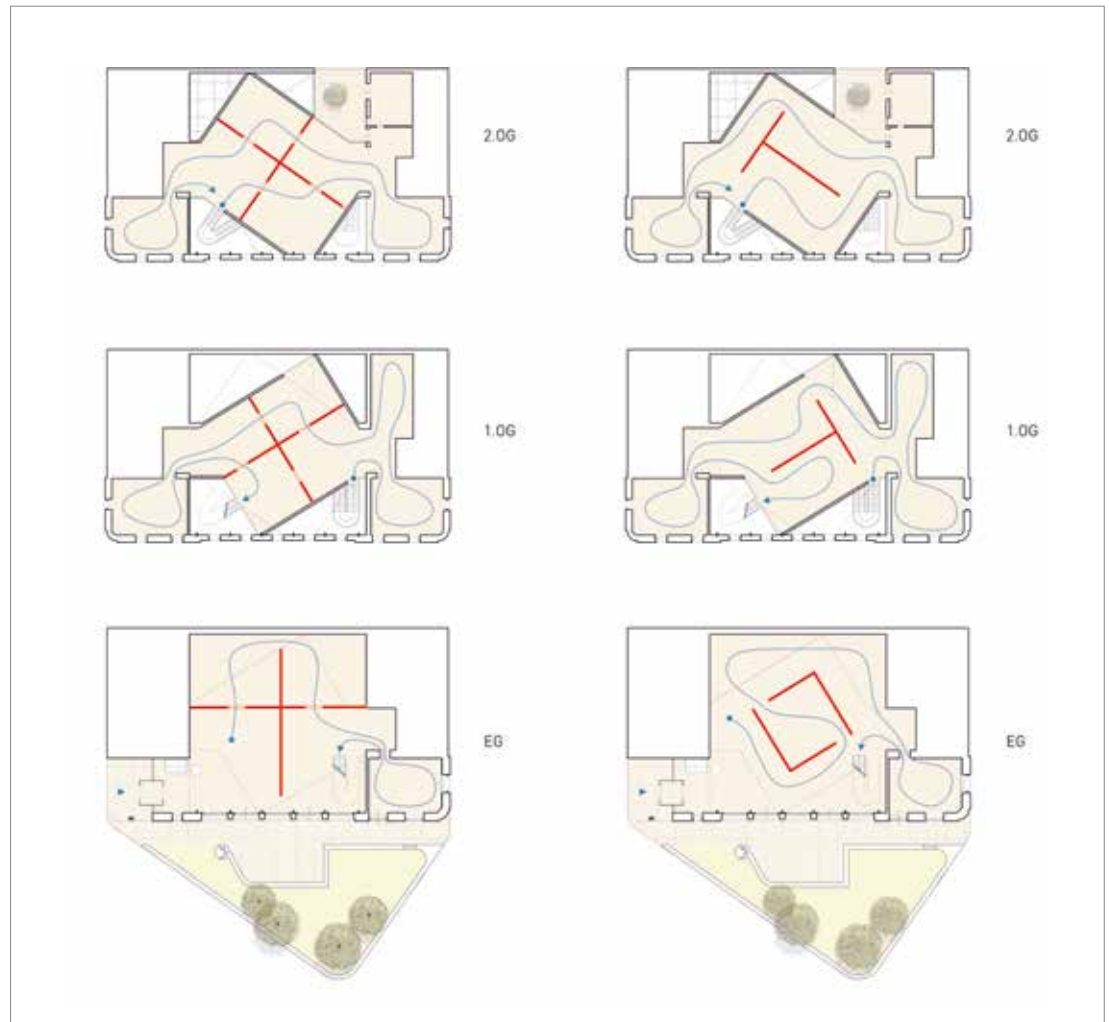


FIG. 9 FLOOR PLANS AND POSSIBLE SPACE PLANNING

The steel construction enhances the existing building's predetermined ceiling height and amplifies it in interaction with the empty spaces. The platforms on welded steel beams are fitted with continuous illuminated ceilings that underscore the construction's gravity-defying aura and ensures even light throughout the space. They are combined with embedded tracks that allow for the installation of spotlights for targeted illumination of individual works of art as needed.

