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MERI BATAKOJA

A THEORY TOWARDS A BUILT-IN-VARIETY IN MUSEUM DESIGN:
THE "CAPRICCIO MUSEUM"


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FIG. 1 THE CAPRICCIO GENRE: GIOVANNI PAOLO PANINI, GALLERY OF VIEWS OF MODERN ROME, 1759, LOUVRE MUSEUM, PARIS

MERI BATAKOJA

FACULTY OF ARCHITECTURE, Ss. CYRIL AND METHODIUS UNIVERSITY IN SKOPJE
BLVD. PARTIZANSKI ODREDI 24, 1000 SKOPJE, N. MACEDONIA
(THE RESEARCH IS PARTLY CARRIED OUT AT THE FACULTY OF ARCHITECTURE UNIVERSITY OF ZAGREB.)

 ORCID.ORG/0000-0001-5503-2251

batakoja.meri@arh.ukim.edu.mk
meri.batakoja@gmail.com

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A THEORY TOWARDS A BUILT-IN-VARIETY IN MUSEUM DESIGN: THE “CAPRICCIO MUSEUM”

CAPRICCIO
NEOCLASSICAL
MUSEAL SPACES
MUSEUM TYPOLOGY
TRANSHISTORICAL

The paper presents an excerpt from the extensive research on various *museal spaces* throughout human history. By re-evaluating the imaginative procedures involved in conceiving those spaces, the research in its broadest scope asks: how do we map, rethink and revive the historically valuable assets of architectural thought without “museumising” them? The excerpt is initially dedicated to the neoclassical museum space based upon the notion of the *frame* that was already adopted by the painting genre *capriccio* to induce the spectator’s mind into an architectural fantasy of juxtaposed real and fictitious buildings, archaeological ruins, urban and natural landscapes. In

the neoclassical museum space, the *capriccio* “became alive” as an actual-size architectural fantasy that could be stepped into. Based upon multiple conceptual *frames*, the interconnected yet distinct architectural fragments illustrated the *neoclassical worldview* founded on inclusivity, synchronicity and bodily experience. This historical episode is further theorised into the *capriccio museum*, a new theoretical model that critically perceives multiple experience probabilities as distilled from the past and starts a process of conversion of that historical knowledge into transhistorical knowledge relevant for today.

INTRODUCTION

This paper presents a single excerpt from the otherwise extensive research on museal spaces throughout human history that are conceived by curious imaginative procedures.¹ It collects them from an interdisciplinary context and re-evaluates them in order to rethink and revive them as valuable assets of architectural thought.

The excerpt presented in this paper is dedicated to the *neoclassical museum space* and the *frame* that was already adopted by the painting genre *capriccio* as its imaginative procedure. The *capriccio* is a painterly representation of architectural fantasies of juxtaposed real and fictitious buildings, archaeological ruins, urban and natural landscapes. In the neoclassical museum space, by analogy to the painterly space, the *capriccio* “became alive” as an actual-size architectural fantasy that could be stepped into.

The textual part of this paper presents the historiographical facts about the use of *capriccio* as an imaginative procedure in art and architectural context and the way it is recognisable in the conceptualisation of “The Pio Clementino Museum of Ancient Art”.

Learning from this historical episode, the *capriccio* is then revived as a theory that is emphatically dedicated to opening new ventures from the architectural vocabulary and meanings of the past. The historical referentiality discourse in the museum context is therefore

deconstructed, resulting in the classification of the museum’s fragments and their accompanying formal and experiential capacities as a new ground for the exploration of an incredible variety of architectural options.

The graphic part of the paper presents three kinds of “boards” – historical, associative and imaginative, illustrating a graphical method for a re-direction of this historical knowledge into speculative and design-wise procedure. The “historical” and “imaginative” boards put forward a catalogue of museum architectural fragments, placing one image next to another, starting with the real and the rational and transposing it towards the imaginative and fictitious and from past to present. The “associative” board mobilises a set of museums that are based on the idea of the whole as a complex model incorporating many real and imagined syntactic memories or fragments of the past and present. In that way, the *capriccio museum* as a new theoretical model shows its two-fold relevance: first, to re-read the existing museum production anew and to recognise the “built-in variety” in museum design transhistorically, in terms of formative ideas and techniques, and second, to contribute to a museum metaphor that has the power to dissolve the museums’ established authority towards new architectural (and curatorial) freedoms to choose and select from a variety of spatial and experiential options.²

THE ARCHITECTURAL CAPRICCIO

“The capriccio can be understood as a metaphor of the architectural mind and of the way it operates by association, analogy and permutation. It can also be the architectural project itself which combines analysis and synthesis, precedent and experiment, technical expertise and artistic poetry in a densely layered and intricate image. The capriccio corresponds truly to the expectation of architecture as an ‘Ars Combinatoria’ with an infinite palette of variations and associations.” (Steil, 2016a)

Capriccio as a term is ascribed via a range of meanings across many art disciplines. Its original meaning was negative, similar to grotesque. Its positive meanings refer to the general onset of defiance and the artist’s clear right to an unrestrained imagination. The term *capriccio*, as of the visual domain, first appeared in the writings of Vasari to describe ancient and modern artists who violate the rules of mimicking nature. It is recognised in the 16th-century painting based upon a game of analogies between the shapes and symbolism of objects, as in the example of Giuseppe Arcimboldo (Popiel, 2015; Anders, 2016). *Capriccio* officially departed from the faithful image of space in the 18th century as a

subgenre of landscape painting, representing an architectural fantasy composed of real and fictitious elements, i.e. buildings, archaeological ruins and urban and natural landscapes (Fig. 1). The composition was built by introducing fictitious architectural elements into otherwise realistic *vedute*, by placing familiar architectural objects in an unusual way, or by changing their usual scale by reducing or enlarging them. Sometimes, they were imagined in visions of the future as torn by the ravages of time. As Popiel (2015) notes, capricious paintings use the framework of landscape convention as an empty form, a template that can be filled with various elements and new semantics.

Capriccio also contributed to the artistic expression of the “spirit of the place” by accentuating a specific light or atmosphere and by emphasising certain features of the landscape that are otherwise unnoticeable in the documentary view. *Capriccio* aimed to represent (and shape) the viewers’ feelings, those they take away from the cities, which are usually a reflection of the super-reality of emotions and do not coincide with the factual content of the scenery (Steil, 2016).

Architectural capriccio, including the *capriccio of ruins*, was a sub-genre of *capriccio* expectedly practised by architects or painters who had some notions of architecture (Mazzola, 2016). It was developed in parallel with the world’s fascination by the Antiquity and the Grand Tour, the cultural pilgrimage for wealthy intellectuals towards the South – Italy. The Grand Tour enabled essential education for architects who were given a first-hand chance to witness the wondrous excavations and discoveries of the Ancient world’s fragments.³ Here, this cross-current of painting and architecture reached its high point. By using the very working methodology of taking notes and sketching in situ and then developing them into elaborate drawings and paintings in the workshops, *capriccio* was adopted as a compromise between archaeologically and historically correct precedents in the face of antique ruins and hypothetical and fictive models of the creative mind (Steil,

2016b). The documentary and the imaginary started to go hand in hand.

