

CA2M+

Typological Corrections for a Museum

ARCHITECTURE PROJECT FOR CA2M MUSEUM

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A. INTRO: THE MUSEUM AS MEDIUM

A museum does not remain the same as the building that contains it.

CA2M was born out of a particular conception of what a contemporary art museum should be, and of a particular relationship between its spaces, its artworks and its visitors. But cultural institutions, unlike their buildings, are never finished being constructed. Their programmes change, their audiences change, their modes of production change and, with them, so do the conditions that architecture must be able to accommodate.

Since its inception, the CA2M building has been subject to successive operations of adjustment, transformation and appropriation. The intervention developed by the Office for Political Innovation, led by Andrés Jaque, constituted a significant first update of the original project, introducing new relationships between the museum's spaces and contemporary forms of cultural production. Subsequently, practices such as Studio Animal and BURR continued to work on the building from specific positions, expanding its possibilities without the need to replace it.

Years later, CA2M needs to adapt once again. Because a museum is not simply a collection of galleries, circulation spaces, storage areas, offices and public spaces. It is also an organisation, a community of workers, a structure of production, a system of relationships and, above all, a particular way of producing culture. The museum's architecture is the medium through which all of these are materialised. It does not simply accommodate an institutional project: it constructs it.

Updating the museum does not simply mean adding a room, moving a partition or solving a functional deficiency. Against the all-too-common logic of the isolated intervention, the project proposes to work towards defining an "architectural medium" that transcends the merely spatial: to understand the museum as a typological structure capable of being revised in order to make another institution possible.

The project is therefore conceived as a **Typological Correction**.

It does not design a new museum, but asks what an existing museum might become. The building is neither erased nor replaced: it is treated as a cultural, material and spatial mine — ultimately, as the raw material of the project — intervening in the relationships between spaces, programmes, workers, visitors and forms of cultural production.

Architecture ceases to be merely that which organises space and becomes a tool for institutional transformation. A medium for its reinvention.

The project has been developed together with the museum's directors, Tania Pardo and Ana Ballesteros, with the institution's team and staff, incorporating the experience of its users. The Museum ceases to be understood as a finished object and begins to operate as a collective infrastructure, open to negotiation, appropriation and transformation.

The question is no longer how to adapt the museum to an institution that already exists, but how architecture can operate as a tool for constructing the institution the museum wants to become.

CA2M+ does not propose a refurbishment of the museum. It proposes correcting its typology in order to make visible a new form of institution. A typology in constant construction. Its form is not spatial, but institutional.

B. THE INSTITUTION AS ARCHITECTURE

The Museum, as an architectural type, is usually defined through a collection of recognisable spaces: exhibition galleries, storage areas, offices, workshops, classrooms, meeting spaces, lobbies and circulation. A sum of programmes which, organised according to certain functional relationships, produces what we recognise as a museum. A typological relationship between programme and form. The problem appears when the institution no longer behaves exactly as the typology that the architecture had anticipated for it.

CA2M no longer simply needs to define spaces in order to do the same things. It needs its existing spaces not only to accommodate more activities, and to accommodate them differently, but for this new way of operating to allow a new institution to be constructed through its architecture, its exhibitions, its curatorial ambition and its social work.

The project starts from this condition in order to shift the conventional definition of the museum. Rather than understanding the building as a sequence of specialised rooms, it is understood as an **Artefact**: a machine capable of bringing together people, artworks, knowledge, production, rest, conflict, learning and encounter. A machine not because it operates mechanically, but because it produces relationships. In terms close to the assemblages described by Anna Tsing, its operation depends less on the autonomy of each individual component than on the contingent relationships produced between them. The museum thus ceases to be a sum of spaces and programmes and becomes an open system, in which each element can acquire new functions when it comes into contact with others.

This transformation is conceived through three simultaneous corrections: **typological, infrastructural and material**.

— The first is typological, affecting the very organisation of the museum. Spaces cease to be strictly determined by a programme and a form. A gallery does not have to be only an exhibition gallery; a circulation space can become a place of encounter; a workspace can acquire a public dimension. Typology ceases to assign a single function to each space and begins instead to produce a field of possibilities.

— The second is infrastructural. Architecture ceases to be defined exclusively by what it contains and begins to be defined by what it catalyses. The value of a space does not reside only in its square metres, but in the relationships it allows to be activated. The museum's infrastructure is therefore less a physical structure than a structure of relationships.

— The third is material. The project introduces a certain material strangeness: materials and elements are deliberately used outside their habitual associations. What apparently belongs to one category can acquire another function, another scale or even another meaning. Matter ceases to be merely a finish and becomes a possibility. Three corrections to allow the museum to cease being merely a building that contains an institution and become an architecture that produces institution.