The exhibition platforms effectively act as viewing balconies overlooking the other levels. Movable walls may be inserted as desired to separate the levels from the surrounding volumes and create enclosed spaces. The plateaus' balusters and the stairs form an interconnected spatial continuum. Their outward-facing surfaces are clad in glass-bead-blasted stainless steel panels that produce diffuse reflections of the vertical spaces, extending them ad infinitum.

The historic façade, which has been uncovered across the full height of three storeys, is lined with a fabric scrim. Subdued daylight enters the building's body through the window openings, which thus remain discernible as a historic architectural element. Present meets history. The textile wall may be activated as a projection screen, bolstering our idea of combining a distinctive atmosphere with flexibility of creative use.

Synergy between historic building and contemporary adaptation

We conceive of the architecture as an elementary medium for the visitors' interaction with the art collection. The exhibition surfaces are engrafted into the gutted structure as an internally cohesive three-dimensional object. The radical intervention reveals the building's original historic structure with its lateral wings and infrastructural areas. In addition to the classic galleries, the building boasts a so-called tea-room and a creative studio where children and teenagers will participate in lively and playfully hands-on art education programs. One small gallery room is equipped especially for presentations of media art and videos; a modest lecture hall may also be repurposed for exhibitions.

The exhibition floorspaces on the three levels add up to 1400 square meters. Together with the offices on the top floor, an art handling room on the newly created basement level, and two elevators, the building has everything that is needed for a smooth, safe, and efficient museum operation.

Emotion and the sense of touch

The collector's love of color and the encounter between the old and the new are thrown into relief by the selection of materials and textures and the palette chosen for the project. The walls and ceilings of the exhibition spaces are painted a pristine white, whereas the interior doors and box windows, the embrasure facings in the galleries, and the fabric wall in the exhibition hall display various other shades of white. A subtle play of hues and textures and the intermixture of daylight and artificial illumination create an environment that also conveys a sense of intimacy. This atmospheric keynote is accentuated by carefully orchestrated surfaces in colors including yellow gold, cream yellow, and a muted apricot in the entrance area, on the inward-facing surfaces of the stairs, and in the bathrooms. Elements clad in stainless steel as a reflective material are placed vis-à-vis the rendered façades and absorb their yellow tone.



FIG. 10 TEXTURES AND COLORS

FIG. 11 VISUALIZATION OF THE GREEN AND CULTURAL SPACE IN THE HANUSCHHOF



With the exception of the historic galleries, the floors on all levels are finished in a red-speckled terrazzo, which extends outside the building in the form of dyed concrete by the entrance, around the sculpture garden, and on the terraces. It is complemented by oakwood floors in the galleries stained a chestnut red that exude courtly elegance.

Integrated into the museum's room schedule is the office level on the top floor, which is likewise laid out as a mix of smaller enclosed and larger open spaces. The central office area gives onto a greened terrace. Spatially segregated and acoustically insulated from the exhibition areas below, this level is nonetheless connected to the exhibition spaces through the glazed corner segments.

The office level is accessed via a separate entrance on the ground floor and a staircase and elevator. The existing stairs are torn down and replaced by precast concrete components, which are mounted to the structure only at either end and separated by a gap from the walls, making the stairwell an open and airy space extending from the basement to the top floor.

The challenge in this extraordinary building project was to implement the standards of contemporary museum construction in the complex and demanding situation defined by the existing historic ensemble and its dense urban context, while also creating an ambitious work of architecture that can anchor the identity of a singular art collection.

In close dialogue and ongoing consultation with the principal, the director, and experts, we formulated a vision that was then cast into a concrete proposal in an extended iterative development process, fleshed out on the level of specific design choices, and translated into a technically detailed execution plan. We are confident that the successions of rooms we have realized will charm visitors with an interplay between expansiveness and intimacy, openness and discretion. Engendering an unmistakable atmosphere and lively circulation of people, art, and ideas, it will underscore the collection's distinctive profile and enable a diverse audience to experience the collector Heidi Goëss-Horten's passion for her art.