The personal voyage from the documentary to the imaginary, until the two became utterly indistinguishable, is evident in the oeuvre of Giovanni Battista Piranesi. His “*Carceri d’Invenzione*” (Imaginary Prisons), a new form of architectural fantasy that Piranesi himself called “capricious inventions”, presented impossible architectural structures that assigned even more striking and extraordinary visual experience to the image of *capriccio* (Marchesano, 2010). In the images of Piranesi, cavities of space are filled with architectural fragments of pillars, buttresses, walls and arches, flights of stairs, portrait busts and tomb sculptures. The architectural fragment remains a basic building block of his compositions even in his later “*Le Vedute di Roma*” (Views of Rome) and the speculative reconstructions of “*Le Antichità Romane*” (Roman Antiquities) with the grandest of them all – the reconstruction of “*Campo Marzio dell’Antica Roma*” (Campus Martius of Ancient Rome). And while in each of Piranesi’s works we see a highly personal response to the past in its fragmented state (Pinto, 2016), “*Imaginary Prisons*” (re-made over and over again throughout Piranesi’s life) represents a real experimental space for architectural fantasy without any realistic limitations (Huysen, 2006). “*Archaeological correctness was no longer an issue for Piranesi*”, as Mallgrave (2005: 33) would say, “*artistic license and bravado were the call of the day*”.

Capriccio was also used in architectural training for developing skills of visionariness through central aspects of the imaginary of ruins: that of erosion, natural decay and the return of architecture to nature. For example, Carl Friedrich Schinkel asked his students to first “build” a building in their drawings and then to start to mentally “decompose” it little by little until they had turned it into a romantic ruin. This procedure was used as a lesson for both architecture’s transitory nature – its vulnerability and its resistance to transience – its dignity in the decay (Bogdanović, 1995: 44-45). But most of all, it was a lesson for architectural imagination to be enabled to look from within, from the interior essence of buildings that come to light, with their structures and substructures exposed, and the mixture of elements and forms they are composed of, such as the rooms, the itineraries, arches, vaults and domes. Joseph Gandy set up this visionary and analytical game earlier through his imaginary representation of John Soane’s Bank of England as a ruin.

Therefore, *capriccio* in all its architectural manifestations, imposed on the viewer a new

1 In his theory on practices of imagination, Michael K. Hays explains the dynamic process that takes place in architectural imagination, starting from our intuitions or sensory experiences and extending to our understanding. In order to bridge our intuitions into the understanding that is the sphere of concepts and categories, he introduces the need for a third agency – a mediator, the so-called imagination intermediary or an underlying imaginative procedure. (Hays, 2016; Fabrizi, Lucarelli, 2019; Klaske, Sioli, 2021)

2 This paper itself works as a *capriccio*.

3 The Grand Tour encompassed a thorough study of antique buildings on archaeological sites. The museal sites, i.e. the collections, especially the ones consisting of visual arts and antiquities, were also visited and studied.

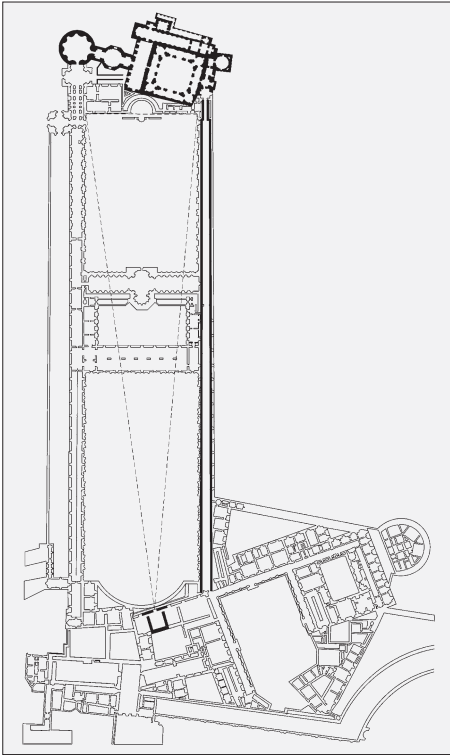


FIG. 2 MUSEAL FRAGMENTS SEQUENCE OF VATICAN PALACE. THE BELVEDERE CORRIDOR CONNECTING THE "STANZA DELLA SEGNATURA" (STUDIOLO; DOWN) AND "CORTILE DELLE STATUE" (THE COURTYARD OF THE STATUES) OF THE BELVEDERE VILLA (UPPER RIGHT), CONTINUED WITH "MUSEO PIO-CLEMENTINO" (PIO CLEMENTINO MUSEUM; UPPER LEFT)

frame of reference to induce his/her mind into an imaginative rearrangement of the real.

We can summarise that *capriccio* represents the architect's desire and intellectual satisfaction to create forms that do not have to be built as well as forms that cannot be built and whose imagined status is equally valuable. *Capriccio* implies working in parallel with the real and the fantastic/fictitious, thus maintaining the self-awareness that the imaginary expressions of the mind are never completely independent of the objective world of concrete real things. *Capriccio* represents the growing fascination with the classical past and introduces the formal logic of architectural composition. Even today, it can be used as a learning ground for the classical categories of architecture and, at the same time, for experimentations with strivings to escape the rigid classical doctrine (Popiel, 2015). That is why it often exhibits oddness in its invention, multiform special arrangement and irregular mixture of conventional and unexpected forms, affecting the viewer with juxtapositions and ambiguity of shapes and meanings (Dowling, 1977). *Capriccio* can be used to investigate architectural meaning by imaginatively placing one image next to another, one metaphor next to another, some belonging to the real world and some to the imagined world. The meanings of those images are transposed and combined, reinforcing or invalidating the original metaphors while new ones are being born.

Capriccio, apart from being an imaginary museum itself, a collection of characteristic architectural fragments from (analogue) cities, has concrete contributions in the context of real museums.

Until the 18th century, the museum was dedicated solely to the experienced viewer, the connoisseur. The display of *capriccio* paintings introduced an intellectual game for the connoisseurs of art and culture and a creative mechanism for socialisation in high intellectual circles. The "artificial", as they were called, or rather, the "fake" architectural compositions, the most famous of which are the paintings of Venice by Canaletto and of Rome by Panini, were self-consciously composed in order to provoke a serious effort on the part of the connoisseurs to recognise the rearrangement of reality: naming the significant architectural and artistic works, discussing the unknown locations to which they have been moved to, or the ways in which they have been changed or recomposed (Mayernik, 2016).

Another contribution of *capriccio* in the context of the architectural imagination of museums is the neoclassical museum. It is a fascinating genre of museum historical types, represented by the complex and primarily

fictitious composition of architectural elements and archaeological finds, which, introduced the concept of a frame (of reference) into the museum design vocabulary for the first time.

THE ARCHITECTURAL CAPRICCIO AND THE NEOCLASSICAL IN THE PIO CLEMENTINO MUSEUM OF ANCIENT ART

The Pio Clementino Museum of Ancient Art, a fragment of today's Vatican Museums, is the first museum ever based on the premise that "the collection is a long-term cultural deposit" accessible to the general public (Kirk, 2005: 69). The Pio Clementino Museum of Ancient Art is a rare historical example that, due to the availability of research sources, allows a thorough insight into the process of its conceptualisation.⁴

The Pio Clementino Museum of Ancient Art was established in 1771 and was architecturally conceptualised as a continual expansion of the "Cortile delle Statue" (Courtyard of the Statues) at the Belvedere Villa, famous under the name of the Octagon (Fig. 2). The first museum room added to its west was the "Salla delle Muse" (Hall of the Muses), designed by Michelangelo Simonetti as one of the first museum rooms dedicated to a complete group of ancient artefacts in 1776. It came into existence due to the important discovery of the Tivoli full-size statue group of seven Muses with Apollo Citharoedus.⁵ It was believed that the statue group belonged to an ancient Greek-themed library or art gallery in an ancient villa dating from the period of Julius Caesar, when, in the words of Collins, elite patrons consolidated their status by absorbing and displaying Hellenic culture. This statue group was the backbone of the collec-

⁴ There is a significant gap in the artefactual history of museum prototypes between the 16th-century "diaeta" and the 18th-century established art galleries. The gallery, the cabinet and the salon all stated the new public purpose within their architectural programme but did not exemplify any new architectural invention, being usually positioned as a separate room or a sequence of rooms within the grand palaces. Architecturally, they can be tracked only through the paintings that depict the wealthy men with their collections (many of them presented as *capriccio* paintings). That is why Collins comments that historical museum spaces are inherently challenging to reconstruct and interpret because they are complex systems of physical structure and conceptual content that are never static, because of which original schemes (and the accompanying visual and archival documentation) are a real rarity (Collins, 2008-2009; Levine, 1990; Kirk, 2005; Mata, 2006).