C.- TYPOLOGICAL CORRECTIONS

1. Façade and Hall

The Hall is currently one of the museum's spaces with the greatest potential and the least definition. An intermediate space that exists physically but barely exists programmatically: it is used occasionally, it hosts occasional events, but it lacks the infrastructure needed to transform this exceptional condition into an everyday one. Outside, the opaque façade on its left-hand side reinforces this situation. The museum appears here as a closed volume, generating a space facing the street that is concealed, difficult to access and practically invisible to passers-by. Behind this façade lies, consequently, a dead zone: a space without a precise infrastructure and with a deliberately blurred programme.

The correction consists precisely in making this indeterminacy productive. Removing the opaque portion of the façade introduces a new visual and physical relationship with the street. The Hall ceases to be the residual vestibule of the museum and becomes its first public room: a space capable of hosting events, but also capable of having none. A stepped platform extends the interior towards the street, transforming the entrance into a place to sit, meet, work, wait or simply be. Its infrastructural condition, with dedicated electrical connections and lighting, allows the space to accommodate everything from a public presentation to more domestic activities, including everyday work or remote working.

The façade itself, conceived as a habitable thickness, will progressively allow the institution to locate artworks, functions and programmes within it. Finally, the action of "inhabiting the arch" introduces an information element within the very thickness of the entrance: an object occupying a place previously understood merely as a transition and turning it into content.

The operation does not simply add a programme to the Hall. It turns a space of passage into an infrastructure for permanence and, in doing so, shifts the boundary of the museum: the institution begins before you enter. A place halfway between an urban square and an exhibition space, between street and museum hall. With the comfort of a museum but the rawness of urban space: a climatic refuge for neighbours in winter and summer, a place for museum celebrations, for creation and for dispersion.

2. Info Point

The reception is one of the places where the museum encounters its public and, paradoxically, one of those most easily reduced to a purely operational function. The problem is not simply where to place a counter, but how to organise simultaneously the visibility of the visitor, that of the receptionist, technical equipment, storage, cloakroom, information and the CA2M's own publishing activity. An accumulation of functions that is normally resolved through an accumulation of furniture. Here, the proposal does the opposite: it concentrates them in order to produce a single artefact.

The new reception is constructed through two complementary pieces: one of furniture and one of infrastructure. The furniture is an intelligent object, a deliberately compact carved volume which, beneath an aluminium skin, contains functions that would normally appear dispersed. It is counter, security control, information point, small bookshop, visitor-care station and domestic workspace for those who work there. The object does not represent these functions: it contains them. Its form is the result of making them coexist.

The second piece operates at a different scale. A mutation of the hall's wall and ceiling completes its broken geometry and reorganises the space into three areas: zaguán, distributor and café area. In contrast to the opacity of the furniture, this infrastructure adopts a transparent materiality: a metal skeleton clad in a skin of lacquered expanded metal mesh, or *deployé*, incorporating lighting, storage and other systems necessary for everyday operation.

But the piece does not remain static. The functions it contains require its form to change: parts pivot, open and unfold, revealing what would normally remain hidden. A shelving unit can become a door. A niche can become a seat. A table can conceal a cupboard.

The reception thus ceases to be a fixed point of control and becomes a mutable infrastructure for welcome, information, work and care. More than a new image for the hall, the project proposes a new spatial and programmatic identity.

D.- FUTURAS CORRECCIONES TIPOLÓGICAS

3. Cafe Area

The café currently occupies an ambiguous position, halfway between the lobby and the hangar. Its irregular L-shaped plan generates two residual corners and a fragmented distribution, aggravated by the central position of the office and kitchen, which introduces a service element into the visitors' space. The correction consists in shifting the service zone in order to free the space. Kitchen, office, bar and storage are compacted into a single service band along the rear party wall. A continuous block concentrating everything required for operation, with the possibility of introducing natural light through openings along its upper section. Once the centre is freed, the café recovers a more elementary geometry: a rectangular, open, homogeneous and polyvalent space capable of directly engaging with the lobby.

4. The Lobby

The lobby currently conveys an image closer to that of an administrative building than an art centre. The accumulation of elements, finishes and technical solutions produces a heterogeneity that ultimately dominates the space. Particularly significant is the accessible suspended ceiling, an efficient and recognisable device of administrative architecture — closer to a public office or healthcare centre than to a museum — which turns technical infrastructure into the building's involuntary image.

The intervention proposes replacing this heterogeneity with a single material infrastructure. Walls, suspended ceilings and programme-specific elements — information and café — are integrated through a continuous skin of white-lacquered expanded metal mesh, or *deployé*. A material capable of accommodating lighting, installations, storage, shelving, bar and kitchen, transforming what normally appears as an accumulation of independent elements into a single system. The intention is not to decorate the lobby, but to give it a new logic.