FIG. 12 SITE PLAN

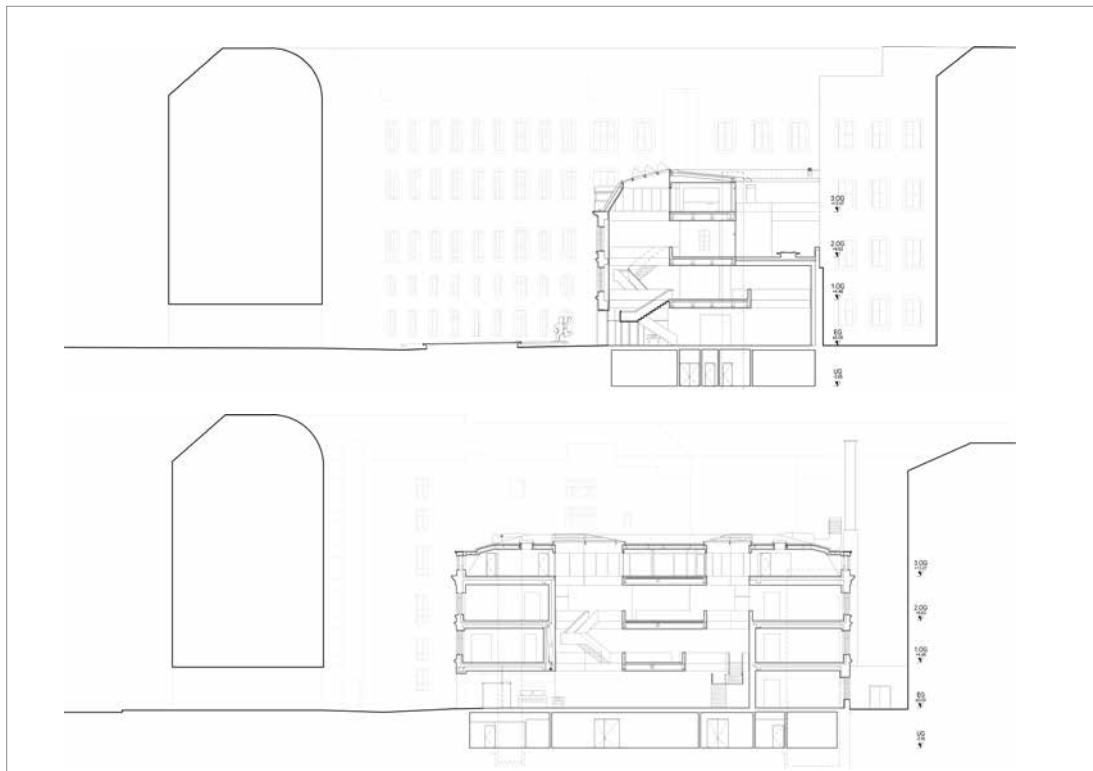
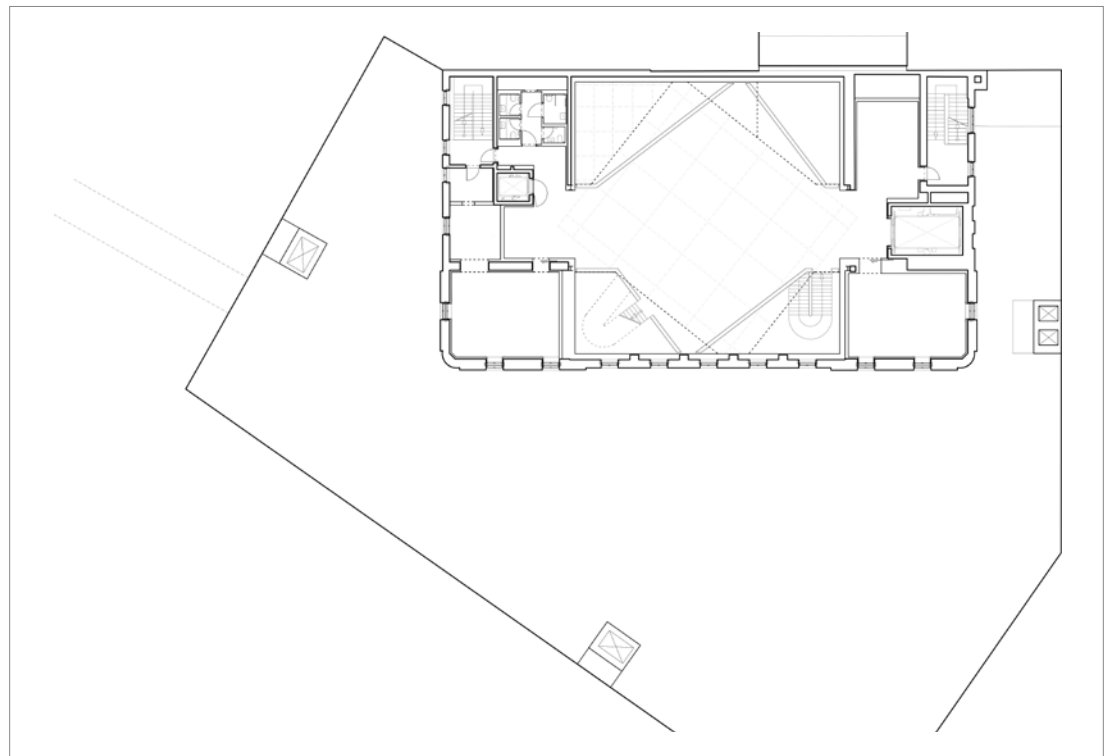
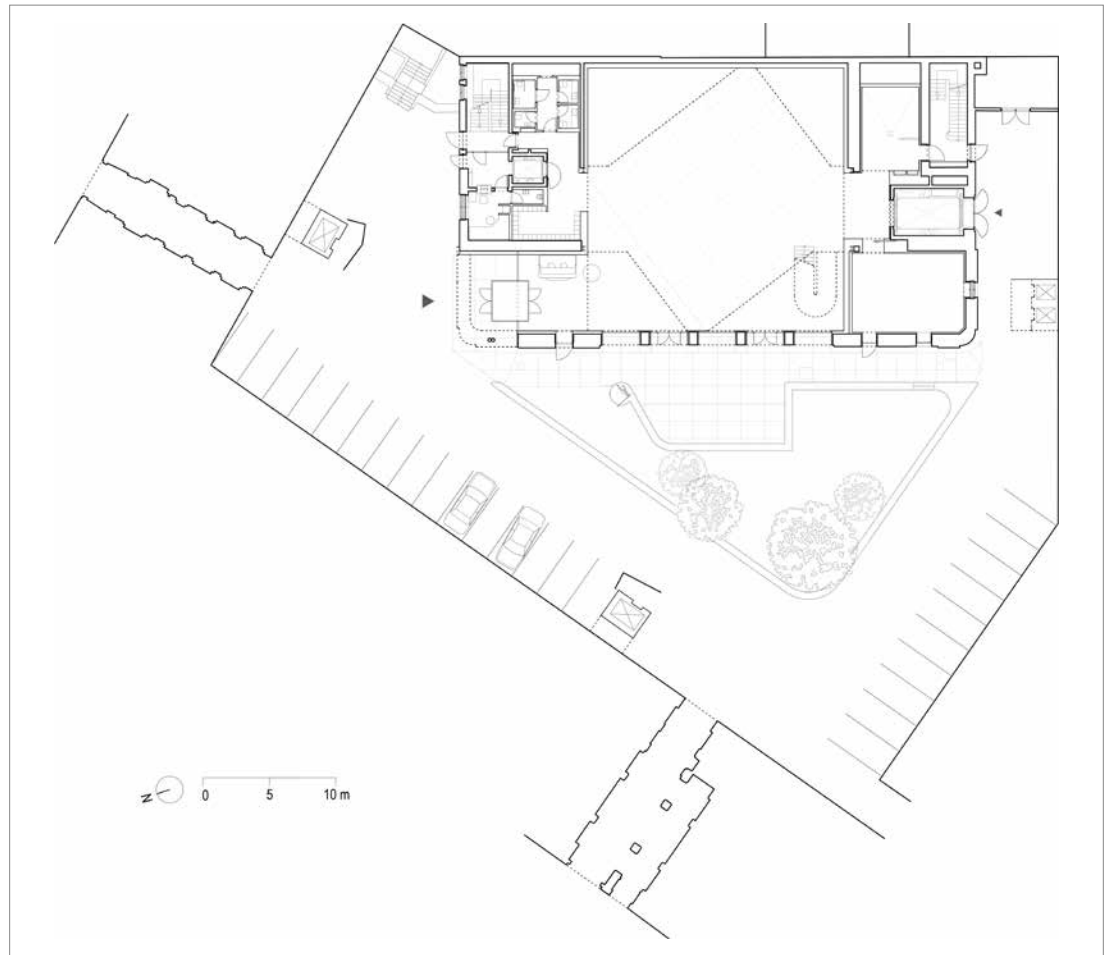