The architectural *capriccio* used in the museum context is not just an Italian story. As the most famous *capriccio* in the history of museums, as well as the most capricious realisation, we can single out the house-museum by John Soane from 1824, on Lincoln's Inn Fields in London. A widower, losing hope that his two sons will inherit the architectural profession, finds solace in collecting and arrang-

tion, which over time was further expanded with twenty-eight busts of Greek intellectual heroes installed between the Muses. The Muses were clustered around their pastor Apollo, within their “natural environment” – the ancient Greek Temple of the Muses. The architecture was dissolved in an illusionistic manner to include fragmentary representations of Mount Parnassus and to transpose real space into the idealised vision of Arcadia. It was further furbished with thematic decorative schemes that involved fragments of authentic Greek mosaic floors. The first and most dominant paradigm underlying this spatial construct was the enhanced interest in Greek antiquity (Collins, 2008-2009).

Johann Joachim Winckelmann is the one directly responsible for the shift from the Latin vision of antiquity towards perceiving Greek antiquity as superior, even miraculous. He was the first to articulate the differences between Greek and Roman art and the author of the “History of Ancient Art” (1764), which established the foundation of modern archaeology and art history. However, years before his theoretical work was finished, he worked as a papal antiquarian in Rome, participating in and writing about the current excavations. It is believed that although the Pio Clementino Museum of Ancient Art was founded in 1771, three years after his death, this museum project was actually his legacy. The way the “Salla delle Muse” tried to visualise and build a slice of Winckelmann’s beloved Greece from the ground up is more an attempt to imagine an ideal Greek space and time than to recreate real Greek space and time. Moreover, this is what makes it truly neoclassical. What does “neoclassical” actually mean?

The term “neoclassical” means returning to the Classicism of Antiquity at the time when

ing his collection of works of art and sculpture, which he planned to leave to the state as a public museum or academy of architecture. He built, expanded and adapted his gallery for 30 years, buying three houses in the neighbourhood and transforming the central building as a significant expression of his architectural worldview – a labyrinthine series of interconnected theatrical scenes lit from the zenith. Each scene in this series is a portal to a unique world. The room of pictures should be especially highlighted because in that room monumental panels have been introduced that open and reveal new settings of artworks.

There are also numerous research sources through which the process of its conceptualisation can be tracked (Luchacher, 1983; Ernst, 1993; Furjan, 1997, 2002, 2004; Psarra, 2009), but it presents a very eccentric structure, where the multiple narratives and the special effects as added on to the autonomous architectural apparatus make a self-referential system that hardly speaks for anything else than itself.

5 Apollo bearing cithara or lyre.

6 As Collins explains, Greece was inaccessible until the 1740s, when the Turks allowed sporadic visits to some of the cities and important sites, and even after the resulting publications, it took at least a generation to assimilate and put into practice the new knowledge.



FIG. 3 THE NEOCLASSICAL FRAME: AUGUST AHLBORN, AFTER THE LOST ORIGINAL BY KARL FRIEDRICH SCHINKEL, VIEW INTO THE HEYDAY OF GREECE, 1836, ALTE NATIONALGALERIE, BERLIN

Italian Renaissance began to be perceived as offering architectural paradigms that were untrue to the Antique. Archaeology, comprehensive excavations and a huge number of publications dealing with antiquities led to an architecture that was more accurate to the spirit of Antiquity (Curl, 1999). Through this new knowledge, the way classical Antiquity was imagined and represented started to change in the 18th century, in a process that was neither unequivocal nor linear and fact-based. Mallgrave succeeds in giving us a peek into this neoclassical worldview by illustrating Winckelmann’s architectural thought on the example of ancient gymnasiums utilised as a training ground for Greek artists. Greek artists used nude males as models and thus had nature as their source, he says, but the idealised beauty of Greek deities was not present in a single model. It consisted of and was assembled from the best parts of all present bodies. Additionally, physical perfection was not complete without expressing a “noble simplicity and quiet grandeur”, or how physical appearance expressed the dignifying human condition (Mallgrave, 2005: 30). The plastic form was hence both formally and spiritually defined (Fig. 3). This oversimplified theoretical assumption is vital to understanding neoclassical architecture’s true nature of historical relativism as opposed to the popular belief in neoclassical historical accuracy. It was surely eclectically based on historical forms, but there were neither dominant nor singular ones. It experimented with classical vocabulary but relativised and eroded classical architectural doctrine. It was archaeological, but it was as imaginative as it was documentary. As Ernst (1993: 483, 493) would say, the neoclassical meant seeking for “environment of flawless and timeless perfection”, and “the neoclassical medium was “vision” meaning imagination”.

The actual knowledge of the architects about ancient Greek architecture was rather incompetent.⁶ What the architects did was not a reconstruction of any kind in the modern

