Art Gallery

Thesis 2015

Dissertation Report

Mashal Zaheer

119110
B-Arch 2010

Acknowledgments

Art Gallery is not an individual work. There are many people whose constant support has helped me achieve this project. I am greatly indebted to my parents, my friends and most of all, my mentor, advisor and an inspiration, Ar. Juliane Eick Aziz; without whose support I would not have found my way back into architectural design and discourse. I am obliged to all the artists who have contributed their time and ideas for the project. And last of all I am very grateful to my school for its contribution through a great many critics and research resources for the project.

Abstract

Keywords: Space; Container; Art; Artists; Form; Space

> *Since the beginning of times, human beings have been evolving new and better ways of communicating and expressing themselves. For this, space has always played an important role not only in terms of a room or a container, but also in terms of volume and matter. Artists are considered to be the voice and soul of a society's ideals, whims, dreams and aspirations. So in this sense, art is a mode of communication through which they express themselves and their societies. An architect is the articulator of space. So here the role of an architect would be to establish an effective medium of expression for the artists. The thesis project is not only an exploration of spatial quality required by an artist to effectively display their work but also its realization through form, space and matter.*

Table of Contents

Chapter 01

Introduction
Thesis Statement
Objectives
Rationale
Scope
Strategic Plan

Introduction

Art is a mode of self-expression. Through art, artists find mediums to connect with the society. Artists also reflect the ideas, wishes, desires and aspirations of a society through their work. This is how they connect with not only the people around them, but also globally. They carry these identities from one place to another and connect people on a macro scale. Through collective memories invigorated through the art, people build ties with each other and find commonalities to establish neutral grounds for friendship and freedom. So for artists it is paramount to have an effective medium through which they could communicate to the masses.

In the second half of eighteenth century, many private collections of art were nationalized and opened to the public[1] all around Europe. Before this, art and other objects of historical, cultural or national importance were largely a part of private collections and special arrangements were made for public viewing and accessibility to these objects. With changing times and concepts involved in art production; art display techniques have also evolved. In today's world, contemporary art is looked upon as a process that takes place during its conceptualization and materialization. From paintings and sculptures, art has also taken the form of digital images, temporal performances; installation art etc. To cater for the effective display of such mediums of art, architecture with respect to context and time plays a crucial role.

The thesis project researches on the concepts behind contemporary art and seeks to explore ways of effectively communicating it to the general public through architectural design. Since today's art is linked with the context and the people it is inspired from, the project will not only look into the ideas behind contemporary art globally but on a local level as well. The role of space as a facilitator for an artist will be discussed in detail and architecture shall seek new ways to help artists effectively communicate to the spectator. Though it must be taken into account that no space can exactly deliver the idea of conception behind any creative process that's temporal in nature (mainly because space once appropriated doesn't carry much room for flexibility, the idea here is to stimulate the collective memories of the viewer through the work of a respective artist (being displayed).

---

[1] Privately established museums open to the public began to be established from the 17th century onwards, often based around a collection of the cabinet of curiosities type. The first such museum was the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford, opened in 1683 to house and display the artifacts of Elias Ashmole that were given to Oxford University in a bequest. (Britannica)

The thesis project *Art Gallery* seeks to become a platform for the artists of the twin cities who want to convey and materialize their respective ideas through art. This platform sets out to help them effectively craft their narratives and projections to be made available for the viewing by the general public. Thus, not only does the artist benefit from such spaces, but also the viewer, who brings forth memories of his/her own and seeks to become a part of the creative process generated by the artist and curated through the space.

Thesis Statement

The thesis seeks to explore the design quality and interplay of spaces that function as facilitators for an artist's work display.

Project Aims

The project seeks to:

1. Achieve an understanding of the relation of today's contemporary art to space, place and time.
2. Understand how the design of a space can influence its role of acting as a facilitator for an artist's mode of communication.
3. Devise a system that renders architecture as a tool for communication between the artist and the spectator.
4. Understand the role of architecture as a tool for education and recreation. Here it seeks to understand in particular the functional aspect of an edifice as a means to reach out to the people and convey its function to the user.

Project Objectives

1.1 This will be mainly done through an analysis of the work of contemporary artists of Pakistan. Interviews will be conducted that provide an insight on how they approach the process of creating art and how they see the evolution of art in the time to come.

2.1 In this part, the artists themselves (being the primary user of a gallery space) will reflect on the ideas of space required to convey their work to the public. Also architectural precedents will be looked into which have achieved maximum functionality and flexibility in the spaces while heeding to a certain set of constraints.

2.2 Architectural tectonics that convey these spatial concepts will be experimented with and efficiently employed to generate an effective display space.

3.1 For this, the spaces will seek the quality of event generation through the introduction of multiple programmes and adaptability with time.

4.1 The project not only aims to become highly functional because of its programmatic efficiency but also seeks an ephemeral quality through its understanding of its context and the people. Here, the process of effectively curating art through a variety of display spaces (with dynamic spatial qualities) aids in conveying the ideas of conception behind art and its process.

Project Rationale

The rationale behind the thesis project lies in the well research fact that no gallery or exhibition space in Islamabad fully meets the requirements of contemporary artists of the city. PNCA does have spacious galleries but its location in the red zone of Islamabad hinders an easy accessibility.

Artists project the image of a society. Through art people come to recollect their identities and past. So it's very important that the artists are fully equipped and accommodated to get their message across to the global masses. The *Art Gallery* aims to do just that.

Since past two decades, art market in South-Asia is constantly booming. Many contemporary artists of Pakistan have been invited to showcase their work in global art fares such *Art Dubai, Biennial Foundation,* etc. To accommodate to this, artists in Lahore and Karachi have been arranging *Literary Festivals* in their respective cities. Islamabad has also initiated this event, but on a very small scale. This is because the artists of the twin cities do not have a proper platform to exhibit, research or converse about their work. The thesis project aims to provide a venue to the artists of the city where they can not only put their work out in the market but find a venue which aims to compete with the global standards.

Project Scope

The project scope is confined within the following parameters:

1. Site context plays an important role in defining the building formal qualities. It is incorporated in following ways:
   - Site's topography is respected through the building form.
   - Site's vegetation is accentuated and incorporated (to the maximum extent) into the building design.
   - Landmarks adjacent to the site i.e. *The Lotus Lake* and the walking track are respected through the building design.

   It must be understood that the context on the whole doesn't play a role in the design process. Since Islamabad is a modern city, the building design reflects the modernistic approach in terms of its use of contextual features. The design caters to the functional and conceptual understanding of the building programme.

2. Use of material is dictated by the conceptual ideas behind the project design. Site features or context does not play any role in deciding the specific use of materials behind the design project.
3. Structure of the building is camouflaged or exposed depending upon the formal qualities dictated by the concept of the building design. Visual appeal of the structure id dependent on the design brief.
4. Form plays an important role in realization of the design brief. Form dictates the building function and typology.

Chapter 02

Research (type, methodology, framework, source of data)
Site selection (criteria, rationale)

Research Methodology

The research for the thesis project was taken as a process towards the selection of appropriate building type and program. This was an experimental process in a way that each set of questions made way for another level which sometimes took back to the previous step (to re-think the hypothesis) or a level ahead. So as it happens in such cases, no conclusions can hold ground indefinitely, yet it must be taken into account that every aspect is well-researched (keeping in with the available resources) and given amount of time.

The process was divided into following research topics:

1. *Contemporary art*: **Its nature? Requirements from architecture? Process of evolution?**

   In this part, the nature of Pakistani contemporary art was established based on a few precedents. Works of different artists in the field were looked into and some of them were questioned regarding their approach towards art.

2. *Building typology*

   The analysis from the artist's interviews fed into the research process for this category. Here, the role of existing art institutions of Islamabad was analyzed and discussed. The artists were also made to input their views on the viability and effectiveness of these institutions. This provided a set of goals for a building typology that could help the artists of Pakistan to effectively showcase their work to the general public.
   Another part of this research was a quick glimpse into the architectural precedents which have dealt with similar problems in the past. This helped into defining a typology that renders the role of architecture as a facilitator for the artist's work display.