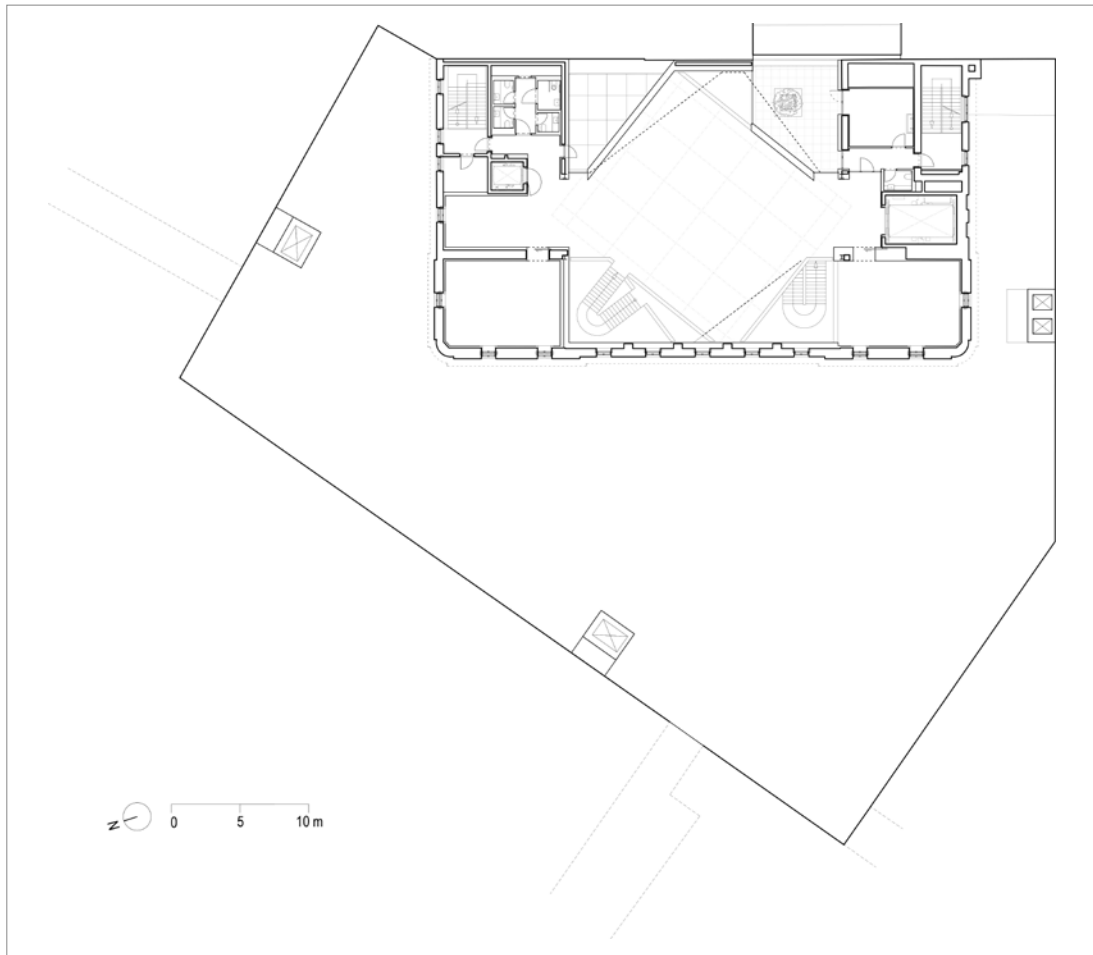


FIG. 13 CROSS- AND LONGITUDINAL SECTION THROUGH THE MUSEUM BUILDING

ABB. 14, 15 GRUNDRISSE
ERDGESCHOSS, I. OBERGESCHOSS





FIGS. 14–17 FLOOR PLANS OF THE
GROUND FLOOR, 1ST FLOOR, 2ND
FLOOR, TOP FLOOR