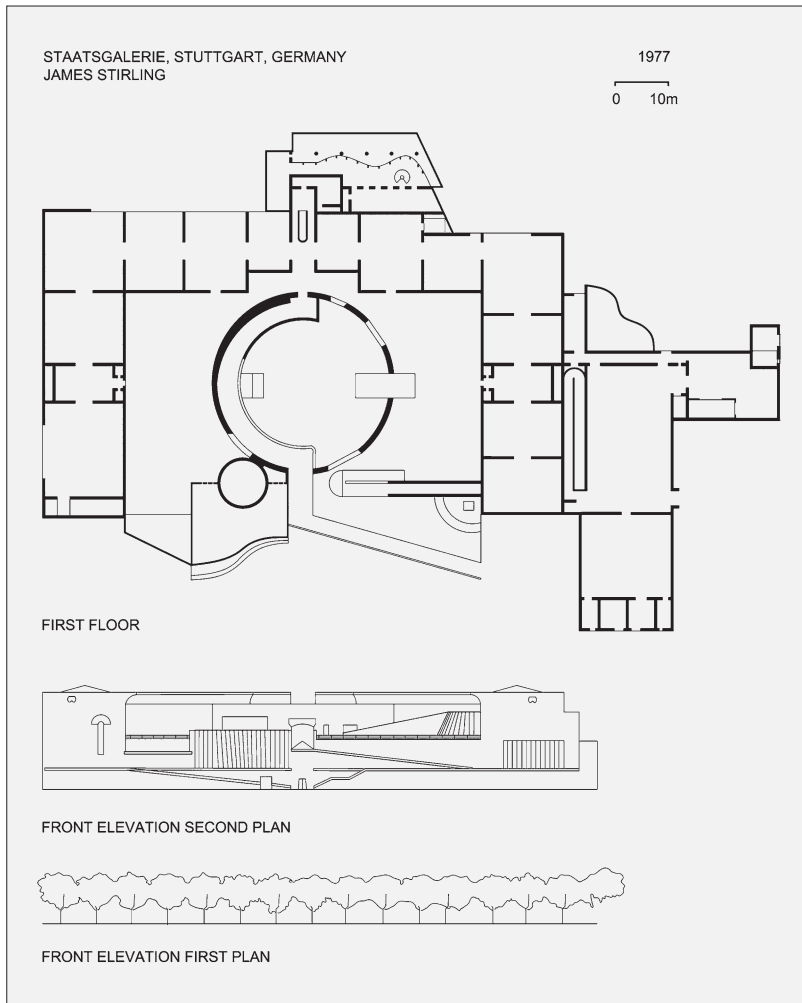
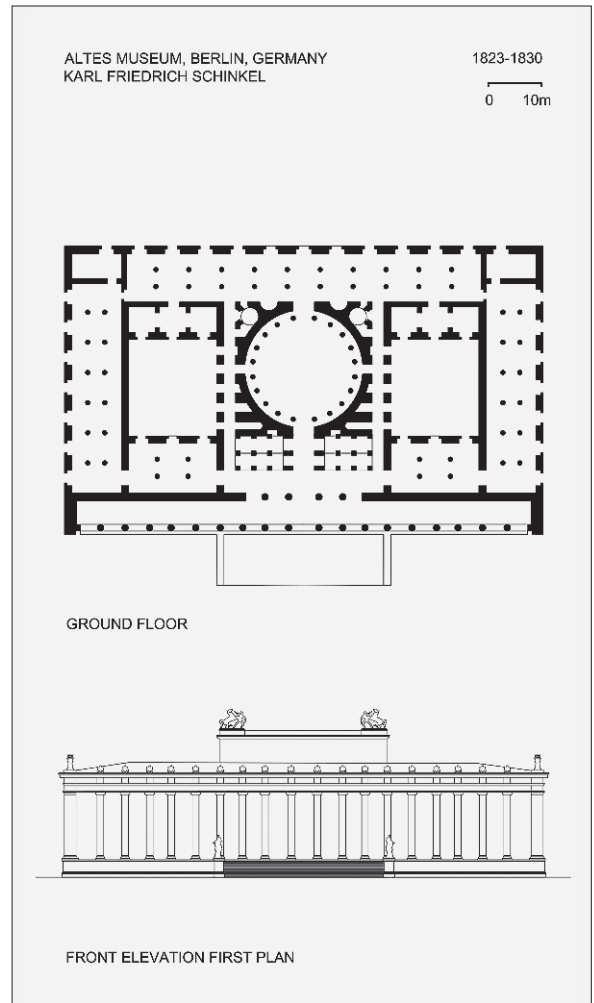


FIG. 4 STAATSGALERIE IN STUTTGART, GERMANY BY JAMES STIRLING: ARCHITECTURAL FLOOR PLAN AND ELEVATIONS

FIG. 5 ALTES MUSEUM IN BERLIN, GERMANY BY KARL FRIEDRICH SCHINKEL: ARCHITECTURAL FLOOR PLAN AND ELEVATION



sense but a creative combination of Roman models, baroque training and a few young archaeological findings. The Hellenistic setting for the Tivoli sculpture group for the “Salla delle Muse” was therefore built as “tentative Greek shoots onto a sturdy Roman stock. Whereas the plan, vaulting and fenestration derive from Imperial bath complexes, a useful model for arranging varied interior spaces, the room’s sixteen monolithic columns evoke the post-and-lintel structure that was becoming identified with ancient Greece” (Collins, 2008-2009: 43).

The Museum was compiled of collated real and imaginary citations that could not be interpreted by separate citations but by the new whole. It expanded west, and with each museum addition, a new frame (of reference) was introduced.

“As is clear in views from about 1790, the cool, cross-vaulted western atrium invoked Egypt, with its tomblike architecture, pharaonic sentinels, paired granite sphinxes, and smaller

Egyptian statues, including some from Tivoli. The adjoining Rotunda recalled ancient Rome, with its obvious resemblance to the Pantheon and its colossal statues of Roman gods and deified emperors. The bright and colorful Hall of the Muses, by contrast, evokes ancient Greece and reflects an important early moment in Europe’s absorption of Hellenic style.” (Collins, 2008-2009: 41)

The realisation of the Pio Clementino Museum of Ancient Art is a starting point of an unfolding architectural historical fantasy, a *capriccio* of unique buildings, archaeological remains and other elements in highly fictional combinations. It introduced the notion of the frame in the museum context vocabulary as one of the most important concepts in the architectural imagination of museums. Architecturally, the neo-classical pattern of compiled architectural fragments signified the fragment of the Hall of the Muses to work as a frame to ancient Greece, the fragment of the Rotunda to work as a frame to ancient

Rome, and more. These frames were meant to transpose spectators into an ideal space and time. The museum started to work as a singular imaginative *mise en scène* that offered multiple spatial experiences.⁷

DECONSTRUCTING HISTORICAL REFERENTIALITY IN MUSEUM CONTEXT – THE MUSEUM AS A FRAGMENT INSTEAD OF THE MUSEUM AS A WHOLE

“The root issue is not one of fact but of theory. It is conceptual.” (Marx, 1992: 209)

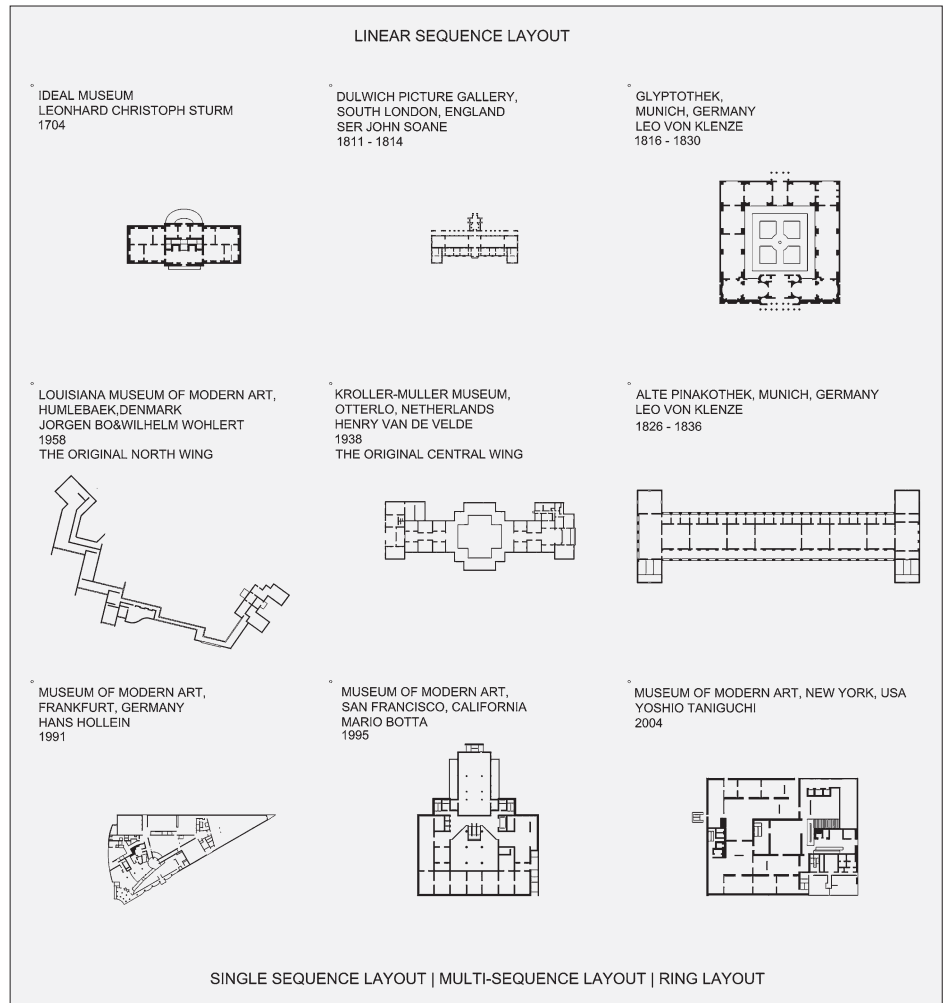
The architectural *capriccio* has historical imagination as its frame of reference and is emphatically dedicated to opening new ventures from architectural vocabulary and meanings of the past. It represents a highly erudite approach to architectural design and is knowledgeable of and therefore playful with conventional formal elements and their experiential, intellectual and even political meanings.