3. *Site*: **Its relevance? Location? Links with the building program and typology?**

   During the research for building typology and nature of contemporary art; the role of context and its relevance to the selected typology was discussed and analyzed. Since the thesis project was supposed to be built in the city of Islamabad; some zones were marked out and matrixes were developed to identify their viability in terms of the thesis proposal.

4. *Case studies*: **Relevance of the thesis project in the light of architectural precedents?**
   Following two goals were meant to be fulfilled through the architectural precedents research:
   - To establish a precedent for the selected typology.

- To seek out architectural solutions for issues generated by site conditions, site location, concept realization and structural performance of the building.

Site Selection

Proposed sites:

Site 01

Opposite to F-7 markaz (current site for Kitchen Cuisine); Islamabad
Salient features:

1. The site is easily accessible being in the heart of the city.
2. It caters to potential clients because of its location in the midst of a few other art galleries of Islamabad.
3. Commercial area (F-7 markaz) adjacent to the site provides access to a variety of users.
4. An addition of a proper art gallery can regenerate the site as well as the city through programmatic variety.
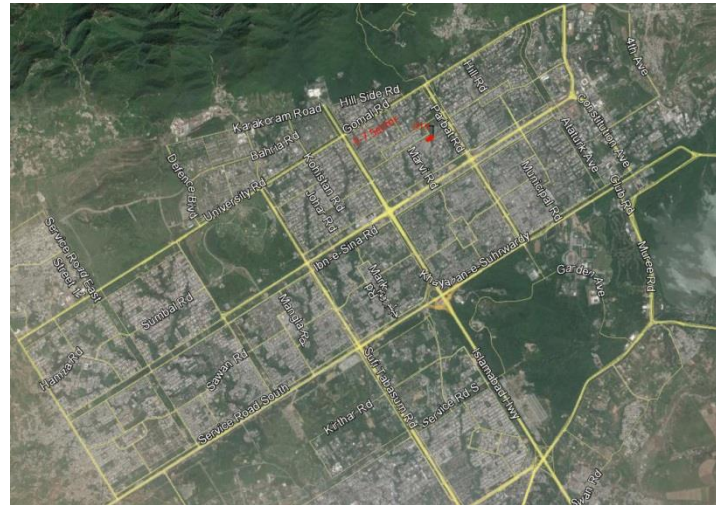
Site 02

Adjacent to Japanese Park and sector E-7; Islamabad
Salient features:

1. Site in the midst of leisure and cultural sites of the city i.e. Saidpur village; Japanese Park; Margalla Hills; Murghazar Zoo etc.
2. Promotes tourism in the city by allowing a wider and more spread out network of landmarks.
3. The site is full of inspiration owing to its presence in green zone and close proximity to Margalla Hills.
4. The site being equally accessible to F-6, F-7, F-5 and E sectors provides a
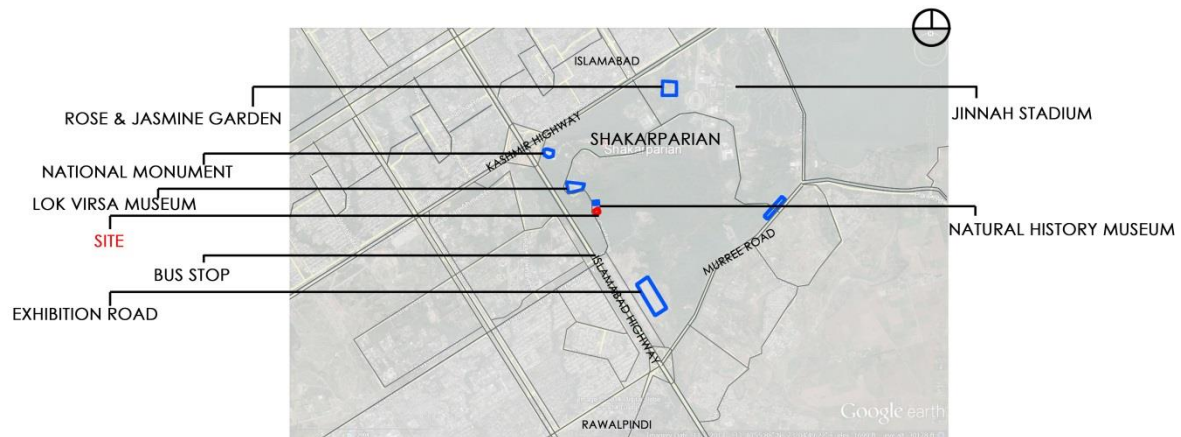
greater possibility of potential clientele.

Site 03

Shakarparian Islamabad (adjacent to Natural History Museum)
Salient features:

1. The site in the midst of art, culture and leisure zone of Islamabad.
2. Adjacent to Natural History Museum enhances the programmatic capacity of the site.
3. Opposite to a bus stop makes it easily accessible.
4. A safari train also crosses the site which makes it accessible for the tourists and general public.
5. Site is surrounded by natural features and is full of inspiration.
6. Site being in the midst of Rawalpindi and Islamabad helps in the regeneration of twin cities.
7. Meets the existing CDA by-laws and constraints for construction.

Site Selection criteria

The selection of site will be based upon the criteria listed below:

1. Accessibility
   a. Since the project lies in the domain of social and public space, so definitely the means of access to the site should be within reach to the targeted users.
   b. The design is for the promotion and propagation of visual artists of Pakistan. The site should be easily accessible or regularly frequented by the potential clientele.

2. Relevance to the typology
   a. What other functions or programs in the immediate context support the chosen project typology?
   b. How the targeted users will benefit from the selected site? In terms of additional services or functions that the site may have to offer.
   c. How the chosen typology can help in the regeneration of the existing site?

3. Existing by-laws: constraints
   a. Does CDA allow the construction of the proposed project on the selected site?
   b. Interviews with the CDA officials regarding the by-laws.

   Selected site and its features will come under the research conducted.

Chapter 03

Research conducted
Precedent study
Literature review,
Theoretical underpinning
Research analysis

Research Conducted

1. *Contemporary art*: Its nature? Requirements from architecture? Process of evolution?

Today's contemporary art is very much aware of the geographical and cultural inhibitions of the artists. In each and every work, it constantly reminds the viewer that art, however conceptual it maybe, cannot forgo its contextual influences (Hurmat-ul-Ain). City and its culture play an important role in defining the conceptual ideas of contemporary art[2]. Although it must be understood that today's art is not just confined to boundaries or a sense of nationalism. For example, the Lahore based artist Rashid Rana, has shown a gradual transition in his approach by starting off with extremely contextual work and later on evolving to a level that questions the authority of place and identity of the work produced (Rana).

This goes both ways. Not only that art identifies itself through the context but also the context constantly re-defines and registers itself in the history through its artists (Boltanski)[3]. The artist more often signifies the catalysts behind his/her work rather than the representation of self. The art is more about the idea and concept behind the final product. So in the end what the spectator gets to observe is not a beautified object (art piece: painting, sculpture etc.), but a series of events stilled in time. For example Olafur Elliason recreates the extremes of landscape and climate of his native Denmark in new terrains, but more often, at the end of each piece he also unravels process or techniques involved behind setting up a single piece. So here it can be observed that the artist, not only signified his geographical identity through his work but also the craft behind it.

With world turning into a global village, the artists today are constantly struggling to locate themselves to a particular setting or scenario. With the changing techniques of representation, it has become more and more difficult to find a medium that identifies with a particular artist. Because of this, most of today's work has a nostalgic quality to it. For example, works of Christian Boltanski, Shazia Sikander and but not limited to Huma Bhabha, are celebrating the lost objects, cultures and people and unintentionally a connection between these objects and their own identity. In their works, there is a conscious attempt of evoking collective memory, which in general is a major facet of contemporary art.

---

[2] In the realm of visual art the presence of the city cannot be denied, as apart from its picturesque representation, the city becomes a site of social, political and economic critique in the works of contemporary artists (Mirza).
[3] Art is always a witness, sometimes a witness to events before they actually occur...so if we want to understand society we should look at society's artists.

