A place between city, park, harbor and sea

The building is envisioned as integral part of the waterfront in which topography, landscape and the city block structure are taken as inspiration.

The museum maintains the city block structure at the north end of the site with a transition to more organic and open spaces to the south.

Siting and massing create future event and gathering spaces. These “public pockets” contain different atmospheres, differing orientation to the sun and to the city and a variety of connections.

The north public space, or Museum Square, is the more active of these spaces with a convergence of tram routes, the majority of pedestrian traffic from the north portion of the harbor and the museum drop off. This space is seen as a gathering space for a wide variety of events — a place for travelers to meet for public movie screenings in summer and light installations in the winter months. Reinforcing the strong connection to the city, the north vertical element participates in a dialogue with other significant cultural buildings in Helsinki as seen from and to the urban fabric.

The Harbor space traverses from edge of water to the walkable roof of the building via a gradual slope to a bridge and pedestrian path connection to the park and cultural institutions to the west. The harbor space maintains a low profile to allow views to and from Töölönlinna and also to create a visual break in the overall building massing as it relates to the city and the harbor.

The South space is more for solitude and a place to relax in the afternoon sun. Conceived as a space to connect to future port developments, it is planted with local vegetation and deciduous trees. This park would provide a wind break as well as shade and also to accommodate the low sun in winter.

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Public Art

The Guggenheim Helsinki is not a closed door, members only institution, or private club itself. It is a space of participation, with the city, with the harbor and the neighborhood, with the art world and with the people. It is a place for art to challenge, not entertain, for art to provoke, for art to require action or submission.

Public place to celebrate Art

Continuing in the exploratory spirit of Nordic Modernism the museum is envisioned as a public place to celebrate art in the north light of Finland.

Volumes of Light

Galleries with specific orientation to the wide variation of northern light throughout the day and throughout the year create more curatorial and collection opportunities. Each of the galleries has public space adjacent to allow expansion of exhibitions and for unique visitor interaction. The entry hall which will be used to present Nordic art and design. The circulation ramp to the north light galleries, following the path of the sun, serves as a dynamic light gallery. With winding exhibitions, light flooding local to regional artists and designers at the heart of the museum, the entry hall itself public display of art with the museum.

“Doubling” of museum for more flexibility as museum and permanent collection grows. By dispersing program over two spaces with different characteristics and differing public circulation paths, the museum increase its curatorial possibilities to grow into its permanent collection while maintaining an emphasis on temporary and traveling exhibitions.

The shaping of the Museum is driven by the dual goal of maximizing and capturing natural light for the space of art while creating a new public place for the city. The building form is a mating of the space for art and the space of public interaction and participation. Once inside the building, one space opens up to and revolves the city – from the performance space beside the harbor to the three-dimensional public observation level at the highest point of the museum.

The Guggenheim Helsinki Design Competition

GH - 835824958
Concept - 2

Program

All program:

- Public Art
- Entry
- Public Elevator to Observation Level
- Lobby / Atrium / Project Space
- Café / Bar / Kitchen
- Café / Bar
- Outdoor Seating
- Gift Shop
- Gift Storage / Office
- Visitor Services
- Exhibition – Nordic Art and Design Gallery
- Ramp
- Maintenance and Operations (M) - Offices
- Security, Supply and Storage
- Lockers
- Staff Lounge (skylit from garden above)
- General Loading Dock
- Art Loading (Secure and climate controlled) / Staff lobby
- Collections
- Classroom / Media Laboratory (Public Accessible)
- Service Corridor
- Mechanical Plant
- Service Yard / Delivery
- Port / Delivery Access
- South Art Garden
- North Light Lower Gallery
- Flexible Performance / Conference Hall
- Mechanical Plenum
- Pedestrian Paths and Bridge to park
- West Light Gallery (lit from high wall windows)
- South Light Lower Gallery
- Open Galleries
- Roof Scape
- North Light Upper Gallery
- South Light Upper Gallery
- Stair to Formal Restaurant
- Formal Restaurant
- Kitchen (after hours elevator access)
- North Art Garden
- Skylight to gallery below
- Observation Level (public access)

Total Exhibition Space 1780

Formal Strategy
Lighting / Daylighting
Walls and floors are neutral plaster and whitewashed wood to focus attention on art and the play of light. The grid shell roof structure and varying apertures bring in a changing light throughout the course of the day and over the seasons.

The open and deep roof structure function in tandem with controlled scrims and obscured glass skylights to create a very even and diffusive lighting condition for galleries. As each gallery roof is oriented to exhibit specific lighting characteristics of Finland’s unique location, the light itself is put upon exhibit.

The variation in opacity between the laminated wood beams creates a dappled patterned light on the interior and a varied roof scape visible from the harbor, but also from key vantage points within the building. This ceiling structure will also house variable color LEDs to modulate light as needed and for night time display.

Structure / Materials
Durable materials such as metal roof panels, sustainably harvested, engineered wood and stone pavings ensure a long life for the museum. The use of wood, a renewable resource, for the grid shell roof structure minimizes the initial embodied energy and places a premium on a product readily available for construction in Finland. The structural system and integral roof form, while iconic, also allow for large open column free spaces and a minimum of load bearing walls or columns.