Concept

The Mountains
The National Museum of Ecuador in Quito is cradled in the Andean mountains, nestled along the Pichincha volcano. Our building design is informed by this magnificent place and the grandeur of this mountain range, close to the sun. The forms of the museum building relate to the mountains of Ecuador, oriented towards the neighboring Parque La Carolina.

The Vessels
The building shapes are also vessels as they contain and protect the museum collection. The vessels organize the galleries and museum program and the spaces made between invite visitors while they make connections to the city.



Inca aryballos



Mayo-Chinchipe culture



Inca aryballo



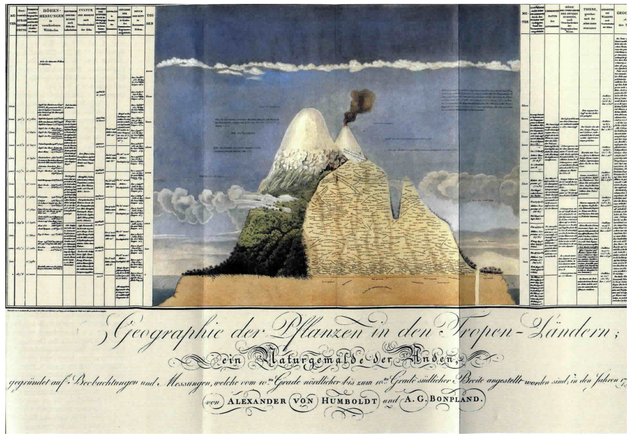
Zoomorphic motif



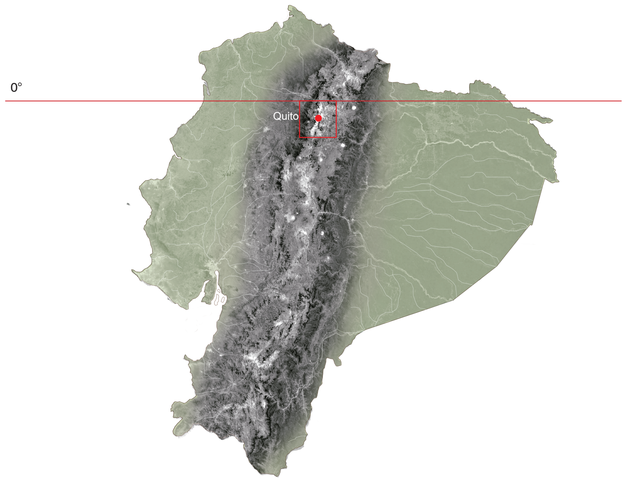
Accessing the aryballos

The Courtyard
These vessels gather together and define a central courtyard, providing constant orientation, a place for community, for light and air, attached to the sky. The museum's courtyard references the courtyards of the historic Quito churches and buildings, as the Quito sun fills the courtyard and its movement is experienced in the courtyard.

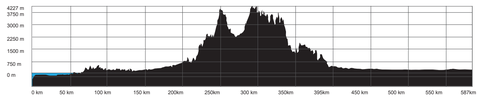
The Band
As the vessels present themselves as distinct elements at the ground floor and from above, a band serves to unify the building as a whole. The band gathers the museum collection, creating spaces inside and outside of each vessel to complete the narrative of the museum. Above, the band is a platform for the rooftop landscape where visitors can engage with the city.



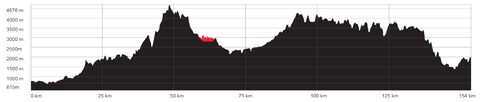
Humboldt´s section of Chimborazo



Quito in the Ecuadorian Andes



Cross section of the Ecuadorian Andes



Cross section of the Valley of Quito

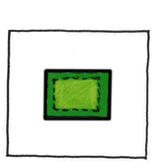


Site aerial looking south-west towards MUNA

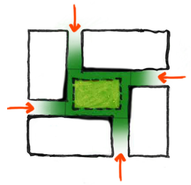


Site aerial looking north-east towards MUNA-Park

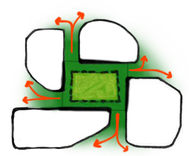
Approach



Courtyard
Heart of the Museum
Public spaces



Invite
Connect to the city
Welcome visitors



Shape the Vessels
Vessels contain the collection
Relate to the mountains



Gather
The band unifies the building
The museum protects the collection



Connect
Connect to the park, the city
Follow the path of the Andes

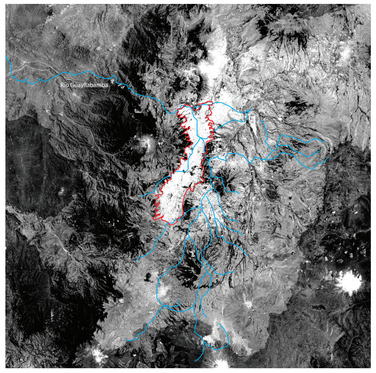
Board	General idea and site layout	Program and functional organization	Main architectural plans	Sections and Facades	Museography and route experience	Sustainability, structural system and project images	Interior and exterior rendering or images	Area schedule
B1	X						X	

Urban Landscape

Civic Topography and Living Territory
The National Museum of Ecuador emerges from the landscape itself, integrating architecture, museography, and public space into a continuous civic geography. Inspired by pre-Hispanic ceremonial symbols embedded throughout plazas, pathways, and public spaces, the project transforms the city into an extension of the museum, where cultural discovery begins before entering the building.

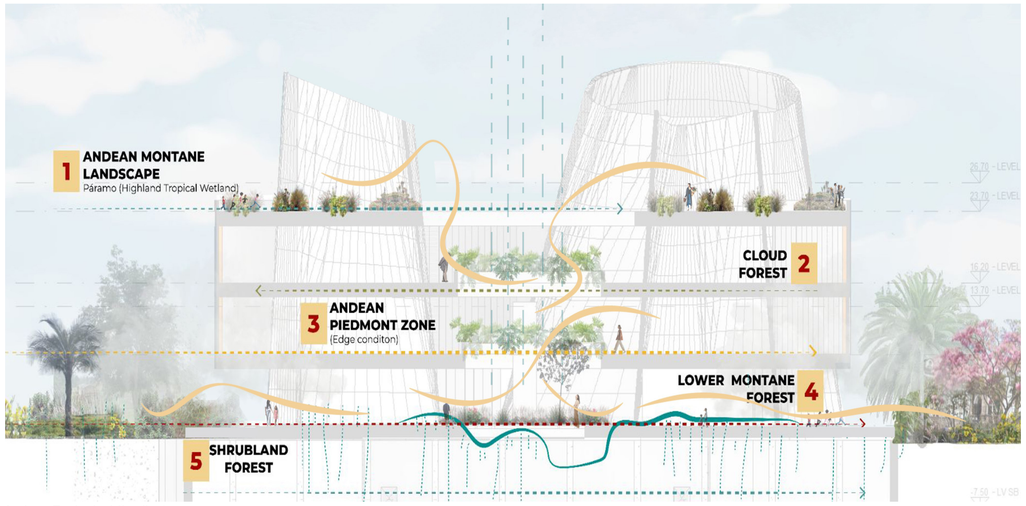
Water as Origin: The Museum's Civic Heart
At the center of the museum, a courtyard inspired by the ripple created by a falling water droplet symbolizes Ecuador's hydrological and cultural origins. Rainwater enters through an opening in the roof, making natural cycles visible and transforming the space into a civic gathering place where memory, nature, and contemporary life converge.

A Double Journey Through Time and Territory
The landscape extends the museum narrative through a sequence of ecosystems representing Quito and the Ecuadorian Andes. Visitors experience a simultaneous journey through history and ecology, moving from water gardens and montane forests to cloudforests, páramo landscapes, and urban ecological corridors, revealing the deep connection between culture and territory.



An Ecological Journey. Quito in it's valley


Paramo Ecosystem

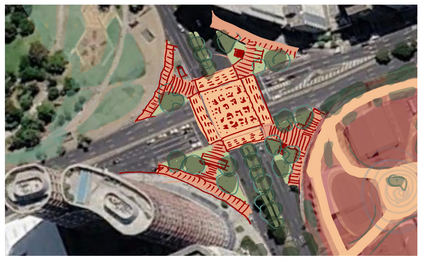


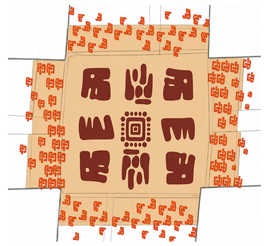
Andean Ecological Gradient


Urban Ecosystem

Landscape as Expanded Museography
Landscape becomes an active museographic medium through atmosphere, ecology, and geography. Mist systems evoke Andean cloud forests, while strategic views toward the city, mountains,and park connect visitors to Ecuador's broader territory. Together, landscape and museography create an immersive experience where nature, memory, and citizenship are inseparable.