To appropriate a structure that accommodates this transient nature of today's art, it is important to identify the people it would be catering to. This is because art today works with the people. It is not about creating the big piece, but rather to be active where one is, with no idea of an immortal art work (Boltanski). So architecture becomes an activator of events and happenings. It fosters the creative processes and facilitates the artists to present those (processes) to the audience. This is just like a city but on a micro scale. City or context on a whole generates the ideas behind creative process. Architecture on the other hand delivers it. It activates and unites the artist and the spectator relationship to effectively communicate the work produced.

2. *Building typology*

In Islamabad there is one government run institution working for the promotion of art and culture in the country i.e. *PNCA (Pakistan National Council of Arts)*. Apart from this, there are two privately owned art institutes; one is *Hunerkada College of Visual and Performing Arts* and the other is, *National Institute of Folk and Traditional Heritage* (Lok Virsa) Islamabad. There are a few other privately owned art galleries in the city that are illegally operated in residences by individuals or joint groups of people. Locations of all the above mentioned institutions are shown in the map below.
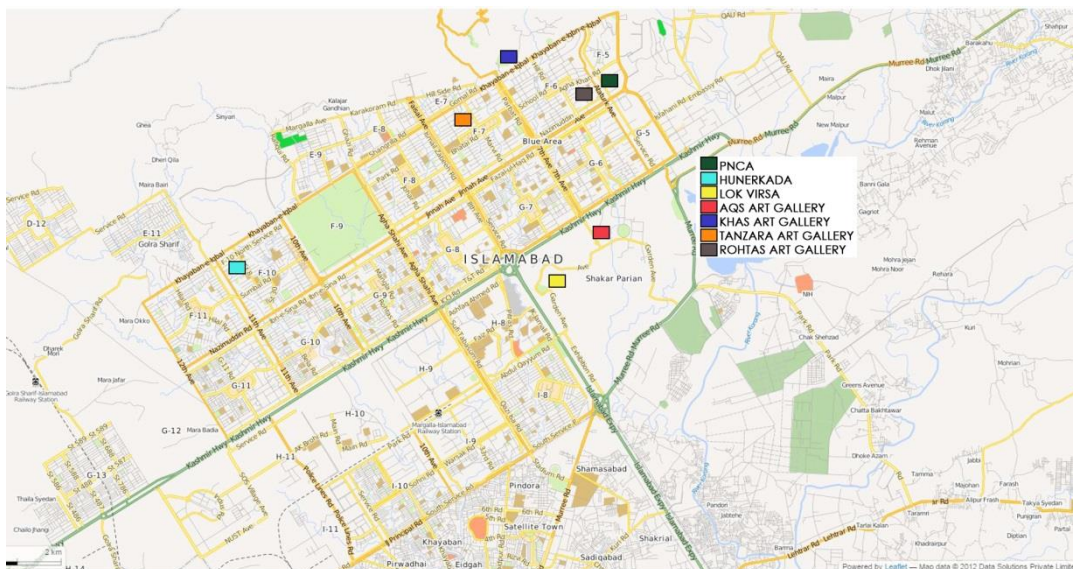
When the artists were questioned regarding the role of PNCA for the promotion of art and culture in the city, their responses were:

The purpose of the PNCA specifically the National Art Gallery was to display and exhibit Pakistani artists (from the Masters to the contemporary artists) as well as to hold exhibitions from overseas. I feel it has not done enough to promote Pakistani artists or to hold exhibitions as effectively as its purpose was. A whole museum team is required to make it a success but in the PNCA there is a lack of qualified people and bureaucracy and nepotism runs deep. (S. Akram)

Presence of galleries is a significant factor in the promotion of art. The number has also increased significantly with the passage of time. Though PNCA, by far hasn't played that role which was the reason for its conception. Initially it was operating in a small house but now that government has turned it into a complete institution, it greatly requires fulfilling its duty as a place for the production and propagation of art in the city. Maybe it's because of their limited budgets or the location itself that created the gap between the institute and the general public; but this definitely needs to be looked into and catered for.

There are two things that are required for an artist, one is the space required for display while the other is a viable clientele for profitable sale of the work. PNCA lacks the second requirement. The clientele that is attracted to the small galleries in Islamabad is much better than that for PNCA. In case of projects financed by the government or the embassies, it's easier for the artists to accommodate to such scale and budget. But for a free-lance artist, it's difficult to meet up the budget needs without the possibility of a resourceful clientele. (M. S. Akram)

The art galleries in Islamabad are playing a great role in promoting art in the city but the problem with them is their capacity. They are operating in houses and are not spacious enough to accommodate to the needs of currently working artists. While PNCA was designed with a specific goal but the problem is with its location. Being in the red zone hinders its accessibility. (Zafar)

From the conducted interviews, it is easy to infer that government run institutions in the city, by far haven't been productive in their efforts for elevating the art culture of Islamabad. In spite of the resources, the location of PNCA hinders its accessibility to the common man. Even the privately owned galleries are clustered in the elitist zones of the city, which on one hand is justified because these cater to specific clientele but on the other hand are quite inaccessible to the residents of Rawalpindi and suburbs of Islamabad.

As already discussed, contemporary art very often is site specific. This doesn't mean the site as a particular plot of land but it approaches the site on an intangible level; such as a city or a

13

town with some historical or cultural value. This is important because every work is a product of environmental, sociological and anthropological factors. Even if the same work is exhibited in different countries, it seeks a connection with the spectator. And most of the time, an artist's purpose behind the work is to understand that connection as to how his/her work affects a certain kind of viewer.

To understand the nature of Islamabad as a site for art production and promotion, it is important to ascertain the city's cultural and historical value. Islamabad being a modern city doesn't hold a rich historical background. All the history there is in the city comes directly from its people (who migrated here almost three decades ago). So to celebrate the creative forces of the city is to celebrate the people here. Now here comes the question of a building typology that is suited to this specific city and its people.

Museums and government run art institutions are places for art collection and instruction. Their purpose is to glorify art through its historical, traditional and national value. Here art carries more of a representational character. But for a city like Islamabad, where people are constantly redefining their culture, such a structure is required that allows them to experiment with their ideas in a way that everything builds a connection between their narratives and the city (or its people). It requires a structure that regulates art along with storing or preserving it. Architecture becomes an activator of the society's creative potentials. It becomes a tool for uniting the city with its people.

For this purpose, art gallery was chosen as the required building typology for this project. The art gallery is an ensemble of spaces that facilitate the contemporary artists to effectively convey their work to the audience.

Project: *Westergasfabriek Park*

Project Architect: *Gustafson Porter*

2004

Amsterdam, Netherlands

Project Introduction:

The project was a winning entry for the Westergasfabriek, by Gustafson Porter that responded to the park's master plan by offering diverse spatial and temporal experiences. The Westergasfabriek is a partially dismantled 19th century industrial site with vestiges of its layout intact and preserved in the new concept. The landscape illustrates in a contemporary form man's changing views and attitude towards the environment and its resulting landscape types.

Mission statement:

Due to the industrial revolution and post-world war rapid economic rebuild, the world has witnessed some of the most devastating pollution. To respond to this project for a new public park on the heavily contaminated site of a former gas factory with an *ecological view*, was the mission behind this project.

Description:

The project's design comprised of the following tiers:

1. Instead of replacing the polluted soil, cut and fill technique was used. Fresh soil was laid over the existing ground levels, creating an undulating new terrain.
2. A central promenade *The Axis* created a link between the town hall and the Cite des Artist; achieving a variety of spaces in-between. There are two different environments: a green part and a cultural centre with indoor and outdoor activities.