The museum as a building type, more frequently than other building types, exhibits conceptual interest based on historical referentiality, or in the ways the new museums formally reinvent old ones. The way Stuttgart Neue Staatsgalerie (1984) by James Stirling (Fig. 4) reinvented Altes Museum (1830) by Karl Friedrich Schinkel (Fig. 5) became “an architectural emblem of the new historical culture” of museum design (Lampugnani et al., 2001: 12). Anthony Vidler (1989) singled it out as representative of a history that lost its face, i.e. its façade, conceptualised as a modern re-interpretation of Schinkel’s museum inner parts, the stoa, the central rotunda, the sequence of rooms en suite – enfilade and the central stairs.

The historical referentiality as conceptual interest, even when neutralising the historical pastiche as in the example of Stuttgart Neue Staatsgalerie, carries the risk of being operationalised as dangerously arbitrary architectural sampling. In the architectural literature on museum design, these approaches are recognised as the *museum-citation type* (Marotta, 2010) and further theorised as *figurative (iconographic) versus typological recre-*

⁷ The author of this paper personally believes that there is a significant and neglected link between the history of theatre and museum architecture. The scenography of museum space, not in decoratively symbolic terms but in spatial and effectual terms, is also a legitimate museum content. That content is presented to the viewer through a frame of reference, like a portal to particular set of beliefs or ideas.

⁸ There is a specialised sector of Space Syntax – spatial measurements methodology that is dedicated to museum buildings. Bill Hillier and Kali Tzortzi started it with their paper “Space Syntax: The Language of Museum Space” from 2006 (Hillier & Tzortzi, 2006).



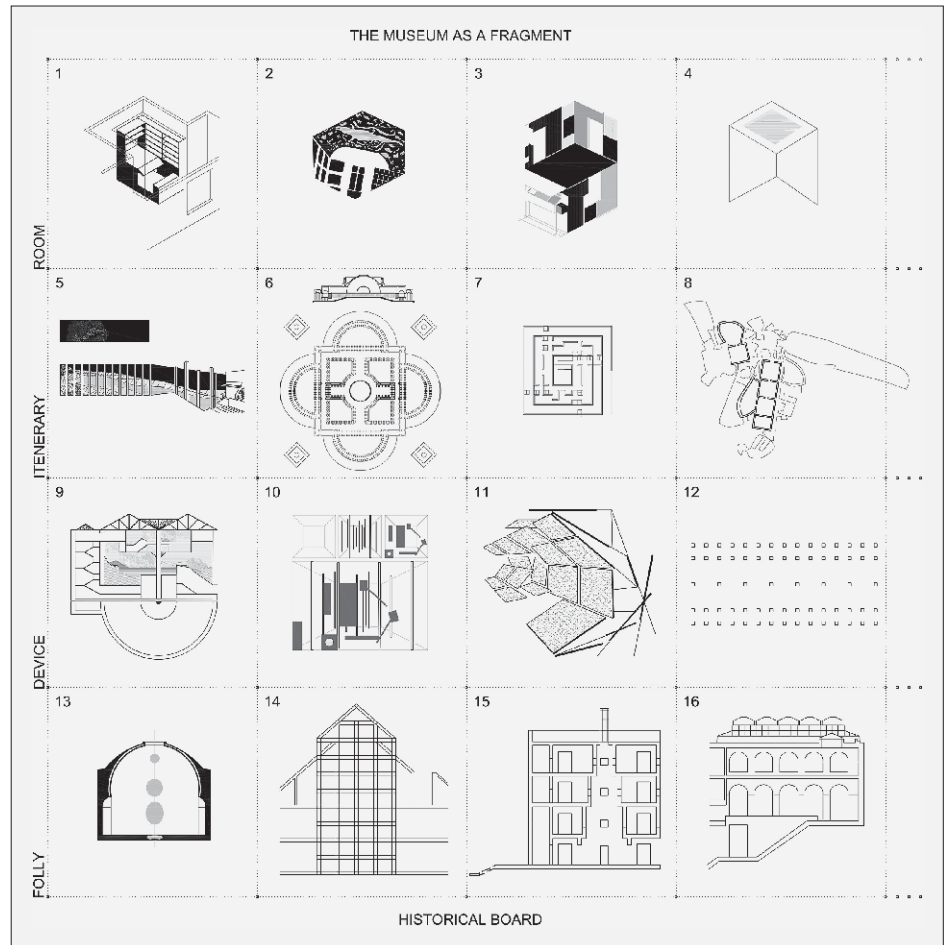
ations (Montaner et al., 1987). Incredibly lucid, although seemingly oversimplified, is the typological categorisation (with historical reference) of the *museum with traditional enfilades* (Lampugnani et al., 2001: 20).

This simplest architectural prototype, recognised by Space Syntax⁸ as the *linear sequence layout* (Fig. 6), is represented with the highest percentage of the entire production of museum buildings (Batakoja, 2015). The *museum with traditional enfilades* reminds us of yet another vital aspect that is missing in the historical referentiality discourse – by recreating famous museum models, we partake in the maintenance of the political programmes, the dogmatic positions and even the clichés of existing museums. The *museum with traditional enfilades*, or the *linear sequence layout* in a broader context, conceptually maintains the authoritative pedagogical manners and the systematising procedures reflecting the taxonomic reasoning of the 19th century. Then why do architects keep recreating it?