Context relations


Andean pre-Hispanic symbols at the República-Eloy Alfaro intersection



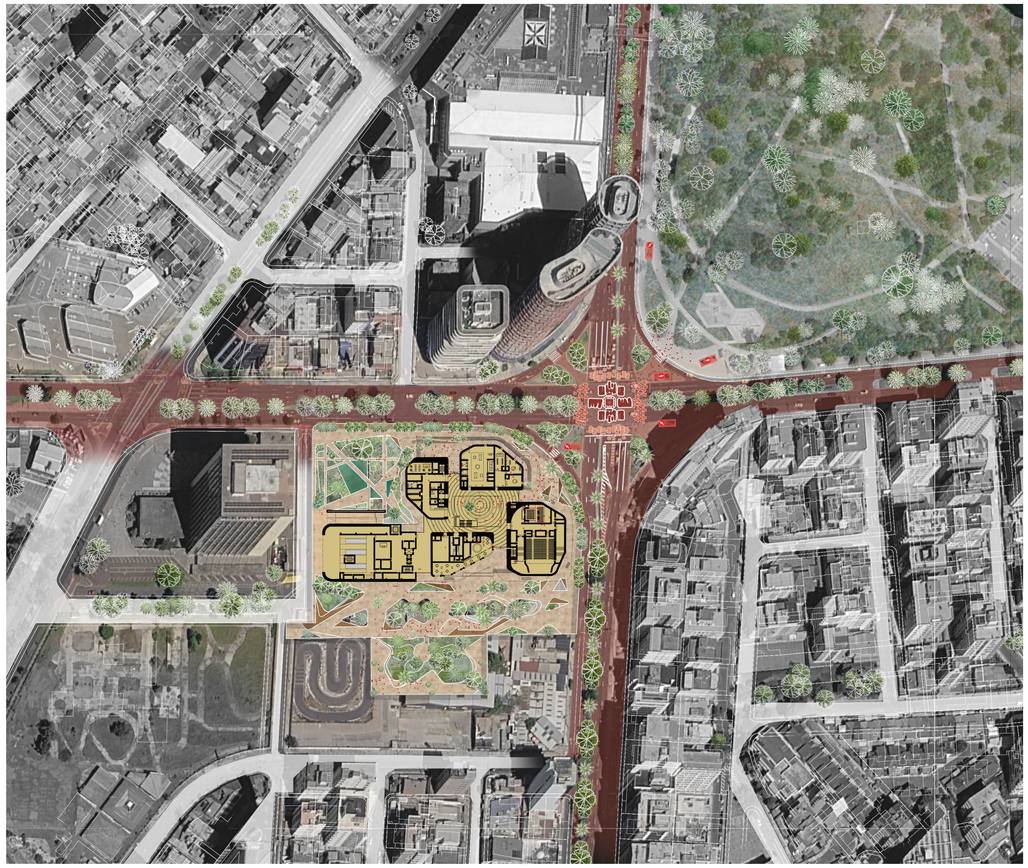
The arrival experience begins before the museum itself. Inspired by Ecuadorian pre-Hispanic iconography, ancestral ceremonial seals are reimagined as a contemporary civic language woven into crossings, plazas, and public spaces. Embedded within the paving, these symbols transform movement into cultural discovery, creating a distinctive identity while serving as wayfinding, public art, and storytelling elements that connect visitors to the territory's living heritage.


Andean pre-Hispanic iconography


Cloud forest as living atmosphere


Foothill Ecosystem


Wetland ecosystem


Site plan
0 20 40 80 M


South-west perspective toward MUNA from the República Avenue and Eloy Alfaro Avenue Intersection

Board	General idea and site layout	Program and functional organization	Main architectural plans	Sections and Facades	Museography and route experience	Sustainability, structural system and project images	Interior and exterior rendering or images	Area schedule
B2	X		X			X	X	

Program Organization

The building is a five story with two basement levels. Parking and Collections reserves are located on the two lower levels.

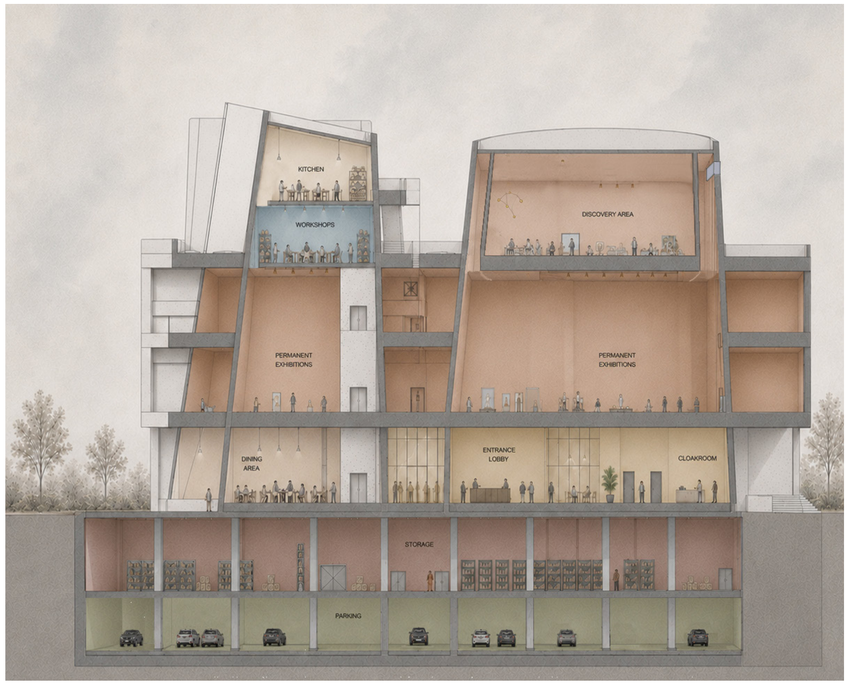
The museum welcomes visitors at the street level with its primary entry along Eloy Alfaro Avenue, in the space between two vessels. Visitor services and related programs are on the ground floor. Amenities such as the cafeteria and auditorium benefit from the connection to the courtyard with a secondary entrance adjacent to the pedestrian boulevard to the southeast.

The vessels arrange themselves around the central courtyard which serves as the organizing space for orienting visitors. The main circulation exists within the courtyard allowing visitors access to all floors with a range of opportunities to enter the galleries and experience the collection. The courtyard balcony leads to the different gallery areas via climate controlled vestibules. These vestibules permit the courtyard to be naturally ventilated while maintaining the appropriate conditions for the collection. A naturally ventilated courtyard takes advantage of the Quito climate and connects the visitor to the outside while benefiting from reduced energy consumption.

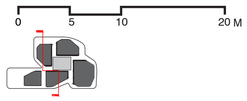
The permanent galleries are located on levels two and three with temporary exhibition spaces and Discovery area on level four. Level four is also home to the museum's planted roofscape, allowing visitors to experience the landscape and views of the city. The museum's restaurant and panoramic restaurant take full advantage of the green roof and many views of the city, including El Panecillo and Pichincha beyond.

The south corner of the building along San Salvador locates many of the building services including loading, racing and parking entry. Above it contains administrative offices, conservation labs, and libraries.

The central mechanical space is located on basement one and is ideally positioned to overlap each vessel to efficiently deliver services to the spaces above.