3. The park is divided into different zones and each zone is designed on a separate theme.

    - At the east end, park reflects a more formal traditional type ambience.
    - The central area reflects the post-war attitude towards landscape as a support for sports, leisure and recreation.
    - The north-west reflects the recent past which is representative of a need for a pure nature/ecology approach.
    - The west end reflects current thinking, that environmental harmony must be achieved with man as a participating partner.
4. At the centre of the park is the events field. Each space created here has multi-dimensional nature in-terms of its functionality.
    - The artificially created stone-lined lake can be drained for large events and festivals.
    - Reinforced grass allows for the traffic of equipment for concerts and fairs yet the space also gives a feel of casual activities and family picnics.
    - The Lake and Amphitheatre Mound to its north frame the space, shield the park from the noise of railway station, provide a south-facing surface on which to recline whilst watching activities spread out on the field below, whilst the proximity of water and stepping stones in the lake make it a perfect area for play on hot summer days.

5. In the former Gas Holder pools, circular Aquatic and Water-Lily Pools are created. The character of the woodland planting changes in the vicinity of these pools. New Salix babylonica and alba sistris skirt the edge of the remaining basement structures of the gasholders which have been filled with the worst pollution and capped to become a contemplative *water-lily pool* and *verdant garden* in which floating timber walkways and terraces have been inserted.
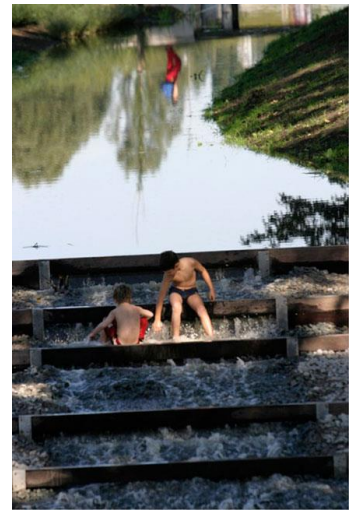
Analysis+Connection+Conclusion:

1. The constraints of the project formed the basis of design. Through adding fresh soil, undulating topography was achieved which added an additional design quality to the natural setting.

2. Theme based design creates active zones which not only build a narrative through the user intervention but generate interest through variety of activities taking place at different points at the same time.

3. Careful use of materials regenerates the once polluted natural setting and connects nature with man.

4. Landscaping in an efficient way optimizes the spatial quality and gives visual cues. Users find themselves moving along a carefully crafted narrative that ends up at a water-lily pool surrounded with extinct species of exotic plants.

5. Excellent example of natural landscape turned into a site of cultural, interactive and user friendly natural setting.

Project: Arp Museum

Project Architect: *Richard Meier & Partner Architects*

Remagen-Rolandseck, Germany

Project Introduction:

The Arp Museum is a seamless integration of the building's spectacular site with the museum's mission to showcase the work of the Dadaist master Hans Arp and his circle. The museum is located in the region of a series of medieval castles that line a 35-mile stretch of the river Rhine.

Mission Statement:

The Arp Musuem, sited on a wooded escarpment overlooking the Rhine is intended to respond to and echo the forms of medieval castles lining the 35-mile stretch of the river Rhine.

Description:

1. The entrance to the museum doesn't begin in the museum proper, but rather from an old village railway station that's used as an exhibition space since the 1960s.
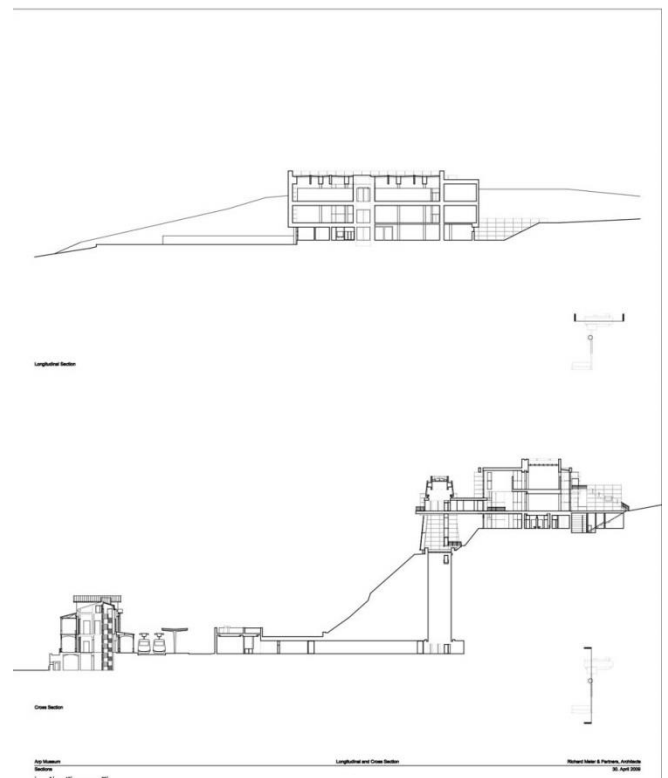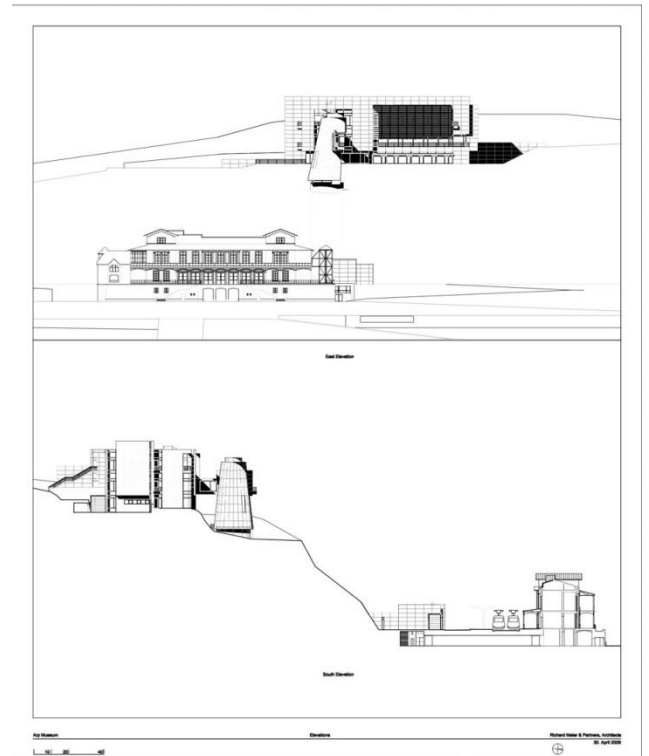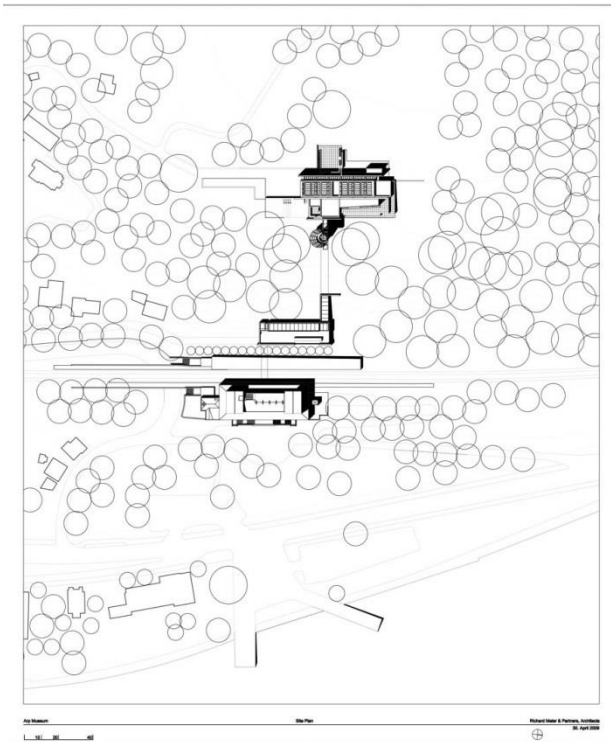
2. The lowest level of the station functions as the main entrance to the new museum building. This is reached by a series of carefully modulated tunnels that burrow into and up through the mountain to the new building.