FIG. 6 LINEAR SEQUENCE LAYOUT MUSEUMS: SINGLE SEQUENCE LAYOUT, MULTI-SEQUENCE LAYOUT, RING LAYOUT

FIG. 7 HISTORICAL BOARD – THE MUSEUM AS A FRAGMENT: ROOM, ITINERARY, DEVICE, FOLLY

1. DRAWING OF STUDIOLO AS PRESENTED IN RENAISSANCE PAINTINGS OF SAINT JEROME IN HIS STUDY
2. CABINET OF CURIOSITIES (WUNDERKAMMER) AS REMEMBERED FROM THE ENGRAVING FROM FERRANTE IMPERATO'S DELL'HISTORIA NATURALE (NAPLES 1599)
3. DRAWING OF THE MIRRORED AXONOMETRY OF THE ABSTRACT CABINET (KABINETT DER ABSTRAKTEN) BY EL LISSITZKY (1928)
4. SKETCH OF THE BLUE PLANET SKY ROOM BY JAMES TURRELL INSTALLED IN THE 21ST CENTURY MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART IN KANAZAWA (2004)
5. DRAWING OF ARCHITECTURAL FRAGMENT IMPOSING THE VALUE OF AESTHETIC PLEASURE AS INSEPARABLE FROM THE EXPERIENCE OF NATURE
6. THE CONCEPT OF *MARCHÉ* IN THE PROJECT FOR A MUSEUM AT THE CENTRE OF WHICH IS A TEMPLE OF FAME CONTAINING THE STATUES OF GREAT MAN (1785) BY ÉTIENNE-LOUIS BOULLÉE
7. SKETCH OF THE IDEA BEHIND THE MUSEUM OF UNLIMITED GROWTH BY LE CORBUSIER (1939)
8. THE WRAPPED ENFILADE IN THE GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM IN BILBAO BY FRANK O'GEHRY (1997)
9. PANORAMA BUILDING SECTION ACCORDING TO THE LEICESTER SQUARE PANORAMA BY ROBERT BAKER (1793)
10. DECONSTRUCTING THE SPACE EMANATED BY THE LEGER UND TRAGER (1924) EXHIBITION SYSTEM BY FREDERICK KIESLER
11. THE EXPANDED FIELD OF VISION DIAGRAM (1930) BY HERBERT BAYER, REINTERPRETED IN CHARLES AND RAY EAMES' MULTI-SCREEN CONSTRUCTION WITHIN THE IBM PAVILION AT THE NEW YORK WORLD'S FAIR (1965)
12. CEDRIC PRICE'S PROTOTYPE FOR THE STRUCTURAL SYSTEM OF THE FUN PALACE (1961-1964) OR WHAT IS LEFT OF ARCHITECTURE
13. ROTUNDA – THE IDEAL GEOMETRY OF THE SPHERE AND THE RENDERING OF LIGHT EFFECTS
14. THE HOUSE ARCHETYPE LEVITATING IN THE CENTER OF THE GERMAN ARCHITECTURE MUSEUM IN FRANKFURT (1984) BY OSWALD MATHIAS UNGERS
15. THE ENTRANCE TOWER IN THE BONNEFANTEN MUSEUM (1995) IN MAASTRICHT, BY ALDO ROSSI
16. THE "CUBE OF BRICKS" INTERIOR BY RAFAEL MONEO IN HIS EXTENSION OF THE PRADA MUSEUM (2006)



If we take a “little” step back in time on the historical trajectory, we will see that the museum encompassed a variety of ideas, images and institutions (Findlen, 1989) or, as Ernst Wolfgang (1993: 492) would say, museums were “not simply an institutional frame but an encompassing epistemological obsession”. Architecture, the space for practising that encompassing epistemological obsession, was just a single layer, not a dominant one, of that stratified and very dynamic field of ideas, images and institutions occupying the Renaissance individual and collective mind. A variety of architectural fragments from temples, palaces and villas, like “rotunda”, “cabinet/studiolo”, “gallery”, “chateau/grotto”, “passage”, spatially confined the ever-expanding paradigms of spiritual philosophies, study and collecting practices. This modest inventory of existing types and models was later supplemented by an extensive inventory of ancient words signifying various imagined architectural spaces as fractured from some Platonic whole, like the Alexandrian Musaeum – “exedra”, “oecus”, “xyustus”, “peripatoi”, etc.⁹ We can confident-

ly state that architectural fragment, both real and imagined, is inherent to architectural imagination of the museum as a building type.¹⁰ Thus, the fragment can be understood as a kind of zero-point museum, where every experience is still possible, and none of it is institutionalised (dogmatized) yet.

That is why this duality between “the museum as an architectural fragment” and “the museum as an inviolable whole” can be a starting point, a preliminary stage for collecting the sources required for a different approach towards historical referentiality as conceptual interest. Because by analysing and thinking of the museum as a whole, we are naturally recreating the existing formal repertoire of museums, and by analysing and thinking of the museum as scattered fragments, we are thinking of human modalities, historical fragments enabled within the original framework. By analysing and thinking of the museum as a whole, we are partaking in the continuation of all dogmatic positions, even political programmes of existing museums, and by analysing and thinking of the museums’ historical fragments, we are aspir-

ing towards their conceptual thematic and experiential receptiveness through the autonomy of architectural form. By analysing and thinking of the museum as a whole, we are limiting our architectural thought to its institutionalised and institutional history after the 19th century. In contrast, by analysing and thinking of the museum as a fragment, a more extensive alternative history is opened, including various museal spaces for private collections, picture-viewing devices, avant-garde experiments in the field of exhibitions, multimedia, galleries and museums, and other complex conceptual structures that intrinsically underlie the museum architecture.

For example, by thinking of **the museum as a room**, we can think of the spiritual solitude of the *studiolo* or the aesthetics of the incredible juxtapositions of curiosities and wonders in the *wunderkammer*. We can also remember the *Kabinett der Abstrakten* (1928) within the Landesmuseum in Hannover by El Lissitzky, the reconstructed *Mur de l'atelier d'André Breton* (2000) in the Pompidou Centre in Paris, or the room of *Blue Planet Sky* (2004), the open-air sculpture installed by James Turrell in the 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art in Kanazawa. As different as they are, they are all little “boxes” of distinct experiences based upon the formative ideas of “domesticity” and “space specificity”. Domesticity refers to the scale of privacy and the immediacy of the event. The space specificity means that museum space is not conceived as a neutral, timeless space; instead, museum space is treated as an experiential platform for the spectator, and it is through this dynamic interrelation between the spectator and the environment that the meaning is presumably created.

Considering **the museum as an itinerary**, we can think of the mysterious *symbiosis between nature and architecture* and how selected architectural fragments impose the value of aesthetic pleasure as inseparable from the experience of nature. We can think of the *Academy* (387 BC) by Plato and his peripatetic dialogues⁹ among the olive trees.

⁹ See more about the construction of the museum as a new building type based upon the Alexandrian Musaeum in: Lee, 1997.

¹⁰ These fractured fragments began to finally synthesise as early as by 1750s when the Italian Academies started to launch design competition tasks to invent the museum as a new building type, a new whole. This research is aware of the “Monumental Public Edifice for the Exhibition of Busts of Famous Men”, a programme launched in 1758 as part of “Concorso Clementino” of the “Accademia di San Luca” in Rome won by Robert Mylne, and the “Galleria Pubblica” programme launched in 1763 as part of “Concorso of the Accademia di Parma” won by George Dance, Jr. (Kirk, 2005: 69).

¹¹ From the word *peripatetikos* meaning the act of walking.