South–north programmatic section

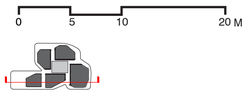


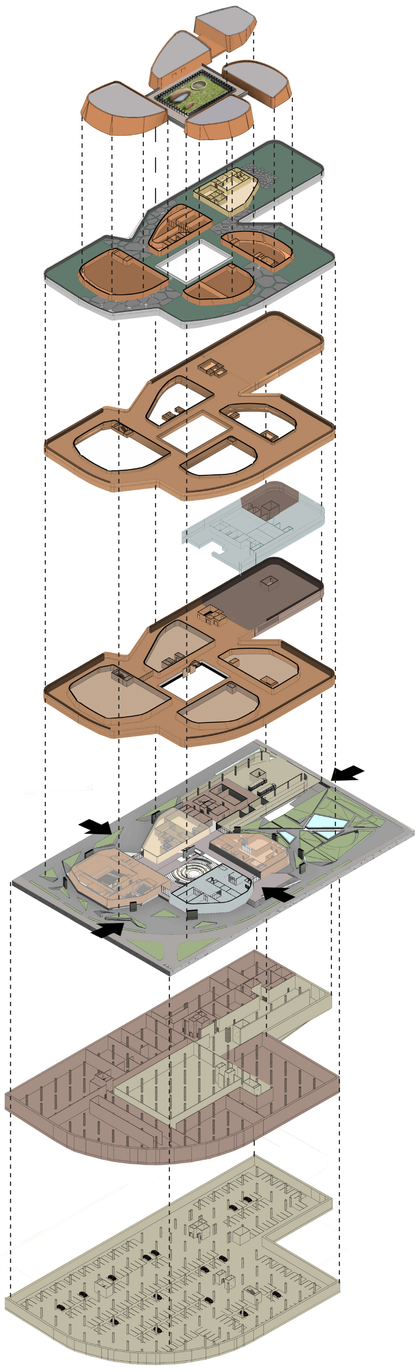
Code	Functional unit	Programmed space	Programmed area (m²)	Proposed area (m²)	Difference (m²)	Variation (%)
A	WELCOME	TOTAL FUNCTIONAL UNIT A	945,00	868,00	-77,00	-8,1%
A1	WELCOME	Reception	625,00	556,12	-68,88	-11,0%
A2	WELCOME	Information / ticket office	60,00	63,93	3,93	6,6%
A3	WELCOME	Group reception	40,00	37,68	-2,32	-5,8%
A4	WELCOME	Cloakroom	60,00	57,34	-2,66	-4,4%
A5	WELCOME	Service room	25,00	23,03	-1,97	-7,9%
A6	WELCOME	Protocol room	40,00	37,49	-2,51	-6,3%
A7	WELCOME	Public restrooms	95,00	92,41	-2,59	-2,7%
B	SERVICES	TOTAL FUNCTIONAL UNIT B	1.720,00	1.872,74	152,74	8,9%
3	SERVICES	Shop	150,00	139,38	-10,62	-7,1%
B2	SERVICES	Cafeteria	175,00	184,62	9,62	5,5%
B3	SERVICES	Restaurant	320,00	353,85	33,85	10,6%
B4	SERVICES	Viewpoint restaurant	420,00	529,11	109,11	26,0%
B5	SERVICES	Retail units	240,00	247,23	7,23	3,0%
B6	SERVICES	Multipurpose room	175,00	166,84	-8,16	-4,7%
B7	SERVICES	Artistic and cultural coworking	240,00	251,71	11,71	4,9%
C	ACTIVITIES	TOTAL FUNCTIONAL UNIT C	8.640,00	9.050,64	410,64	4,8%
C1	ACTIVITIES	Permanent exhibitions	5.200,00	5.558,92	358,92	6,9%
C2	ACTIVITIES	Temporary exhibitions	1.150,00	1.189,70	39,70	3,5%
C3	ACTIVITIES	Explorers room	225,00	235,61	10,61	4,7%
C4	ACTIVITIES	Auditorium	870,00	891,68	21,68	2,5%
C5	ACTIVITIES	Media library	535,00	539,82	4,82	0,9%
C6	ACTIVITIES	Library	390,00	366,73	-23,27	-6,0%
C7	ACTIVITIES	Classrooms	120,00	128,68	8,68	7,2%
C8	ACTIVITIES	Workshops	150,00	139,50	-10,50	-7,0%
D	STORAGE	TOTAL FUNCTIONAL UNIT D	8.310,00	8.452,75	142,75	1,7%
D1	STORAGE	Loading and unloading	200,00	204,54	4,54	2,3%
D2	STORAGE	Cultural property reception	320,00	339,82	19,82	6,2%
D3	STORAGE	Packing storage	50,00	46,32	-3,68	-7,4%
D4	STORAGE	Storage	4.635,00	4.799,16	164,16	3,5%
D5	STORAGE	Documentary storage	1.530,00	1.491,87	-38,13	-2,5%
D6	STORAGE	Audiovisual storage	365,00	357,48	-7,52	-2,1%
D7	STORAGE	Storage warehouse	150,00	141,54	-8,46	-5,6%
D8	STORAGE	Conservation and restoration	840,00	850,49	10,49	1,2%
D10	STORAGE	Conservation and restoration offices	200,00	196,84	-3,16	-1,6%
D11	STORAGE	Restrooms	20,00	24,69	4,69	23,5%
E	COORDINATION	TOTAL FUNCTIONAL UNIT E	759,00	792,91	33,91	4,5%
E1	COORDINATION	Reception and secretariats	40,00	38,67	-1,33	-3,3%
E2	COORDINATION	Executive management	30,00	31,21	1,21	4,0%
E3	COORDINATION	Cinematheque management	20,00	19,90	-0,10	-0,5%
E4	COORDINATION	Museum staff pool	350,00	364,41	14,41	4,1%
E5	COORDINATION	Cinematheque staff	50,00	52,36	2,36	4,7%
E6	COORDINATION	Museum institutional archive	150,00	154,76	4,76	3,2%
E7	COORDINATION	Cinematheque archive	20,00	20,05	0,05	0,3%
E8	COORDINATION	Meeting rooms	59,00	59,83	0,83	1,4%
E9	COORDINATION	Coffee station	20,00	19,09	-0,91	-4,6%
E10	COORDINATION	Restrooms	20,00	32,63	12,63	63,2%
F	LOGISTICS	TOTAL FUNCTIONAL UNIT F	8.715,00	9.438,60	723,60	8,3%
F1	LOGISTICS	Truck maneuvering yard	0,00	345,46	345,46	
F2	LOGISTICS	Logistics loading and unloading	40,00	40,44	0,44	1,1%
F3	LOGISTICS	Logistics reception	40,00	38,88	-1,12	-2,8%
F4	LOGISTICS	Security control room	40,00	39,86	-0,14	-0,4%
F5	LOGISTICS	Maintenance workshop	70,00	70,42	0,42	0,6%
F6	LOGISTICS	Museography workshop	260,00	254,16	-5,84	-2,2%
F7	LOGISTICS	Subcontractor units	130,00	138,87	8,87	6,8%
F8	LOGISTICS	Warehouses	160,00	154,72	-5,28	-3,3%
F9	LOGISTICS	Technical areas	1.280,00	2.099,10	819,10	64,0%
F10	LOGISTICS	Parking	6.695,00	6.602,15	-92,85	-1,4%
		OVERALL USABLE TOTAL	29.089,00	30.475,64	1.386,64	4,8%

Area Schedule



West-east sectional perspective





Fifth Level
- Panoramic Restaurant
- Services

Fourth Level
- Temporary exhibitions
- Services

Third Level
- Collection storage
- Permanent exhibitions

Mezzanine Level
- Collection storage
- Administrative area

Second Level
- Collection storage
- Permanent exhibitions

Entry Level 1
- Logistic area Collection storage
- Entrance lobby area
- Services

Basement Level 1
- Logistic area mechanical
- Collection storage

Basement Level 2
- Logistic area
- Parking

Exploded axonometric

Board	General idea and site layout	Program and functional organization	Main architectural plans	Sections and Facades	Museography and route experience	Sustainability, structural system and project images	Interior and exterior rendering or images	Area schedule
B3		X		X			X	X

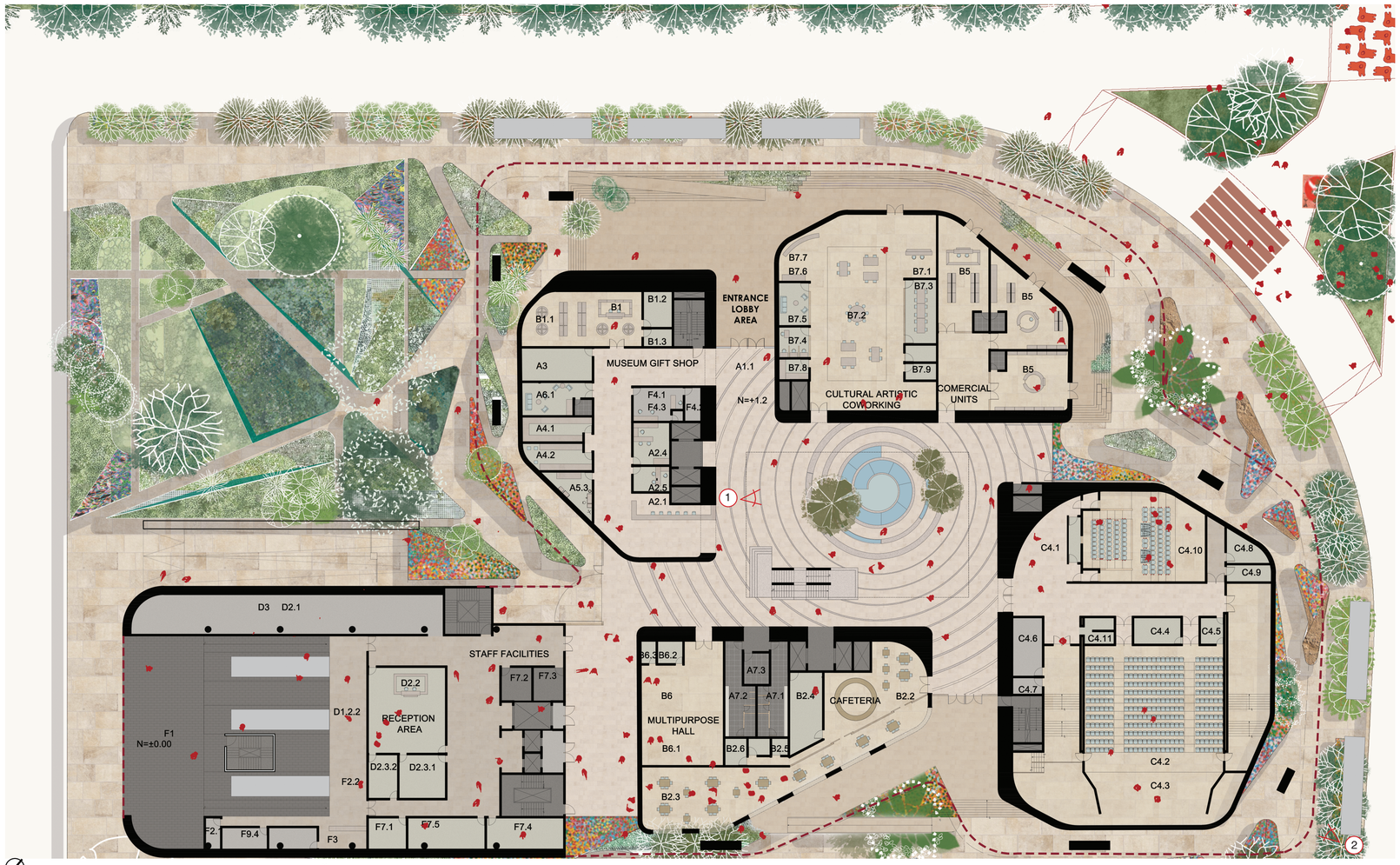
Public Space and First Level

The street life of Quito flows into the central courtyard of the Museum. The public is welcome to enter this space and experience the heart of the museum. As the museum gallery spaces begin at level two above, the ground floor can remain free for public use with the ability to control entry and provide security as needed. Entry to the public level is from Av. Eloy Alfaro or the new pedestrian boulevard. The cafeteria on the ground floor can spill out into the pedestrian boulevard.

The courtyard is alive with light and air, planted with native landscape elements. There is a topography with water that can give visitors a moment to rest or connect with others. Art and artifacts may dot the courtyard as a preview of the exhibits awaiting upstairs. Generous openings in the roof allow for light and air to fill the space but they can be controlled with a retractable roof and the water feature can be made dry. This flexibility will allow the museum to host public events, large gatherings and community activities.