- The first of these subterranean sequences begins from the lobby that leads to a 40 meter long tunnel illuminated by two bands of light. This extends below the railway tracks to an exhibition pavilion that stands independent of the main building.
- The pavilion features polished concrete floors and is provided with a slotted skylight. Aside from providing a temporary exhibition space, it establishes a certain level of anticipation which is further reinforced by another subterranean tunnel that's 35 meters long and ends up at the bottom of a dramatic 40 meter high shaft. The shaft is accessed with two glass-enclosed elevators.

- The elevators ascend through the shaft to a conical tower structure above grade. The translucent walls illuminate the shaft and the glass slots in the walls get views from the exterior.
- At the tower's apex the elevator opens onto a 16 meter long, glass enclosed bridge that represents the final stage of the sequential promenade into the museum.

3. The entry to the museum's ground floor is flanked on one side by a free standing staircase that leads to the lower and upper levels. A void towards the left provides views to the lower level.
4. The service elevator designed to facilitate the movement of art, also functions as the visitor's elevators and provides a galvanized core around which the gallery spaces on the ground and upper floor are organized.
5. The galleries on both levels open up onto terraces that provide breath-taking views of the river Rhine and the surrounding valley.
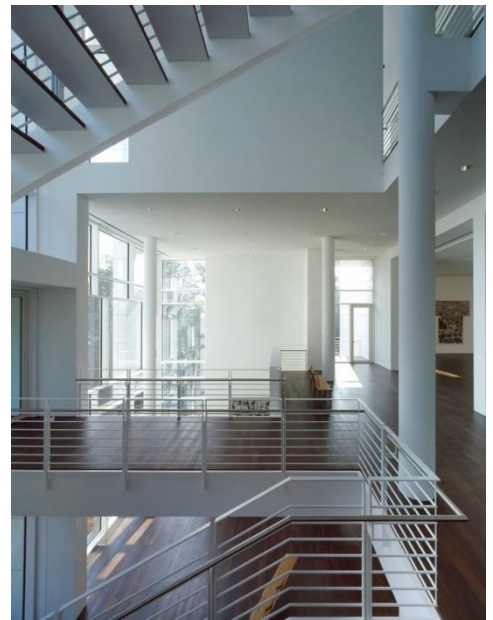
Analysis+Connection+Conclusion:

1. The use of railroad station as a portal and the design of the entry sequence is integral to this ideal of relationships between interior and exterior, past and present. This not only adds to the visitor's experiential journey but also integrates the site features at its best.
2. Travelling through the exhibition spaces, within the rail station, through the tunnels and shafts makes the entry part of the museum truly enticing and completely experiential as a whole.
3. Use of solids and voids, translucency through materials and double height glazed facades bring light and extraordinary surroundings into the space as well.
4. A successful example of a museum in the suburbs of a city that attracts visitor due to its regeneration of the site and elevating the user experience because of the additional programs it has to offer.
5. Juxtaposition of galleries in a way that a single core connects to each one of them yet every gallery has a different character owing to its orientation and the external views it caters to.

Literature Review

The literature review highlights on the poetics and conceptual ideals of museum spaces. It takes excerpts from the writings of different people, on what and how they perceive the museum as a building or a space.

Review 01

Creation in Space
A Course in the Fundamentals of Architecture
Volume 1: Architectonics
Jonathan Block Friedman

As the name suggests, this book is about the art of creating three dimensional objects in space. It talks about the ways a space is designed and organized through examples of the works of great masters. For example, at one place the writer says,

"When a piece of pie or corner of a cube is missing we still can perceive the overall form or gestalt of the whole. The missing part of the original form is present as space, amplitude, and void-VOLUME. The other parts set the bounds in which that form appears. How large a piece or corner can be removed before the original form disappears? Is there volume between the columns of the Parthenon? The skillful architect can make the sense of VOLUME present even when the original material is separate pieces that must be added together." (Friedman)

Here the writer is talking about the subtraction or saturation of space. In galleries, architects require empty voids that can accommodate to different scales for display. But it's very important to establish the character of a space before it's abstracted into a bland or empty container. If these voids do not establish a relationship with the building as a whole, the character of the building cannot be established. There has to be a single idea behind the overall form. If the spaces cease to be cohesive, the visitor cannot gel in with the environment and won't understand depth or logic behind the design.

Review 02

Hadid Studio Yale
Contemporary Art Centre Zaha Hadid Studio 2000 Yale School of Architecture
Edited By:
Doudlas Grieco, Wendy Ing, Nina Rappaport

In spring 2000, Zaha Hadid was the Eero Saarinen Visiting Professor of Architecture at Yale. Two of her projects, the Contemporary Art Centre in Cincinnati, Ohio and the Centre for

contemporary Arts in Rome; formed the basis for Hadid's studio in spring 2000. This compact publication, documents the original and provocative design research at Hadid's studio in Yale.

The book explores the definition of an art space and what can be the possible ways of giving it an architectural expression. For instance, during one of the discussions in the studio sessions, Fabrian Marcaccio narrated his thoughts on the poetics of art spaces:

"Maybe all museums have to be generic. There are so many artworks to accommodate and so many needs. But if you talk with most artists they will say, 'The space is so hard to control.' So obviously what you are pursuing is not pleasing to certain kinds of art. An artist has a specific idea for a show at Moma and the curators are not going to be happy. In a generic space, the art becomes generic, whereas the Guggenheim is actually a special kind of space. When you see the shows in Guggenheim you can say, "Okay, the artist has had to accommodate to that configuration," but the spaces are totally unique. The show could never have happened in another museum. There is always a conflict. You want to have a generic museum that accommodates everything, but at the same time the reality is that the museum asks a lot of the artist. There is no such thing as total freedom in a museum. A white box even creates something with the art that it shows. Museums determine what happens with the art. The museums that don't ask anything of the artist are not usually great pieces of architecture." (Doudlas Grieco)

In the above excerpt, the writer talks about the importance of spatial design in case of art galleries. Here he believes that the fate of an art work is also determined through the way it's curated and displayed in a gallery space. If the spatial design is such that the artist has to accommodate to it, then each exhibition will be unique. This is because each space has its own character which will add to the creative quality of the art objects through unique display design.

Review 03

Chambers for a Memory Palace
Donlyn Lyndon and Charles W. Moore

The book is a dialogue (exchange of letters) between two writers who recollect examples of buildings and landscapes that have made significance to the history of architecture. This critique is a food for thought for designers to abstract the good things about these designs which can aid them further with their imaginations. For instance at one point, the writer says;

"The recurrence of familiar themes and types of spatial organization aid in the ordering of places. For some time now, order has been simplemindedly found in such acts as lining up the

heads of windows and doors, or in making regular modules in the plan. Such acts are not wicked but don't, it seems to us, constitute order. The order of things should reward our attention, not demand it. Patterns that are too obvious and insistent impose themselves upon our appreciation of a place rather than giving us the opportunity to find a subtler understanding…some mathematicians and physicists are these days understanding the world better through a study of chaos, which turns out to be subtler and nonrecurring kind of order." (W.Moore)

In the excerpt, writer talks about order in spatial design. He refers to the order inherent in the design and order that's dictated or forcefully made visible. He believes that space should constitute order subliminally. It should leave upon the visitor to experience that. The same thing is required of an architect while designing a gallery. Galleries stacked on top of each other or placed side by side don't constitute order, but it's the placement of walls, the design of museum walk that implements it. A single theme or a solitary idea can constitute order. Likewise, intelligent use of materials can help connect the dots visually or haptically.

Review 04

Invisible Cities
Italo Calvino

The book presents utopian ideals for spaces and constructs them in the most imaginative ways possible. An exploration of the essentials in architecture, it delimits the extents of our thoughts and makes our desires and memories an inherent part of the design process. This book explores these ideals and helps towards seeking them through the articulation of form and space while keeping the imaginative process intact.

" The building with the globes is now Fedora's museum: every inhabitant visits it, chooses the city that corresponds to his desires, contemplates it, imagining his reflection in the medusa pond that would have collected the waters of the canal (if it had not been dried up), the view from the high canopied box along the avenue reserved for elephants (now banished from the city), the fun of sliding down the spiral, twisting minaret (which never found a pedestal from which to rise).