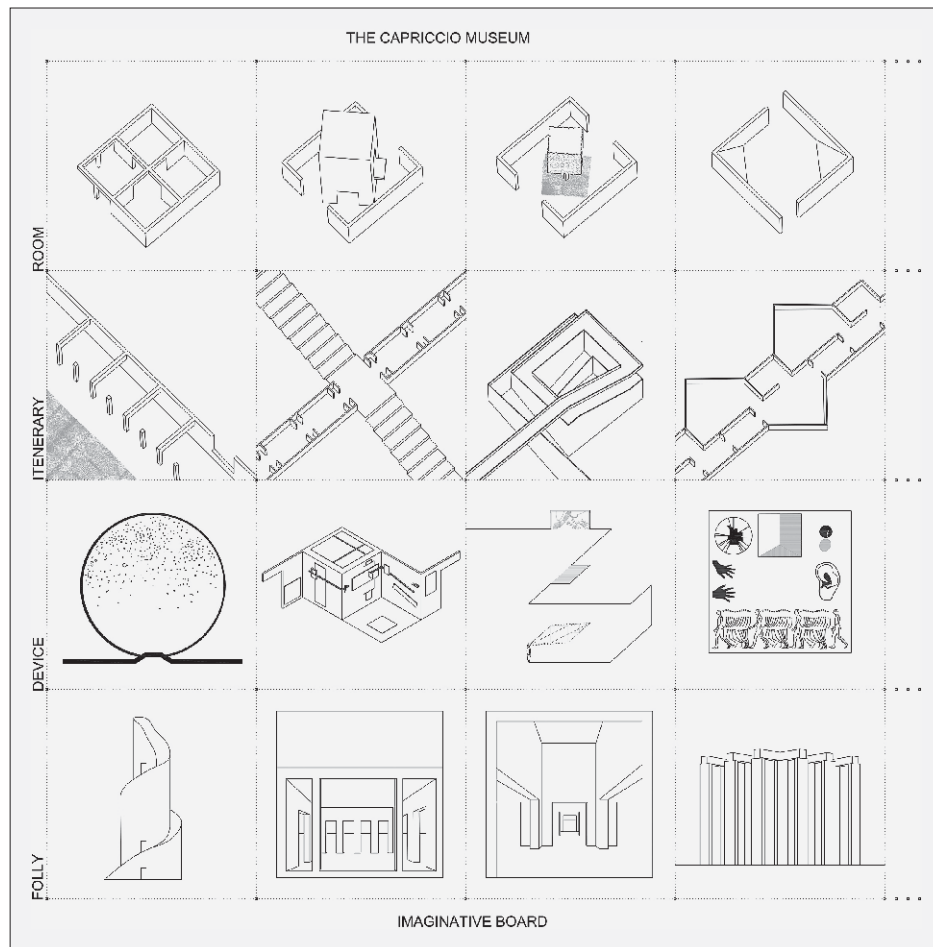


FIG. 8 IMAGINATIVE BOARD – THE CAPRICCIO MUSEUM: EVOLVING IDEAS AND IMAGES FROM THE ALREADY EXISTING TYPOLOGICAL THEMES IN THE HISTORICAL BOARD

We can think of the “Beaux-Arts” broader concept of *marché*, which controls the action of moving and viewing through built form by using the layout’s principal axis and the way it is monumentally realised in the famous *Project for a Museum at the Centre of Which is a Temple of Fame Containing the Statues of Great Man* (1785) by Étienne-Louis Boullée. Moreover, we can think of all the previously mentioned *museums with traditional enfilades* that are synonymous with a *single sequence layout* and exist throughout history, starting from the *Grand Gallery of the Louvre* (1793) in Paris to the inventive *Museum of Unlimited Growth* by Le Corbusier (1939) and the sculptural *Guggenheim museum in Bilbao* by Frank O’Gehry (1997).

As different as they are, they are all linear structures (galleries, courtyards, loggias, pavilions, towers, passages) that support prolonged (across the dimension of time) experiences based upon the formative ideas of “sequencing”, “permeability” and “staging”. Sequence is a method of composition in which elements are juxtaposed in a meaningful series. Permeability refers to the character of the

continuity of the axis, treated as a vector in expanse. Staging means setting conditions across the linear structure, of which the most common are the ceremonial and festive processions¹² of the traditional enfilades. There are, however, various other means to direct the museum itinerary differently, with its beginning, mid- and end points, by the rhythm of events, walking and stopping areas, secondary axis intersections, sudden or gradual transitions between the elements, etc.

By thinking of **the museum as a device**, we are thinking of the imprint of the technological age on our perception, from the invention of the *Panorama* and *Diorama buildings* (18th century) as architectural machines for seeing wondering sensations to all of the interactive spaces and spatial systems the architects and artists invented throughout the 20th century.¹³ Consider, for example, Frederick Kiesler's *Leger und Trager* (1924) exhibition system, the Eames' *architectural multimedia structures* (1950s) or the *high-tech architectural containers* never achieved but ever dreamed of, as Cedric Price's *Fun Palace* (1960s).¹⁴

All of them invite us to see what lies before our eyes, inured by habit, in a new light, to break with visuality as perspective automatism and explore the possibilities of the new multisensory interactive environment. The formative idea of *interactivity* refers to the participative body, when the spectator¹⁵ is respected as an active participant with all of his/her senses and hence becomes the design's key intention, encouraged to build his own relationship with the space of display and the displayed content.

By thinking of **the museum as a folly**, we are thinking about a museum's capacity to house curious architectural objects whose purpose is not clearly determined but are of higher aesthetic and philosophical order. We can recognise the concept of folly, starting with the *temples of the muses* (rotundas), the *grottoes* and the small-scale *chateaus* in the *gardens*. It gradually started to inhabit the interior museum spaces as a "*cube within a cube*" (house within a house) concept. We can illustrate this with the house archetype levitating in the centre of the *German Architecture Museum* in Frankfurt¹⁶ (1984) by Oswald Mathias Ungers as memory inserted into the body of architecture. We further recognise the museum as a folly concept in the *Bonnefanten Museum*¹⁷ (1995) in Maastricht, by Aldo Rossi, in the two "towers" with different characters that mark the beginning and the end of the exhibition.

At last, the multiple spatial ambiances in the "cube of bricks" by Rafael Moneo in his ex-

position of the *Prada Museum* (2006) challenge the perception of whether they are completely imagined or meticulously reconstructed as new, therefore, representing the folly-repertoire of architectural fragments.

The rooms, itineraries, devices and follies are the elements, i.e. the fragments every museum is composed of. Each of them is based upon distinct formative ideas and therefore work as a frame for a unique spatial experience (Figs. 7 and 8). If we explore what those elements are and what spatial experiences accompany them, we can explore an incredible variety of spatial and experiential options of forms and meanings. We can reassemble them in different formations and compile from them the *capriccio museum* as always new.

How can we use this imaginary *capriccio museum* to conceptualise a possible "built-in variety"¹⁸ in museum design, to imagine a contemporary analogue to the neoclassical museum space?

THE ARCHITECTURAL CAPRICCIO AS A METHOD TOWARDS A BUILT-IN-VARIETY MUSEUM TYPE

The museum is first broken down into its historical parts, thematically classified (room, itinerary, device, folly) after rigorous research, but briefly illustrated in this paper (Figs. 7 and 8). Many architectural interpretations of the same fragment are possible, starting with the real and the rational and moving towards the imaginative and fictitious, from the past to the present. In this catalogue of museums' architectural frag-

¹² Think for example of the Vatican Museums and their role in expressing papal triumphalism through the procession held for ordinary people or the wedding procession of Napoleon I and Marie-Louise of Austria taking place in the Grand Gallery of the Louvre.

¹³ Read more about the avant-garde spatial experiments and the reorganisation of the human sensorium in: Batakoja and Serman, 2021.

¹⁴ It is remembered as a project by Cedric Price as the single architect of the team, otherwise composed of the director Joan Littlewood, the structural engineer Frank Newby and the systems consultant Gordon Pask.

¹⁵ Therefore the "viewer" becomes "spectator".

¹⁶ And, in dialectical position, with the glass cube with a tree in the backyard.

¹⁷ Bonnefanten Museum means "Museum of Good Children" and refers to the name of the monastery that housed the museum in the period 1951-1978.

¹⁸ The term "built-in variety" is introduced in the paper by Geraint Franklin dedicated to the architectural practice of David and Mary Medd in the area of primary schools. It refers to the re-thinking of the spatial relationships between pupil groups and learning activities that resulted in many interconnected contrasting spaces. They coined that term to distinguish their kind of flexibility as essentially different from the flexibility of the "open plan" of US origin, where a single neutral, unenclosed space can be infinitely subdivided in order to accommodate multiple classes. This can also be applied in the context of museum space (Franklin, 2012).