1 Entry level perspective looking south-east towards courtyard in dry season



Entrance level plan

0 5 10 20 M

Key program:
A1.1 - Main Entrance A1.2 – Lobby A2.1 - Information Counter A2.2 - Ticket Counter A2.3 - Security Checkpoint A2.4 - Back Office A2.5 - Guide Office A3 - Group Reception Area A4.1 - Coat Room A4.2 – Lockers A5.1 - Rest Room A5.2 - Nursing Room A5.3 - First Aid Room A6.1 - VIP Lounge A6.2 - Coffee station A6.3 – Restroom A7.1 - Women´s Restroom A7.2 - Men's Restroom A7.3 - Family Restroom
B1.1 - Exhibition and Sales B1.2 - Storage B1.3 - Office B2.1 - Reception / Bar B2.2 - Dining area (70 PAX) B2.3 - Terrace (outdoor) Outdoors B2.4 - Kitchen B2.5 – Office B2.6 - Public restrooms B6.1 - Hall B6.2 - Technical booth B6.3 - Storage room B7.1 - Reception B7.2 - Workspace (25 pax) B7.3 - Meeting rooms (8 and 2 x 4 pax) B7.4 - Individual booths B7.5 - Networking Lounge B7.6 - Coffee Station B7.7 - Print Area B7.8 - Technical / storage B7.9 – Restrooms
C4.1 - Foyer C4.2 - Auditorium (300 pax) C4.3 - Stage and Backstage C4.4 - Technical Booth C4.5 - Translation booth C4.6 -Dressing rooms/ restrooms C4.7 - Guest speaker office C4.8 - Stage Storage C4.9 - Equipment storage C4.10 - Cinema / Cinematheque C4.11 -Public Restrooms
D1.2.1 Trucks Area D1.2.2 Loading dock D2.2 Reception area D2.3.1 Biosafety D2.3.2 Quarantine D3 Packaging Storage
F1 - Truck maneuvering yard F2.1 - Security Gate F2.2 - Loading Dock F3 - Logistics Reception F4.1 - Control Room F4.2 - Racks F4.3 – Restrooms F7.1 - Subcontractors' Offices F7.2 - Cleaning Room F7.3 - Garden Maintenance F7.4 - Staff Dining Area F7.5 - Staff Changing rooms F9.4 - Waste Management Area



South-north sectional perspective

0 5 10 20 M



2 North-west perspective toward MUNA from the intersection of Pedestrian Boulevard and Av. Republica

Board	General idea and site layout	Program and functional organization	Main architectural plans	Sections and Facades	Museography and route experience	Sustainability, structural system and project images	Interior and exterior rendering or images	Area schedule
B4			X	X	X		X	

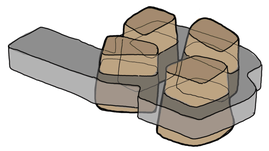
Permanent Exhibition

The Permanent Exhibition is conceived as a journey through interconnected stories, knowledge systems, and cultural memory. Its architectural concept draws inspiration from the Aryballos, an ancient vessel whose form serves as a metaphor for the exhibition buildings: distinct yet unified containers of meaning, experience, and exchange. Within these structures, the Quipu provides the organising principle for the galleries.
Like the knotted cords used to record and connect information across the Inca world, the galleries are linked through thematic threads that guide visitors across time, place, and ideas. Together, the Aryballos and Quipu create a coherent framework for exploration and discovery.

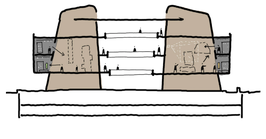


Aryballo,
Inca period
Moment 7

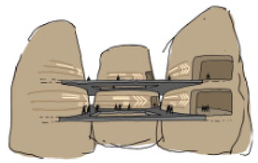
Aryballo
The new National Museum of Ecuador is conceived as a living vessel of memory—a place where the nation's deepest histories, present realities, and future possibilities converge. More than a repository of objects, it is a landscape of encounters: a civic forum, a cultural crossroads, and a bridge between generations.



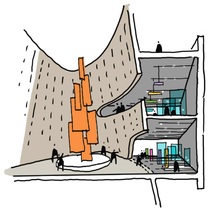
Four Aryballos
At its heart lies a powerful spatial narrative. Four monumental aryballos anchor the museum like guardians of collective memory. Bound together by a continuous stone band, they create a dynamic realm between container and journey, object and story, past and future.



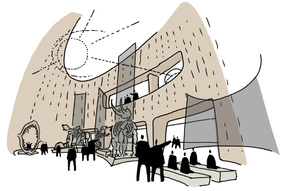
The courtyard and layers of memory
The central courtyard is the museum's beating heart, where visitors connect with Ecuador's story. Surrounding it, the aryballos and their interstitial galleries preserve national memory—its people, landscapes, and transformations. Above, the roof connects to the city and sky, serving as a lookout point and a platform for imagining the future.



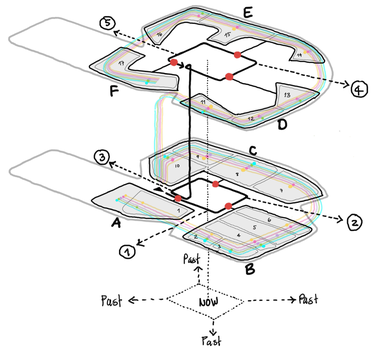
Navigating through the Aryballos
The museum offers a chronological path from deep geological time to contemporary Ecuador, yet it avoids a single prescribed route. Like a network of trails through a diverse landscape, the space invites multiple ways of moving and understanding. Visitors may return to the courtyard's present, ascend toward the future-facing roof, immerse themselves in a single vessel, or focus on specific thematic threads. Every journey remains a personal experience, whether exploratory, contemplative, or specialized.



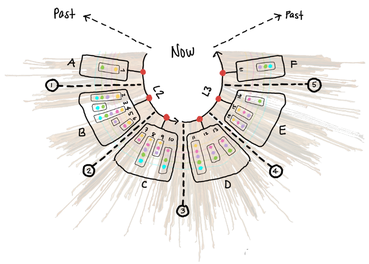
Levels and vertical connections
The exhibition creates a vertical dialogue across time. The second level explores foundational history—territory, society, and nationhood. The level above reveals the modern aftershocks of these forces, including globalization, inequality, and contemporary identity. What begins below as origin reappears above as consequence. The museum becomes a conversation between roots and branches, between inheritance and possibility.



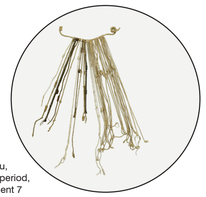
Great chambers of memory
Each aryballo reinforces this reading. Together they function as great chambers of memory, linking ancient formations to contemporary realities. Visitors move not through isolated periods but through echoes across time, discovering how the forces that shaped Ecuador's earliest landscapes continue to resonate in its cities, cultures, economies, and aspirations today.



Quipu axonometric

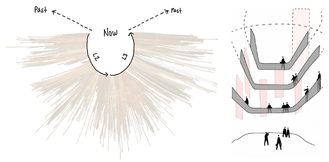


Quipu metaphor between gallery spaces

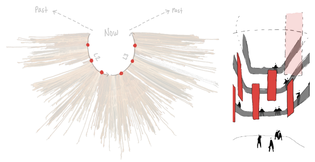


Quipu,
Inca period,
Moment 7

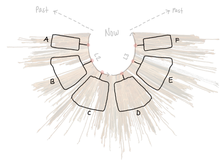
Quipu
In the Permanent Exhibition areas, the quipu provides a linking metaphor between the gallery spaces. It is an ancient recording device consisting of a series of colored, spun threads or cords hanging from a main central string. Knots tied at various heights and intervals were used to store numerical data, census figures, and even narrative information. This is used as a metaphor for arranging the exhibition areas, and as a beautiful wayfinding device.



The central string
Curled around the courtyard, and across Levels 2 and 3, the central string represents the "now". Visitors experience it as they walk around the courtyard.



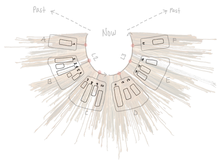
Knots
Tied to the central string, the knots provide contemporary visual 'windows' or banners that announce and draw visitors towards the gallery spaces.



Chronological Themes
Six large epochal periods that express a main theme. They contain the 17 Moments.

Level 2:
A. Origins and the Living Land
B. Worlds of the Ancestors
C. Conquest and Dominions

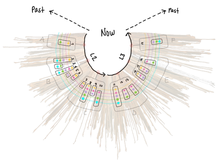
Level 3:
D. Unequal Transformation
E. Globalization
F. Aequator



Moments
17 narrative scenes that condense a given period of time, making it possible to capture processes of change and continuity without becoming bound to a rigid chronology. They offer thematic conversations that can feature contemporary people, objects, or artists, etc. reflecting on the deep and near past.

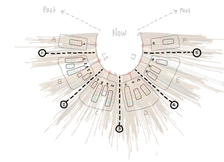
Level 2:
1. Land, Nature and Diversity
2. Hunter-Gatherer Societies
3. From the Age of Horticulture to Agriculture
4. Settlement and Expansion
5. Transforming Matter
6. Contacts, Exchanges and Movement
The End of the Known World? New Dominions, Old Resistances
8. The Age of the Pact and Baroque Culture
9. Dissent and Reordering
10. The Republican Project

Level 3:
11. Modern Times
12. Modern Ecuador? Unequal Modernity
13. Reimagining a World of Our Own
14. Different contexts, Strange New Hairstyles
15. Change of Century, Change of Currency
16. Very Far, Perhaps Very Close: Globalization and Fragmentation
17. Aequator



Transversal Axes
Five thematic currents threaded through this architectural constellation. These themes flow across time and space like rivers crossing a shared landscape, revealing Ecuador not as a sequence of isolated events but as an intricate web of relationships.