On the map of your empire, O Great Khan, there must be room both for the big, stone Fedora and the little Fedoras in glass globes. Not because they are all equally real, but because all are only assumptions. The one contains what is accepted as necessary when it is not yet so; the others what is imagined as possible and, a moment later, is possible no longer". (Calvino)

The excerpt is about how we connect with our memories through the spaces we inhabit. It talks about the collective memories that help us reflect and imagine. Also it speaks of our desires and

the way we pursue them in our thoughts. A gallery space should be like that. Since art is a creative process, resultant of an artist's imagination; it would be interesting to explore how a space can create a link between the spectator and the artist's work and invigorate the process of nostalgia and imagination.

3. *Site*: Its relevance? Location? Links with the building program and typology?

In the previous discussion regarding the building typology, the location and role of existing art institutions was discussed in detail. Concluding from the discussion, following characteristics can be marked out for the site selection:

1. Site should be located in Islamabad.
2. It should be easily accessible to the residents of Rawalpindi and Islamabad.
3. Site should cater to potential clientele and user group who is interested in art activities taking place in the city.
4. Site should be located in a serene and calm setting that carries an inspirational value for the artists and leisure zone for the spectator.
5. Site should be located in the vicinity of such programs that promote and facilitate the function of the building project.
6. Site must have a representational value of its own. It should have a character that's stands for more than the project built upon it.

In chapter 2, three potential sites were chosen. The viability of these sites in the light of above mentioned characteristics is discussed in the matrix below:

Site 01
Opposite to F-7 markaz
(current site for Kitchen Cuisine)

Site 02
Adjacent to Japanese Park
Sector E-7 Islamabad

Site 03
Shakarparian Islamabad
(adjacent to Natural History Museum)

Selection Criteria

	Site 01	Site 02	Site 03
Accessibility			
1. Ease of Access (for the twin cities)	✔	✔	✔
2. Ease of Acess (by the potential clientele)		✔	✔
Relevance to the typology			
1. Does other functions or programs in the immediate context support the chosen project typology?			✔
2. Will the targeted users benefit from the selected site? In terms of additional services or functions that the site may have to offer.		✔	✔
3. Can the chosen typology help in the regeneration of the existing site?	✔	✔	✔
Existing by-laws: constraints			
a. Does CDA allow the construction of the proposed project on the selected site?			✔

So from the findings of the matrix, site 3 appears to be the most promising of all.

Selected Site

Site 03
Shakarparian Islamabad (adjacent to Natural History Museum)

Rationale *(for site selection)*

1. Accessibility
   - Bus stop nearby promotes ease of access.
   - Presence of cultural and art institutions nearby provide potential clientele.

2. Relevance to the typology
   - Relevant programs nearby: Lok Virsa Museum; Pak-China Cultural Center; Natural History Museum, Pakistan National Monument; National Sports Complex; Rose and Jasmine Garden.
   - Due to the presence of variety of educational and leisure spaces in vicinity, the users will have the luxury to enjoy maximum facilities at one place.
   - The *Art Gallery* will add into the diversity of stakeholders for this zone of Islamabad. This will definitely help in the re-generation of existing typologies.

3. Existing by-laws: constraints
   - CDA allows the construction of such projects in this particular zone only in Islamabad.
   - Interviews with the CDA officials indicate that the projects for leisure and cultural; artistic nature can only be constructed in this zone. While the site one comes under residential zone and the site two comes under green zone of Islamabad. Both of these zones are not allowed for construction of any such or related projects46on page 46).

Chapter 04

Synthesis and key findings
Architect's brief
Design concept

Synthesis and key findings:

The key findings of the research being carried out are:

1. Contemporary art is a depiction of a creative thought/process. It requires no specific formal qualities. Thus the display space required for art cannot be justified in terms of spatial dynamics or scale.
2. To facilitate an artist, architecture is required to be customizable and multi-functional. Such display spaces are required that can cater to multiple forms of art and events.
3. Since contemporary art also deals with time, situation and actors (spectators who can be visitors, participants or art objects) and their interaction, so architecture for such a program has to generate spaces that allow for experimentation and anticipation.
4. The selected site for the thesis project carries a historical value. Since contemporary art is sensitive with the context and location, so it is important that the building design responds to the site conditions.

Architect's brief:

Project name: Art Gallery

Project client: Artist's Association of Pakistan

Introduction:

The project is the design of an *Art Gallery* for contemporary arts in the city of Islamabad. It accommodates to the display of visual arts, both in two and three dimensional formats. The gallery also supports digital displays and performance art. For research purposes, it has an adjoining library that also archives the work being displayed in the gallery. To facilitate the function of display; a cafeteria, an administrative zone, workshops and open performance space are the additional programs.

Project site:

Shakarparian Islamabad (adjacent to Natural History Museum)
33*41'05.92" N   73*04'35.82" E
Plot dimensions: 620 ft X 340 ft
Site Elevation: 1736 ft above sea level

Site attributes:
1. Site is in the midst of lush green landscape of Shakarparian hills.
2. From the south-west, a walking track leads towards the north-east of the site and ends up at the Lotus Lake.
3. The site has an undulating topography with a contour difference of as high as 30 ft.

4. In the monsoon season, a portion of Lotus Lake fills up with water, accentuating the natural landscape.
5. The site is located in the midst of Natural History Museum and Lok Virsa Café-Museum.

Building programs:
- Art gallery (display function)
- Artist's workshops
- Administration
- Cafeteria
- Library
- Sculpture gardens
- Open air performance space
- Parking and other ancillary spaces

Areas:

FUNCTIONS	SPACE REQUIRED
1. **Curatorial functions** A. Collection, preservation, identification, documentation, study, restoration. B. Storage of collection.	A. Office-workroom, workshop *2000 sq ft* B. Reserve collection room *5000 sq ft*
2. **Display function** Thematic and changing displays of selected objects and documents from the collections arranged to tell a story.	Display gallery *Size varying from 60 x 100 sq ft – 30 X 75 sq ft* *Total area: 9742 sq ft* *Outdoor spaces, sculpture gardens: 10,000 sq ft*
3. **Display preparation function** The preparation of exhibits.	Workshop, *Paint workshop: 30 X 60 sq ft* *Sculptor workshop: 30 X 90 sq ft* *Office-workroom* *Work stations: 4X (20 x 20 sq ft)*
4. **Educational and public functions** A. Lectures, school tours, society meetings, auditorium, films and social functions. B. Reception, information, sales, supervision of display gallery. C. Public requirements.	A. Lecture rooms *4X (40 X 50 sq ft)* chair storage closet, *50 X 50 sq ft* Kitchenette *10 X 8 sq ft* Auditorium *Seating: 180 Area: 1218 sq ft* B. Lobby, sales and information counter *20 X 10 sq ft*

	C. Cloak room, washrooms *4X (16 X 20 sq ft)* Parking *55 cars : 11800 sq ft*
5. Other services A. Mechanical. B. Janitorial	A. Heating-ventilation plant B. Janitor's closet *1000 sq ft*

Additional programs:

1. **Café** : 10,000 sq ft

2. **Archives Library**: 15,000 sq ft

Total area: 85,920 sq ft

Net area (including circulation) : 98808 sq ft.

Design Concept:

The design concept for the *Art Gallery* is to appropriate[4] a series of happenings that form a parable through the user intervention. These *happenings* will take place through the sequencing of spaces in such a way that multiple user paths are generated. Users taking paths of their choice happen upon the resulting spaces where events of different sorts are taking place. The nature of these events will be related to artist's work display. So each happening builds up the anticipation level of the visitor and probes him/her to explore further. The spectator develops a connection with the work as spaces provide him/her with subliminal clues to saunter along. Some spaces will offer recluse and bring the journey to a temporal halt until another happening takes place nearby and steals the visitor back into loop.

To achieve the concept, three of the site features will be exploited. The first is the Lotus Lake, the second the walking track leading towards the Lotus Lake and the third are the site contours. The user paths will identify the positive spaces inhabited by the galleries while the residual spaces will be left open for art related activities or user intervention. A public gathering space, sculpture gardens and open air performance space will knit the web of galleries, voids and happenings.