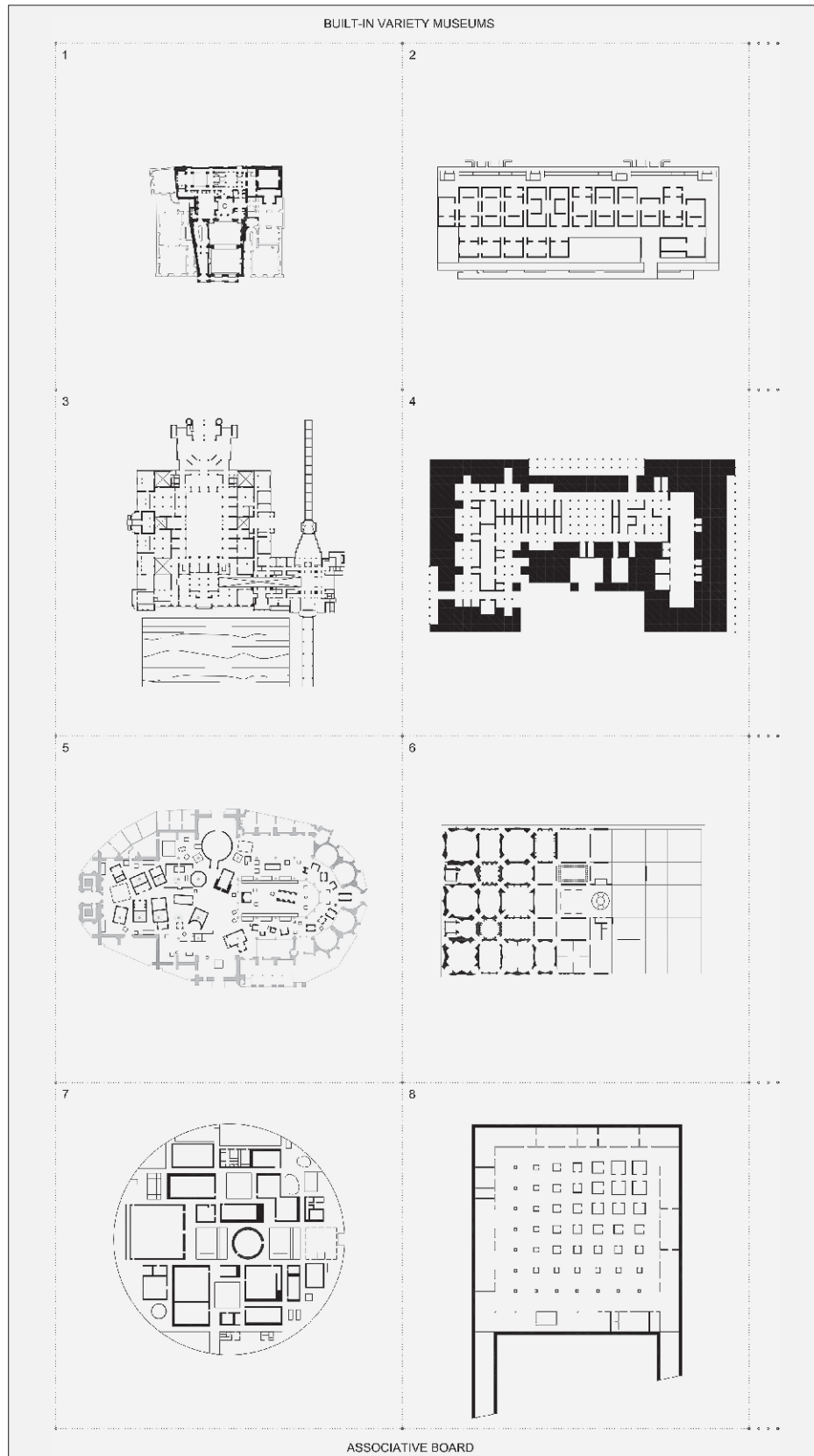


FIG. 9 ASSOCIATIVE BOARD – BUILT-IN VARIETY MUSEUMS: READING THE EXISTING MUSEUMS AND MUSEUM PROJECTS ANEW

- 1 THE HOUSE – MUSEUM (1824) IN LONDON BY JOHN SOAN
- 2 THE FIFTH FLOOR PLAN OF THE POMPIDOU CENTER (1977) IN PARIS BY RICHARD ROGERS, SU ROGERS, RENZO PIANO, ALONG WITH GIANFRANCO FRANCHINI
- 3 GEMEENTEMUSEUM DEN HAAG (1935) BY HENDRIK PETRUS BERLAGE
- 4 TEMPORARY MUSEUM (1981) BY O.M. UNGERS ET AL., ACCORDING TO REAR PUBLICATION IN: KOOLHAAS & OBRIST, 2009
- 5 IMAGO LUXEMBURGI (1990) BY LEON KRIER
- 6 “ART IN CONTEXT: RETHINKING MUSEUM TYPOLOGY” GRADUATION RESEARCH PROJECT BY KATARZYNA NOWAK (OBSCURA) FROM ROTTERDAM ACADEMY OF ARCHITECTURE AND URBAN DESIGN, NETHERLANDS, TUTORED BY LUDO GROOTMAN, WINNER OF ARCHIPRIX 2015 AND AWARDED EUROPEAN ARCHITECTURAL MEDAL FOR THE BEST DIPLOMA PROJECT (EAM BDP) 2015
- 7 THE 21ST CENTURY MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART (2004) IN KANAZAWA BY SANAA
- 8 CONTEMPORARY ART MUSEUM LIMAC (2006) IN LIMA, PERU BY PRODUCTORA

ments, by placing one image next to another, their original meanings combine or transpose, invalidating original metaphors and giving birth to new ones.

The “built-in variety” museum design, as a whole, is about finding a new articulation of space, inclusive of the dissimilar and holding the synchronous co-existence of heterogeneous architectural fragments as its key characteristic (Fig. 9). In order to do that, it experiments with the stratification of grids and figures and their elasticity in order to incorporate or compile many architectural fragments. It tests complex patterns of routing to master over a patchwork of unique spaces that unfold gradually or abruptly one in relation to the other. The resulting dense network of spatial possibilities evacuates the visitor into a multiplicity of intellectual and bodily experiences within a single museum space.

The *capriccio* museum, as a metaphor for the “built-in variety” in museum design, dissolves the museum’s established authority towards a new architectural (and curatorial) variety of options to choose and select from.

CONCLUSIONS

Apart from being a fascinating historical pair, the neoclassical museum space and *capriccio* as its underlying imaginative procedure, impose theoretical and practical challenges for today’s architectural thought.

This paper demonstrates the validity of architectural *capriccio* as a theory of creating a new approach to historical referentiality as a conceptual interest, i.e. to find new ways the history of museums as building type could be used design-wise. It also practices the power of architectural *capriccio* to become an inspiring visual strategy through a graphical method that is tailored to transpose historical knowledge into speculative and design-wise procedure.

Capriccio in the museum context may be a centuries-old idea, but it is once again relevant. With its inclusivity of dissimilar and synchronous co-existence of heterogeneous architectural fragments, the “built-in variety” museum as its contemporary analogue, democratizes the museum experience in the way in which it offers a variety of spatial and experiential options for spectators and curators to choose from. It strengthens the role of architecture in directing the museum experience. It also points towards the (unpleasant) fact that many of the sought-after architectural novelties can be discovered “behind us”.

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MERI BATAKOJA, Ph.D., works as Associate Professor at the Institute for Architectural Design at the Faculty of Architecture, Ss. Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje. Her broad research interest is the field of public space and public buildings, with the focus on interdisciplinary border areas of architectural thought. Personally, she is strongly interested in the phenomenon of museums, modernity and the avant-gardes of the 20th century. She has worked as a researcher on multiple national and international projects. She has published four books as an editor and over twenty articles as an author.

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- FIGS. 2, 4-9 Author's drawings
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