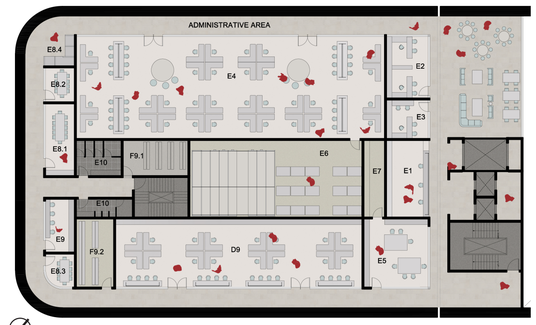
- Migrations, exchanges, and movement
- Power, conflict, and possibility
- Imagination, technology, and creation
- Territory, nature, and diversity
- Beliefs, spiritualities, and sacredness



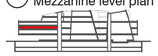
Turning points
5 spaces that signify epochal changes in the story and ask "big questions". These may be through large gesture installations that ask visitors: what effect would this have had?

Level 2:
1. The Arrival of Humans
2. The Incas and the Spanish
3. Independence

Level 3:
4. Modern Challenges
5. Making a Living Equilibrium



Mezzanine level plan

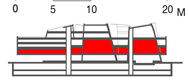


Key program:
D9 - Conservation and Restoration Offices
E1 - Reception/ Secretary's Workspace E2 - Executive Management E3 - Cinematheque Management E4 - National Museum Technical Office
E5 - Cinematheque Staff E6 - National Museum Archive E7 - Cinematheque Archive E8.1 - Meeting Room (12 Pax)
E8.2 - Meeting Room (6pax) E8.4 - Teleconference Booths
E9 - Cafe
E10 - Restrooms
F9.1 - 2 Server Room - Data Processing Center



Second level plan

0 5 10 20 M



Program key:
A7- Public Restrooms
C1 - Permanent Exhibitions C9 - Support space exhibitions
D8.1 - Audiovisual Restoration and Preservation Workshop D8.2 - Digitalization Laboratories D8.3 - Document Digitalization Center D8.4 - Restoration Chemistry Laboratories D8.5 - Chemical Handling Booths D8.6 - Paper Restoration Workshop D8.7 - Conservation and Restoration Workshop D8.8 - Restoration Storage D10 - Restrooms
F9.3 - Mechanical room



Cotopaxi,
Rafael
Troya,
Moment 10



Virgen de
Quito,
S XVII,
Moment 8



Sun Mask,
La Tolita,
Moment 5



Zoomorphic
Globular
Vessel,
Moment 5



Notiomastodon
Platensis,
Moment 1



1 Second level perspective looking towards Moment 1



2 Second level perspective looking towards Moment 5, Sun Mask, La Tolita

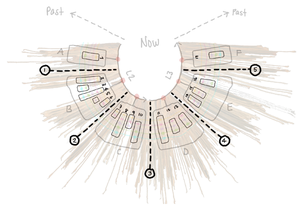
Board	General idea and site layout	Program and functional organization	Main architectural plans	Sections and Facades	Museography and route experience	Sustainability, structural system and project images	Interior and exterior rendering or images	Area schedule
B5		X	X		X		X	

Permanent Exhibition

At key moments along the museum route, the exhibition opens into framed spaces that mark shifts in Ecuador's historical narrative. These moments connect artefacts with views toward gardens, the Andes, and the Pichincha Volcano, allowing geography to become part of the visitor's understanding of history.

Each space gives form to a specific transformation: the arrival of humans, the expansion of the Inca world, the encounter with the Spanish, the struggle for independence, modern challenges, and the search for a living equilibrium with the planet. Objects, terrain, horizon, and memory come together to create moments of orientation within the journey.

Through these framed encounters, the museum experience moves beyond a chronological sequence. History is read through material culture, but also through distance, light, landscape, and the changing relationship between people and territory.



Quipu metaphor and turning points

Level 2:

1. The Arrival of Humans
First turning point being a space of reflection, where artefacts made by hand and footsteps impressed on the floor connect with the view out to a garden that is nature transformed by man.

2. The Incas and the Spanish
The second turning point connects with the view out north, following the direction of the great Andean range, dominated by the Incan empire and then conquered by the Spanish. Aryballos and Quipus are displayed underscoring the arrival of the Incas.

3. Independence
The Pichincha Volcano can be seen dormant through the window at the third turning point. It serves as a metaphor for the violent and explosive period in Ecuadorian history that brought independence.

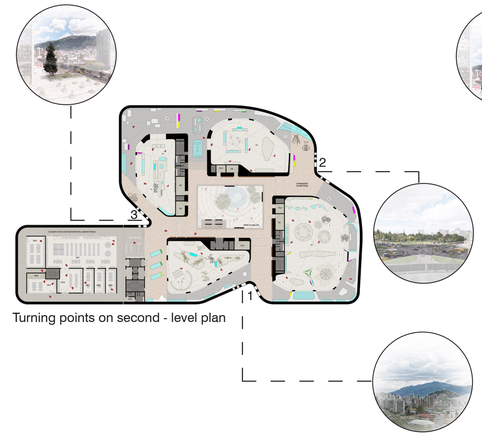
Level 3:

4. Modern Challenges
A view out North again, but from a higher perspective, provides visitors with a chance to reflect on Ecuador's place in the world and the challenges it faces

5. Making a Living Equilibrium
Once again, the volcano appears, reminding visitors of the forces of nature and how our actions have affected the planet. This reminder helps reset the mind before entering the last moment, Aequator.



6 Third level perspective looking towards the courtyard



Turning points on second - level plan

Turning points on third - level plan



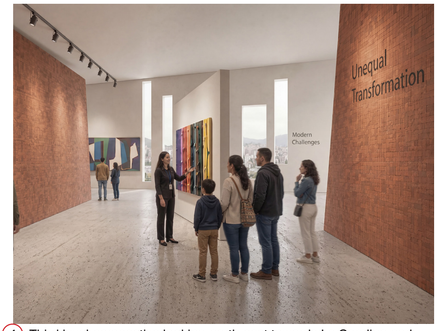
1 Third level perspective looking south towards the boulevard



2 Second level perspective looking north-east towards La Carolina park



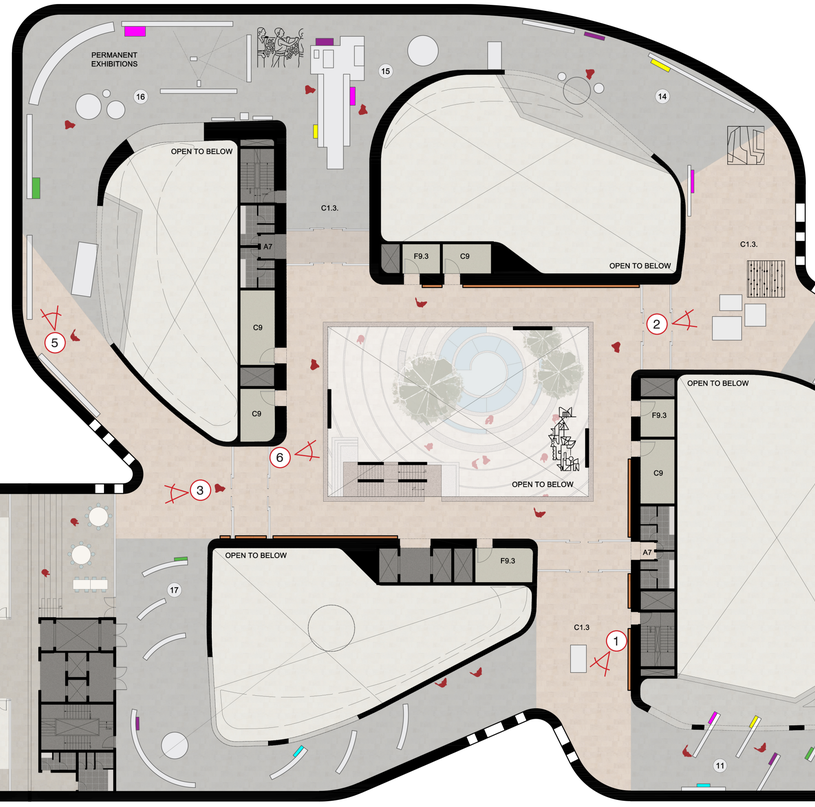
3 Third level perspective looking south-west towards Pichincha



4 Third level perspective looking north-east towards La Carolina park

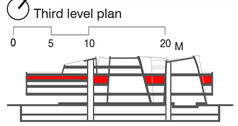


5 Third level perspective looking north-east towards Moment 16



Third level plan

0 5 10 20 M



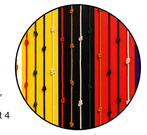
Key program:
A7 Public Restrooms
C1.3 - Permanent Gallery 2 C5.2 - Media Library C5.3 - Music Library C5.4 - Consultation Room C5.5 - Recording Room C5.6 - Restrooms C6.1 - Open Shelving C6.2 - Office Control Room C6.3 - Reading Room (30pax) C6.4 - Study Room (10p) C6.5 - Children's Playroom / Library C6.6 - Restrooms C9 - Support space exhibitions
F9.3 - Mechanical room



Humboldt's passport, Moment 17



Composición, Jaime Andrade Moscoso, Courtyard



Quipus, Luis Molinari, 1978 Turning point 4



Construcción horizontal, Araceli Gilbert, Moment 13



Las Floristas, Camilo Egas, 1917, Moment 11

Board	General idea and site layout	Program and functional organization	Main architectural plans	Sections and Facades	Museography and route experience	Sustainability, structural system and project images	Interior and exterior rendering or images	Area schedule
B6		X	X		X		X	

Roof Garden and Temporary Exhibition

On the fourth level, the museum's chronological ascent reaches the temporary galleries and the green roof, bringing together exhibition, landscape, city, and territory. The permanent galleries on the second and third levels establish a sequence across time: foundations, early societies, conquest, nationhood, modern transformation, migration, globalization, and contemporary identity. The fourth level extends this narrative toward changing cultural conversations, future possibilities, and new forms of participation.