---

[4] Conduct; choreograph

Chapter 05

Design concept translation
Iteration (process documentation)

Design Concept Translation:

1. ***Understanding the site features***

   In the first phase, site features were explored and documented. Sun path, wind direction, access from the main and secondary roads, viewpoints, water bodies (including but not limited to *Lotus Lake*), site topography, vegetation, character of existing buildings in the vicinity, activity patterns, etc., were documented.

2. ***Partii diagrams***

   The research from the first part fed into the development of relationship diagrams. Building programs formulated in the architect's brief were the starting point for the partii diagrams. These generated user patterns that over-lapped and dictated the placement of possible circulation zones.

3. ***Form finding***

   Building form evolved from two simultaneously occurring processes:
   - Layering of user pattern over the site. Because of the site's undulating topography, the layers were further deconstructed and laid over site at a difference of every five feet. This informed on the hierarchy of building programs. For instance, which programs could go underneath? Which ones should be clearly visible from a certain distance? Which need more light and easier access?
   - Juxtaposition of building masses to access, view or enhance the site features. For example, how the form welcomes the visitors? How it shapes or morphs to accentuate the narrative built around the user? Which views does it cater to? How does it respond to the *Lotus Lake?*

     Juxtaposition was also done the other way around as in to arrange masses from an outside view. For example, how should it appear from the road side? How should the building transform as the user meanders along the walking track towards the *Lotus Lake?*

     (The process shall be more comprehensible in the *iteration* part that will come later.)

4. ***Addition and subtraction***

   In this part building masses were analyzed and processed further. Here the relationships between these masses were explored and an additive/subtractive process too place. Chunks of masses were removed to let light in or cater to views or accentuate the site's

existing topography. At some places, to enhance the character of a certain space, surrounding spaces were morphed and gelled into one single language of form.

5. *Landscaping*

    Since the site and its features were the starting point for the design concept exploration, landscaping was an important factor to be considered to understand the building design and its concept. Landscaping gave visual cues and directed the visitor's path towards the events taking place in and about the building form.

Iteration:

The project *Art Gallery* mostly involved through the process of form finding during its design phase. There was a continuous process of going back and forth from each form to another.

Starting off, there were five major concerns:

1. How the form would exhibit its function to a person approaching the site?
2. How shall it create subliminal cues of a public gathering space?
3. How shall it manifest building function from all four sides?
4. How shall it respond to the walking track and the *Lotus Lake?*
5. How will the volumes juxtapose against each other to make events possible?

Lok Virsa Café-Museum   Natural History Museum   Site
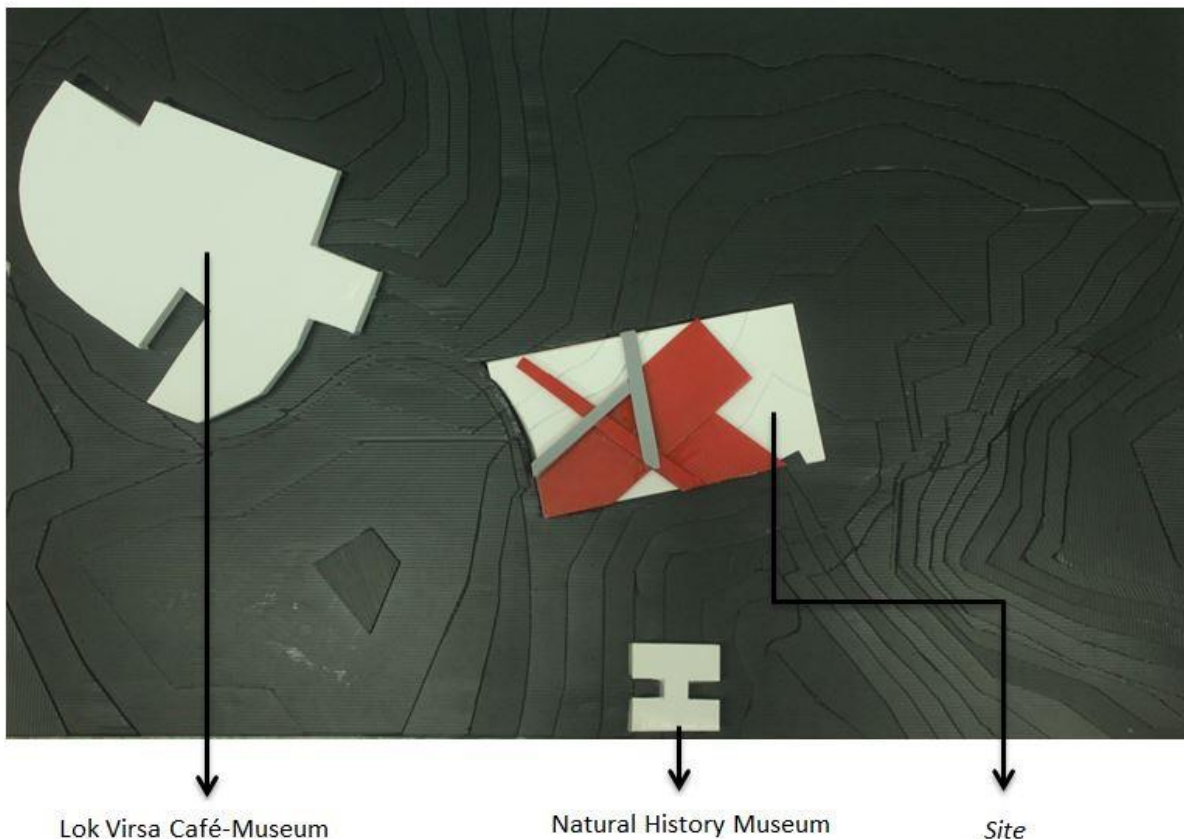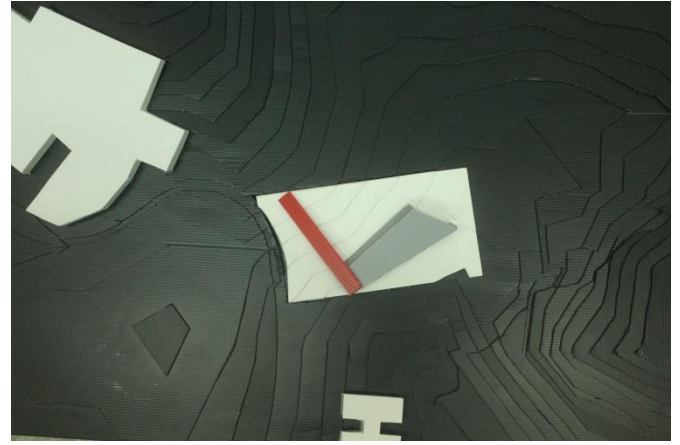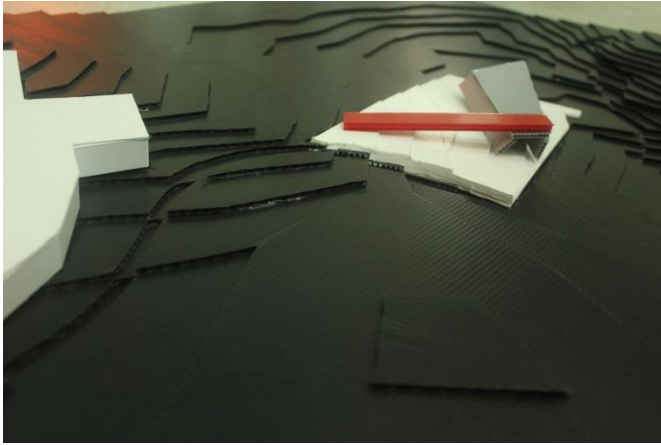
In the two pictures above, the *red* color signifies display function while *grey* shows ancillary spaces and rest of the building programs (explained in the architect's brief). Here the building form exploits the site features in such a way that the gallery extends from the highest contoured point of the site and rests on the opposite site of the building mass. This leaves a void underneath that suggests enclosure and an open air activity zone. This basic model suggested three further areas of exploration:

1. The display function needs to be visible from the viewing angles from the road side.
2. The public gathering area also needs visibility from the road.
3. Site contours can help create enclosures and suggest circulation.

