

MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART HELSINKI, FI



Competition 2014

Client The Salomon R. Guggenheim Foundation

Area 12500 m²

Sustainability LEED

Budget 100 M€

A raised building introducing a new relationship with the town, the underside of the Museum has become a façade which shelters an unprecedented public space.



It was intended that the Museum should be sited in a port, backed by an urban façade comprised of high-quality buildings : one of the key concerns in our approach to this project has therefore been the preservation of the existing qualities of the site. Working in a port means that large-scale issues need to be addressed : boats, cranes and other harbour machinery are gigantic. In order to exist in such a location, a building needs to assume the same scale ratio : we therefore decided that the structure should be raised, to the greatest possible extent. This option also frees-up the ground level footprint, creating a generous and high-quality public space. This arrangement also permits the avoidance of any obstruction of the view of the urban façade, or of the view from the Tahititornin Park.



From the exterior, the Museum assumes a very simple form, but its setting makes it both unique and emblematic. The building is raised 30 metres above ground, reaching the average height of the Helsinki skyline.

We have conceived the forecourt of the Museum as a public space which is open to all. At present, the site of the Museum is an urban no-man's land, and it has been our intention to transform it into an attractive location, a destination for residents, and a meeting point where people will choose to gather, even if they are not planning to visit the Museum. The underside of the Museum will thus become the ceiling of the esplanade, sheltering onlookers and providing an exhibition space for artists. Hanging facilities permit the suspension of works of art above the public space. This is a new type of presence of art in the town, replacing the traditional pedestal-based sculpture.