The temporary exhibition spaces are conceived as flexible galleries that can grow alongside visitor expectations, contemporary discourse, art, culture, and practices. Located at the top of the museum, they connect the collections with the wider world through 360-degree views of Quito and the surrounding Andes. This position strengthens the dialogue between permanent and temporary exhibitions, allowing historical collections to enter new relationships with present-day questions, public programs, and international perspectives.

The fourth-floor landscape gives this level a specific ecological and cultural identity. Inspired by Ecuador's high-altitude páramo ecosystems, the green roof recreates an ecological journey through grasses, Polylepis groves, and andean vegetation. These planted areas frame the temporary galleries and connect the exhibition experience with water, territory, nature, and culture, recalling the environmental conditions that have shaped the Ecuadorian Andes for centuries. They also create spaces for visitors to pause, observe, and understand the museum in relation to its geographic setting.

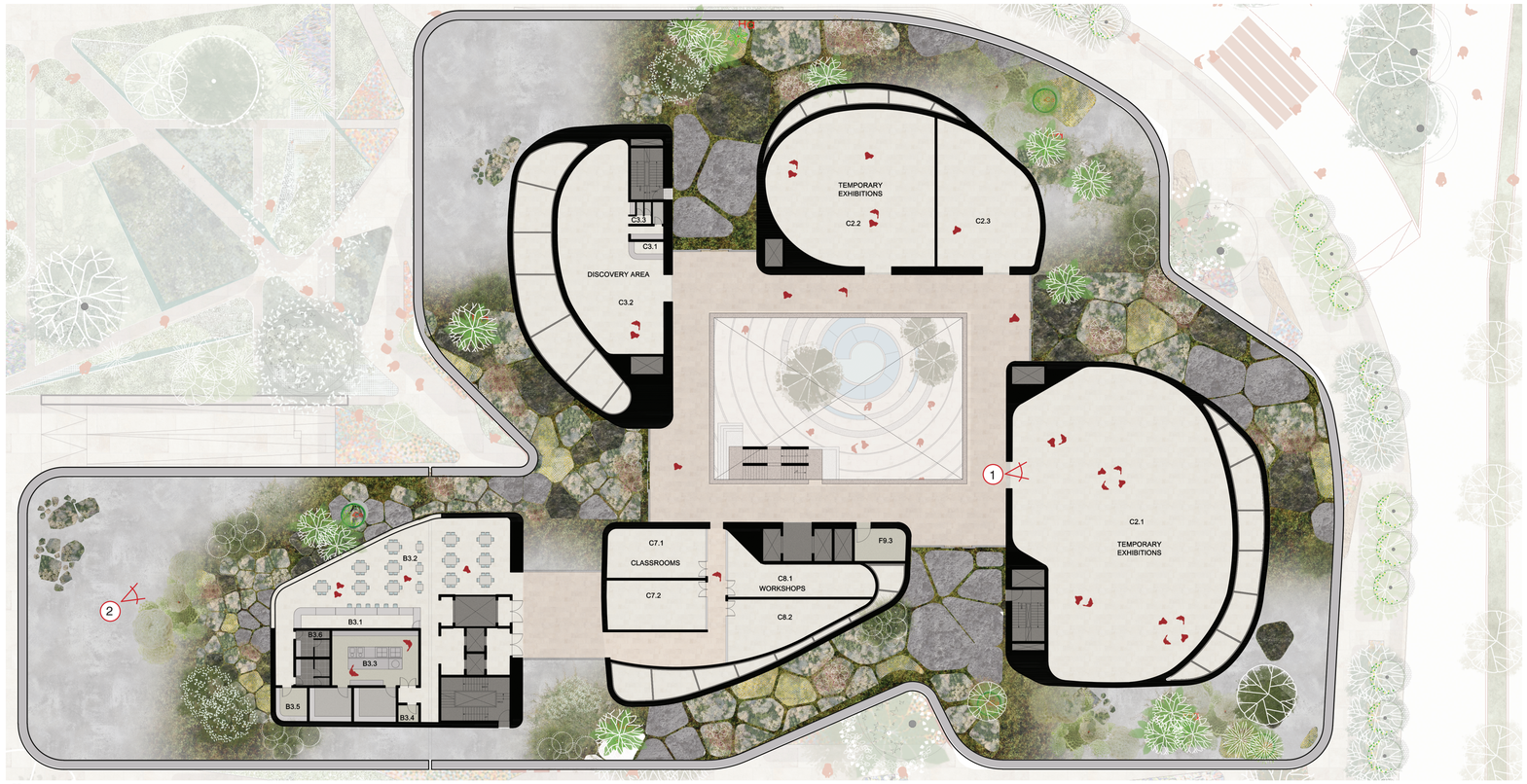
Together, the temporary galleries and the páramo-inspired landscape complete the museum's vertical dialogue across time. The lower levels provide historical depth, while the fourth level opens the institution to renewal, exchange across generations, and contemporary culture. Collections, landscape, public life, shared memory, ecology, and the living presence of the Andean environment are brought into close proximity on this connected platform.



1 Fourth level perspective in temporary exhibition gallery 1



2 Fourth level perspective looking north-east towards La Carolina park



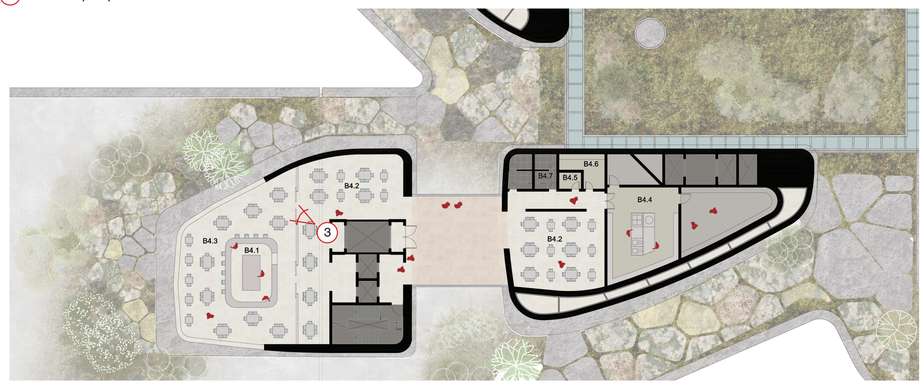
Fourth level plan

0 5 10 20 M

Program key:
B3.1 - Reception Bar B3.2 - Dining Area B3.3 - Kitchen B3.4 - Restaurant Office B3.5 - Staff Changing Rooms B3.6 - Public Restrooms
C2.1 - Temporary Gallery 1 C2.2 - Temporary Gallery 2 C2.3 - Temporary Gallery 3 C3.1 - Reception Area and Lockers C3.2 - Explorer Room C3.3 - Children's Restrooms C7.1 - Classroom 1 C7.2 - Classroom 2 C8.1 - Workshop 1
C8.2 - Workshop 2
F9.3 - Mechanical room



3 Fifth level perspective of restaurant from north-west towards Pichincha



Fifth level plan

0 5 10 20

Program key:
B4.1 - Reception / Bar B4.2 - Dining Area B4.3 - Terrace B4.4 - Kitchen B4.5 - Office B4.6 - Staff Changing B4.7 - Public Restrooms

Board	General idea and site layout	Program and functional organization	Main architectural plans	Sections and Facades	Museography and route experience	Sustainability, structural system and project images	Interior and exterior rendering or images	Area schedule
B7		X	X		X		X	

Support Spaces

Collections Storage program is predominantly located in the Basement level one. It will be designed to meet all the stringent requirements for climate control and protections to messures that the museum's holdings are properly maintained. With the water table starting at -6.5 meters, the collections are suitably located above. The reserves are easily served by the building's freight elevator and a dedicated path is provided to reach all areas. This path encircles the central mechanical room which also serves as a buffer zone to insulate the collection. The mechanical room with the building's primary zoning equipment is centrally located on this level to provide efficient access and distribution to the gallery spaces above. While the storage is organized according to type, opportunities are available to allow supervised visitation of the collection at this level. The Conservation Lab may similarly be visible to the public and will be located at level two, adjacent to the permanent collection, and benefit from controlled natural light. Visitors will be able to selectively witness the painstaking efforts of the museum's conservators and staff.

The building's parking is located on the Basement level two and accessed from the street via San Salvador. The ramp continues past the bicycle parking on Basement one to the main parking level below. With the required two-way drive aisles and parking space dimensions, an 8.8 meter structural grid was developed to provide an efficient layout. Pedestrian paths are located in between facing parking spaces to allow for safe passage to stairs and elevators up to the museum street level. Based on this layout, parking space count is limited to 308 and an additional half-level of parking may be considered, rather than a full additional level. It is understood that an excess of bicycle parking at Basement one (currently 70 spaces), together with the museum's location in one of the best-served areas of the city for public transportation, may offer an appropriate offset of vehicular parking spaces. This should be evaluated in more detail.