5. The Rooftop

The Rooftop is probably CA2M's most singular space: an urban, open and festive place where the institution can programme what would hardly fit inside a gallery. Yet its capacity to produce events is limited by its lack of infrastructure. Events rely on informal furniture, the productive urban garden appears scattered across precarious supports, and the exceptional stepped seating is conditioned by the climate.

The proposal turns this informality into infrastructure. A continuous piece of furniture, materially related to the museum's reception counter, incorporates a DJ booth, speakers, electrical outlets and a cinema screen. The garden is reorganised through mobile modular planters and installations integrated into a common wall. The stepped seating is provided with a temporary canopy of galvanised steel mesh, capable of protecting against the sun and mitigating rain.

while maintaining its openness. Finally, an LED screen facing the city announces what is happening inside: the terrace ceases to be the end of the museum and becomes its urban interface.

6. The Permanent Collection

CA2M possesses an extraordinary archive that, paradoxically, remains invisible to those who visit the museum. The collection operates as a black box: its contents become visible to the public only through occasional exhibitions or an excellent digital catalogue, while physically remaining reserved for museum staff and curators.

The proposal seeks to de-black-box the archive and make the collection part of the museum experience. Not through a simple opening of the storage areas, but through a museographic device capable of making conservation, research and exhibition coexist. The archive ceases to be the hidden infrastructure supporting the museum and becomes one of its contents. The precedent of Depot Boijmans Van Beuningen demonstrates that storage and exhibition, archival practice and curatorship, can occupy the same space. The collection can thus cease to be backstage and become public architecture.

7. The Floor Halls

The neutrality of exhibition galleries is a necessary condition of the museum. The floor halls, however, do not have to share this neutrality. At CA2M, these spaces associated with stairs, lifts and circulation largely reproduce the administrative genericness of the building. Precisely because they are transitional spaces, they can assume the responsibility of constructing an architectural identity that the galleries deliberately suspend.

Museums such as Breuer's Whitney, the Kunsthal Rotterdam, the Munch Museum in Oslo or the New Museum in New York demonstrate that circulation can also be an architectural experience. The proposal extends the lobby's new material identity to the upper floors: a continuous infrastructure of white-lacquered deployé integrating accessible suspended ceilings, lighting, exposed installations, storage and information elements. The hall thus ceases to be a residual space between exhibitions and becomes an active part of the museum's architecture.

8. The Offices

CA2M's offices cannot be understood as conventional administrative offices. An institution dedicated to contemporary art requires workspaces capable of simultaneously supporting exchange, concentration, meetings and production. Yet the current opaque and rigid subdivision, together with the scarcity of openings, produces an excessively compact floor plan, further fragmented by an L-shaped distribution and obsolete partitions.

The proposal replaces opacity with porosity and reversibility. Offices are updated through double-glazed acoustic partitions capable of opening completely and combining with one another, producing anything from small private rooms to an almost continuous open floor. Transparency can also disappear when necessary: a textile curtain between the two layers allows privacy to be graduated without introducing another wall. At the same time, opening towards the courtyard improves natural daylight and reduces dependence on artificial lighting. The office ceases to be a fixed sum of rooms and becomes a variable working infrastructure.

9. The Library

The library is another of CA2M's black boxes. Although accessible to the public, its position and architectural configuration make it difficult both to perceive and to use spontaneously. The proposal opens this box in four directions. Towards the hall, incorporating worktables that allow more casual use; towards the offices, through a precise opening establishing an everyday relationship between research and institutional work; and towards the space below, occupying the double-height volume with an internal terrace of translucent Tramex steel grating, floating above the exhibition space.

The fourth opening directly connects the library to the new Accessible Archive. Two infrastructures previously hidden begin to operate together: library and archive cease to be independent repositories and become a public knowledge system. The library no longer simply contains books: it connects people, documents, research and exhibition.

10. The Viewing Platform

The viewing platform occupies a privileged position and yet remains largely outside the museum's programme. At present, it allows visitors to look down onto the exhibition below, but its function ends with this act of looking. The proposal transforms this passive condition into a position of production.

The viewing platform becomes an architectural capsule capable of closing to accommodate new uses, but also of remaining open and retaining its condition as a balcony over the exhibition. In connection with the adjacent walkway, it can accommodate artist residencies and research programmes linked to the museum's activities. Work no longer takes place entirely behind the museum's doors but appears within the visitor's route. The walkway thus becomes a meeting place between artist and audience: a hybrid space of Work & Exhibition, where producing and showing cease to be separate moments.

Project Title:

Museo CA2M

Subtitle:

CA2M+

Correcciones Tipológicas para un Museo No-Convencional

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Renovación Museo

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Place:

Madrid

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