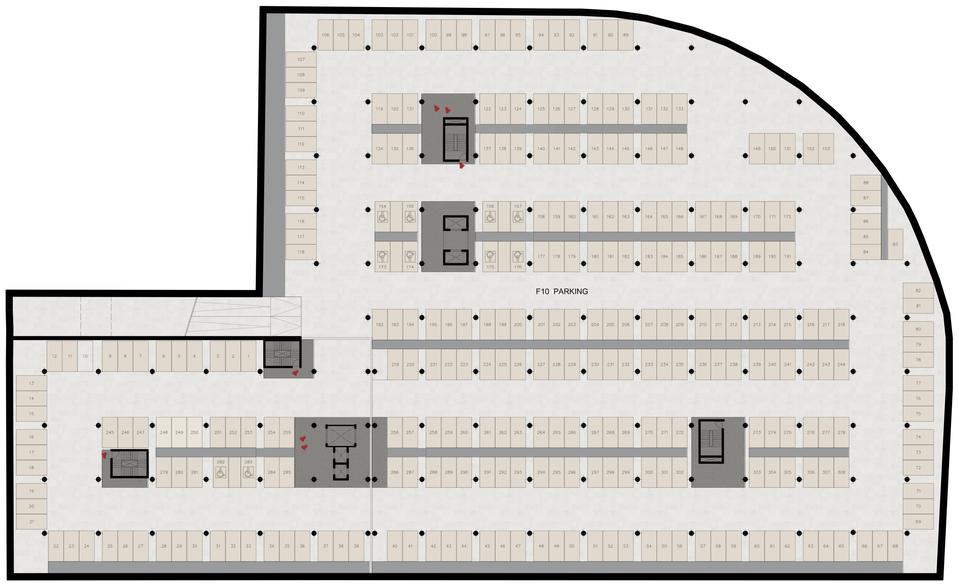
The main 300 seat auditorium supports the functioning of the museum and will be a flexible space for music, presentations and events. The room is wrapped in acoustically treated panels to reflect textures and fabrics of Ecuador traditional weaving. It is located on the ground floor and is part of the active public space next to the courtyard.



Basement level one plan

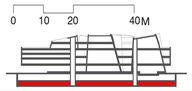
0 10 20 40M

Program key:
D2.4 - Inventory Room D2.5 - Photographic and digital registration area - D4.1 Inorganic archaeology and paleontology D4.2 - Organic material storage D4.3 - Archaeology, and history's Metals storage D4.4 - Colonial / Republican collection storage D4.5 - Modern / Contemporary collection storage D4.6 - Consultation rooms D5- Documentary Collection Storage D6 - Audiovisual Collection Storage D6.8 - Consultation area
F5.1 - Maintenance Workshop F5.2 - Office / BMS control F5.3 - Spare parts storage F6.1 - Museography Workshop F6.2 - Office F6.3 - Museography Storage F8.1 - Furniture Storage F8.2 - Equipment Storage F8.3 - Consumables Storage F9 - Technical Areas



Basement level two plan

0 10 20 40M



Program key:
F10 - Parking Area
F9 - Technical Area



1 Basement level 1 perspective of Visible Storage



Second level perspective of the Conservation Lab



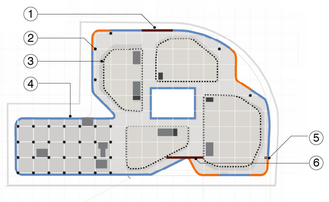
Entrance level perspective on Auditorium

Board	General idea and site layout	Program and functional organization	Main architectural plans	Sections and Facades	Museography and route experience	Sustainability, structural system and project images	Interior and exterior rendering or images	Area schedule
B8		X	X				X	

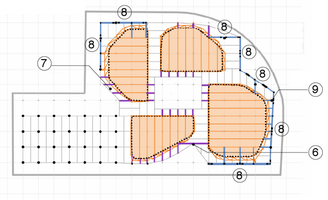
Engineering and Sustainability

Structure

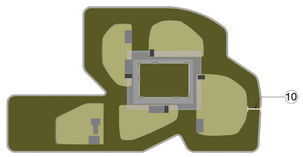
- Hybrid structure of reinforced concrete and steel construction is based on architectural clarity and efficiency.
- Concrete structure at grade and spaces below including columns, slabs, and retaining walls at the property line.
- Steel superstructure above grade facilitates accelerated construction.
- Structural grid at 8.8 meters works with parking layout and provides efficient organization for the structure framework of the vessels.
- Steel columns are embedded within the concrete columns as needed to support the vessels, which are in turn continuously braced around their perimeters.
- Cantilevers and spans are used for column-free ground floor and gallery level spaces



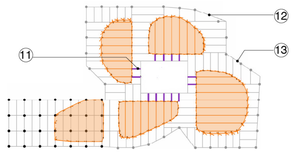
Architecture, constraints and edge conditions entrance level



Structural response entrance level
This is the level where the cantilevers are the shortest. At the upper levels, as the vessels taper in, the cantilevers increase therefore it is proposed to transfer the upper levels on the cantilevers at level two. This allows for the upper level framing to be typical.



Architecture roof level



Structural response roof level
This is the level where the cantilevers are the longest. Typical framing proposed at level three and roof that land on the cantilevers and transfers at level two.

Key notes:
1 – Long Span
2 – Columns outside of Vessel Structure
3 – Vessel Perimeter at L2
4 – Edge Condition typically achieved with Cantilever framing from the Vessels
5 – Corner Condition could be achieved with Story Height Trusses supported from Columns and Cantilevers from the Vessels
6 – Transfer Beam
7 – Backspan Cantilevers
8 – Story Height Truss
9 – Back span Cantilevers that support the Perimeter truss
10 – Large Cantilever
11 – Backspan Cantilevers flat Vessel Faces help support the Inner Void
12 – Columns that Conclude at transfer Framing below
13 – Typical Steel Framing all around Supported on the Framing below

HVAC

Art Approach

Sustainable museum design must directly address the primary drivers of energy use: stringent environmental control, operational resilience, and life-cycle cost. High-performance enclosure strategies—airtightness, vapor control, insulation, and solar mitigation—are foundational prerequisites that reduce system demand before mechanical solutions are applied.
- Right-sized environmental criteria — Define conditions zone-by-zone
- Buffered transitions — Introduce environmental “buffer zones” between art and non-art spaces
- System zoning by function — Group spaces with similar environmental requirements
- Strategic equipment consolidation — Centralize maintenance-intensive and high-cost components
- Stepwise conditioning — Utilize a layered approach in which efficient, lower-precision systems address bulk loads, while high-precision equipment provides final control
- Load-based conditioning delivery — Apply heating and cooling at the source of gain or loss to improve environmental uniformity and reduce reliance on high air-change rates.

Art Spaces

Exhibition galleries, collections storage, and conservation/work spaces are designed for precision climate control tailored to collection-specific requirements. These areas are served by all-air VAV systems with a high degree of zoning and redundancy to ensure operational resilience.
Airside distribution is centralized, with VAV terminal units and reheat coils located within mechanical rooms to keep maintenance activities and hydronic systems outside of sensitive spaces.

Services and Administration

Non-art spaces use DOAS-based systems with supplemental, room-based cooling as required.

Auditorium

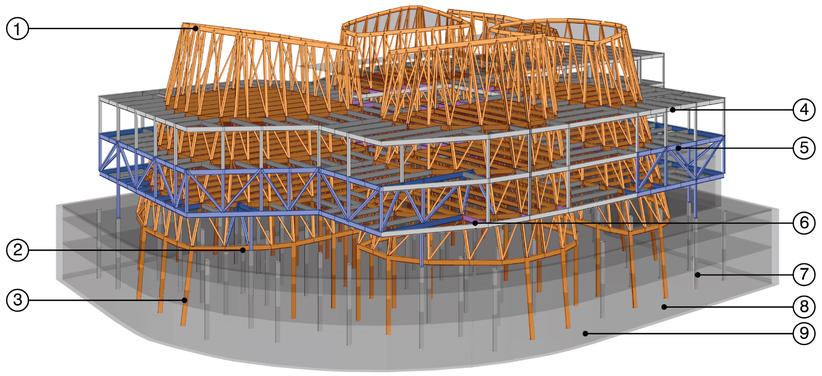
The auditorium is a high-occupancy space with significant ventilation demand and is served by a dedicated VAV air-handling system. The design will consider high-level supply and displacement ventilation options.

Courtyard

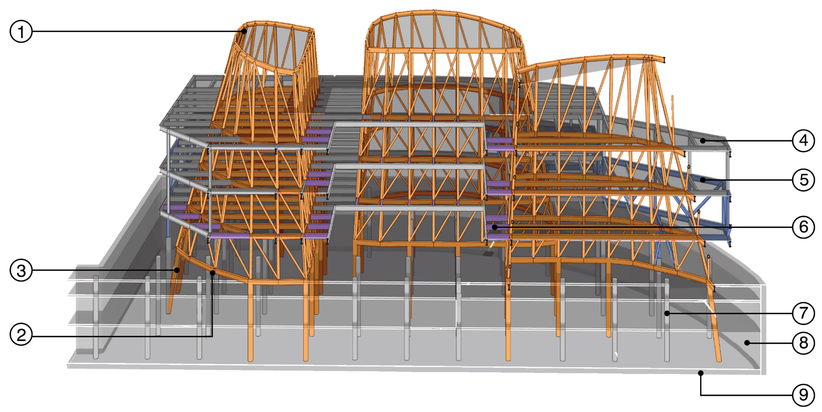
The central courtyard is conceived as a mixed-mode environmental space that leverages Quito’s temperate, high-altitude climate to prioritize natural ventilation while accommodating flexible use.

Passive mode: outdoor air is introduced at ground level through large operable openings and exhausted via controllable roof openings.

Mechanical assisted mode for programmed events: the building’s DOAS system serving non-art spaces introduces tempered, dehumidified air to occupiable zones, creating a transitional microclimate.



Structural axonometric



Structural sectional perspective

Key notes:
1 - Steel vessel structures providing stability and primary vertical support
2 - Vessel structures span as deep trusses between car park grid columns
3 - Steel encased in concrete supporting the vessel structures
4 - Typical steel framing at levels three and four.
5 - Story height perimeter truss to create column free ground plane and corner cantilevers
6 - Cantilevers to support edge
7 - Typical concrete columns
8 - Concrete retaining wall
9 - Raft foundation

Electrical

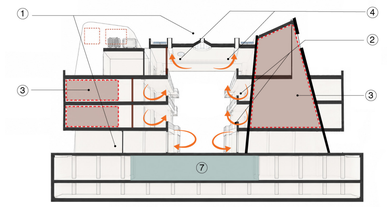
All-electric strategy aligns with national energy policy and leverages Ecuador’s low-carbon, hydropower-dominant grid to reduce operational emissions while meeting Ecuadorian standards and Quito municipal codes.
Service will be a medium-voltage utility connection (anticipated at 6.3 kV or 13.8 kV), with step-down transformation to a 380/220 V low-voltage distribution system. Vertical distribution will be provided via bus duct risers integrated within stacked electrical rooms to optimize space efficiency and maintainability.

Plumbing

Dual water distribution networks will be provided for potable and non-potable uses. A rainwater harvesting system will collect runoff from roof surfaces and combine it with HVAC condensate to supply a non-potable water system serving toilet flushing, irrigation, and designated wash-down applications.

Fire Safety

The building will be fully protected by an automatic wet-pipe sprinkler system designed to meet applicable fire codes and occupancy requirements. A dedicated electric fire pump with automatic transfer capability ensures system performance under all conditions.
The fire alarm and detection system will be fully addressable, incorporating emergency voice and alarm communication to support both general and selective notification strategies. Integrated speakers and visual signaling devices provide clear occupant direction, while the Fire Command Center enables centralized monitoring, control, and live voice communication during emergency events.

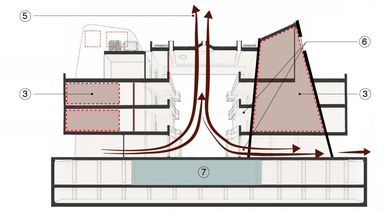


Assisted mode

Sustainability

Energy and Carbon strategy thesis: Ultra low energy museum that is net zero ready through optimization of: passive design such as thermal mass, high performance HVAC and façade systems, utilization of beneficial natural ventilation and a fully electrified building.

-Target EUI: 80-100 kBtu/sf/yr. Estimated 50% reduction compared with “typical” museum.
- PV to produce on-site energy. Potential locations: On the roof of the band that connects the vessels.
- All electric design to be Net Zero Ready
- Thermal mass in office areas and non-gallery/art storage spaces
- Collection and reuse of rainwater and condensate recovery for: irrigation, toilet/urinal flushing, outdoor cleaning functions (e.g. sidewalks, parking).
Materials and Waste strategy thesis: Design to optimize material use and ensure highest and best use of materials
- Material reduction and optimization to minimize impact of extraction and lower the carbon footprint of materials
- Low carbon materials selection – recycled content, locally sourced, natural and regenerative materials
- In particular recycled content for metals, concrete, insulation and gyp board (less of a carbon impact, but generally available)
- Locally sourced materials support proximal communities and reduces carbon emissions associated with transportation.
- Design to support the goal of low/zero waste (infrastructure for separation of metals, organics, paper and other waste) Recycling of plastics and glass does not appear to be robust. Local team to advise.
Occupant comfort/indoor environment strategy thesis:
- Beneficial solar gain – use of shading, including trees, to diffuse summer heat gain.



Passive mode

- Visual comfort minimizing glare and light infiltration near the collection.
- Consider courtyard materials selection (e.g. stone or similar) to assist with comfortable natural ventilation and reduce energy associated with pre-treating outdoor air. With this strategy we would have to use a mixture of natural ventilation modes and mechanical ventilation to keep the temperature and humidity within ‘transitional’ comfort conditions – say 60 F to 78F and no more than 65% RH.
- Intentional outdoor lighting design, including downlighting to minimize light pollution

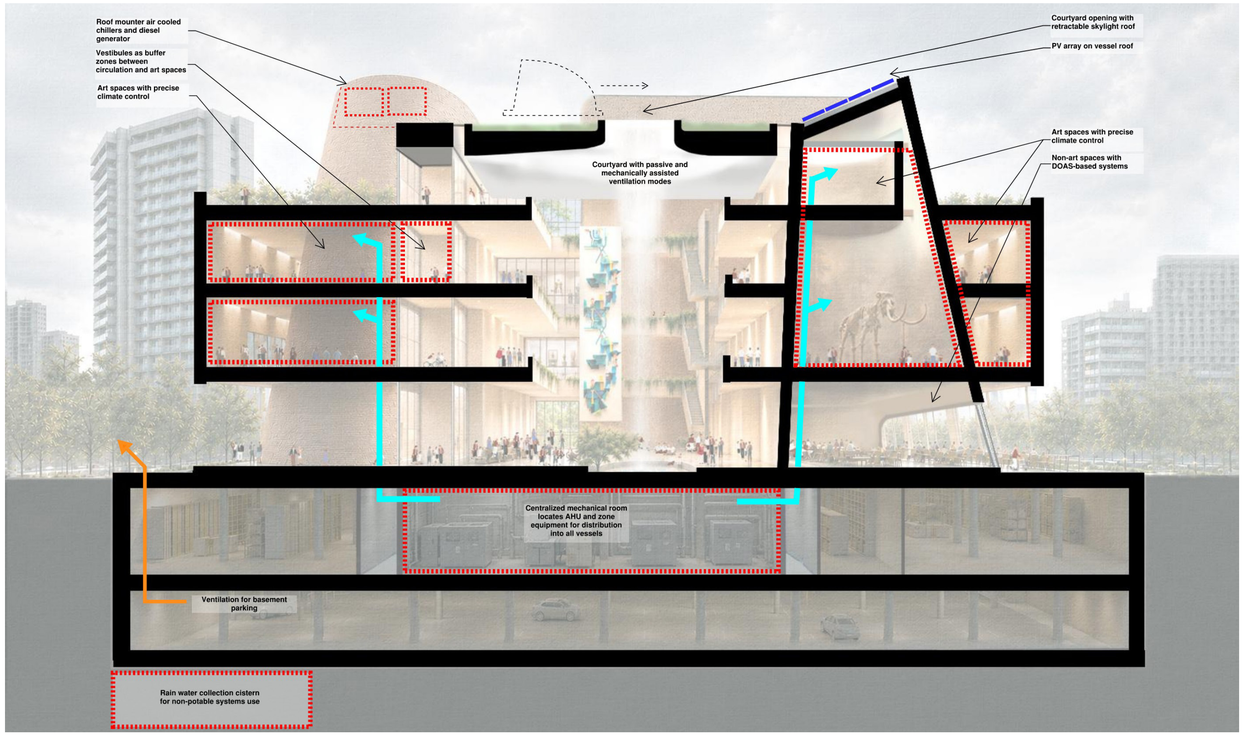
Energy and Climate Resilience strategy thesis: A low energy building that is seismically sound and designed to withstand current and future weather events, including increased precipitation.
- Natural ventilation
- Thermal mass.
- Seismic design
- Use of public/non collection area of the museum to be used for a resilience hub or place of shelter in an emergency.

Typical resilience hub characteristics: well insulated, thermally broken envelopes to maintain temperatures in loss of power situation, additional redundancy for power (e.g. for phone charging), which could be tied to PV, back up of key equipment such as refrigerators for food and medicine. Would be good to get local consultant input on any potential non-profit partners that provide emergency services that might be interested in this type of collaboration. Sharing of auditorium, cafeteria, multi-purpose hall spaces could be a great opportunity for community building as well as safe harbor in a climate or other emergency event.

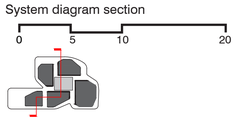


Key notes:

1 - Low and High-Level Openings in Closed Position
2 – Tempered Environment for Improved Comfort during Programmed Events
3 - Art Spaces with Precise Climate Control
4 – Return Air for Energy Recovery
5 – Controllable High-level Openings for Natural Ventilation Exhaust Air
6 - Stable Environment Tracking Outdoor Conditions with improved Confort from Shading and Thermal Mass
7 - Centralized Mechanical Room locates AHU and Zone Equipment for Distribution into all Vessels



System diagram section



Board	General idea and site layout	Program and functional organization	Main architectural plans	Sections and Facades	Museography and route experience	Sustainability, structural system and project images	Interior and exterior rendering or images	Area schedule
B9		X		X		X		

Materiality and Facade Concept

The vessels are clad in a geometric tile that relates to the history of Quito and its many tiled domed churches. The tile wraps the softened outer surfaces of the vessels and dissolves to create openings for light. Use of the traditional tiles also serves to maintain the tradition of craftsmanship, now used only for the repair and replacement of missing tiles on the domes of the churches of the Historic Center.

The band is made of local volcanic stone fragments embedded in panels that display the colors of Quito. These stones range from gray to orange as a parallel to the colors of the Ecuadorian geology. Bronze panels connect with windows to create a system of window panels, accented with bronze “brows,” projections that articulate the façade.

The ground and courtyard surface are stone that draws the street level into the courtyard.

Interior galleries are primarily plastered surfaces with hints of the tile wrapping the vessels. Exhibitions are well-lit spaces with flexible, functional ceiling design and floors are a warm terrazzo that relates to the materials of the band façade.



Diagram 2 Materiality and Facade Concept



Tejuelo domes of the Church of La Compañía de Jesús in Quito



Matte vitrified terracotta-ochre ceramic tile on vessels from Pujilí



Detail Elevation



Eloy Alfaro Avenue Elevation



Sectional Perspective

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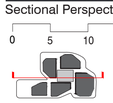

Board	General idea and site layout	Program and functional organization	Main architectural plans	Sections and Facades	Museography and route experience	Sustainability, structural system and project images	Interior and exterior rendering or images	Area schedule
B10				X		X	X	