The form in the picture to the left caters to the three viewing angles from the site. The thin masses arranged to form a triangular center are the galleries that seem to flow inwards, creating a central circulation space in the center.
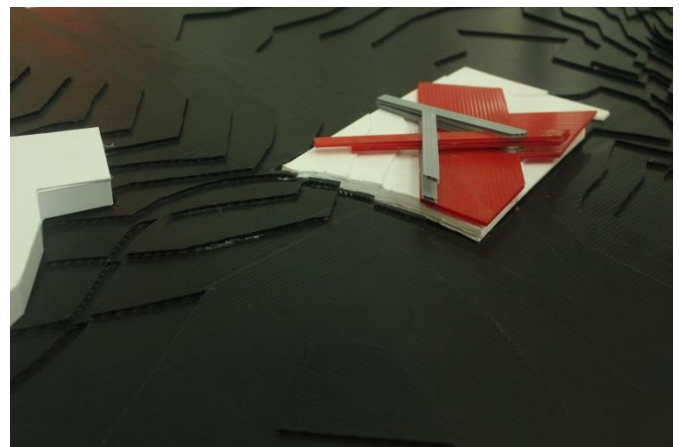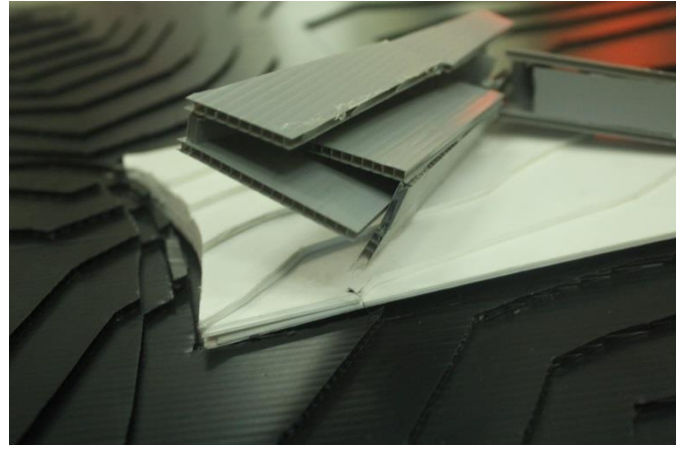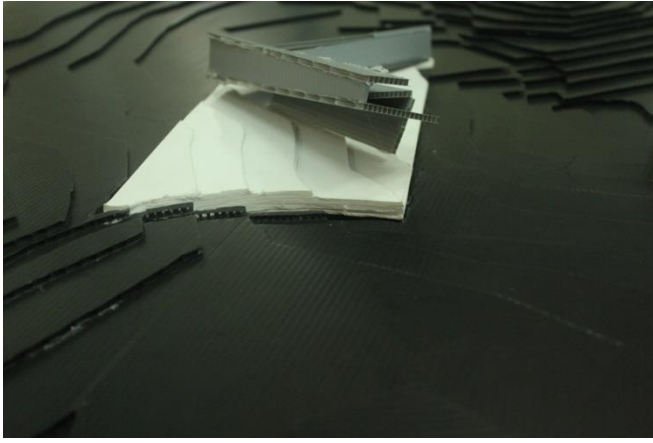

In the front is the public gathering area and towards the left is the parking zone.

In this part of form finding, the character of gallery space was explored. Two things were considered:

1. Formal qualities
2. The views it caters to.
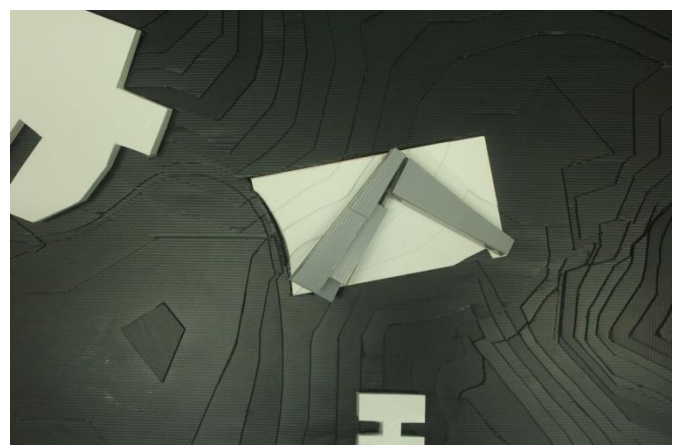
The form catered to light, transition zones and the in-between spaces that are the resultants of two colliding masses. The shape of the gallery suggested attractor points in the context, which were the *Lotus Lake* and the Dinosaur sculpture from the Natural History Museum. The voids created underneath the form suggested shade and public gathering spaces.
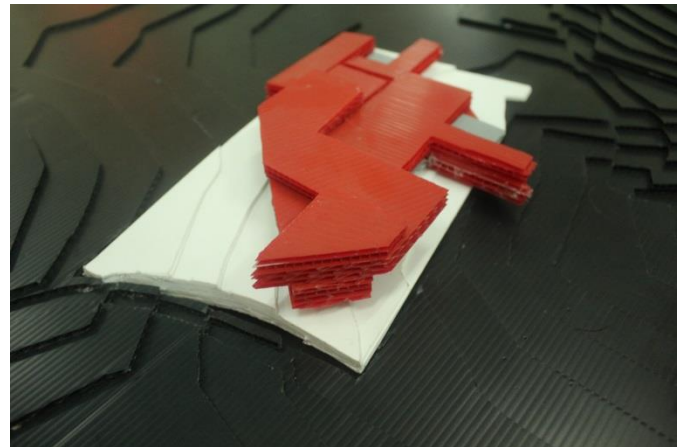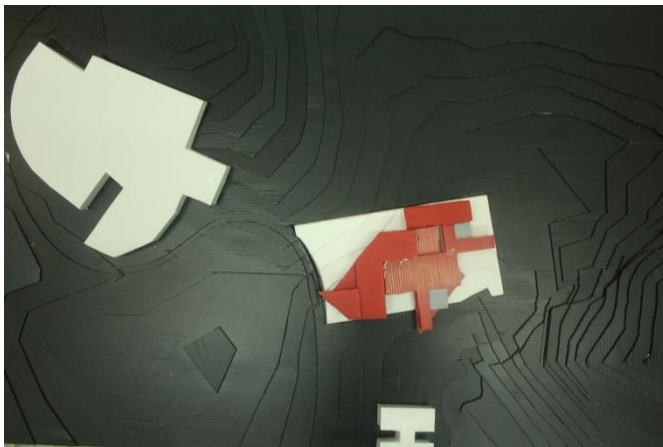

In this phase, the form was a layering of different building programs and functions. The greys were spaces other than display. The form was extremely geometrical in character and had very little room for porosity and open spaces.
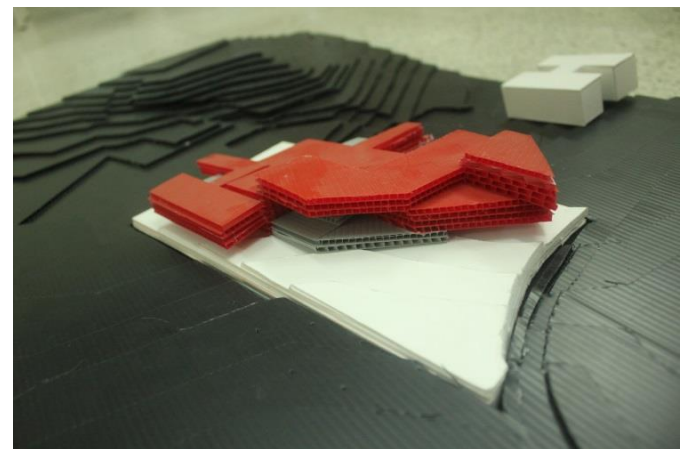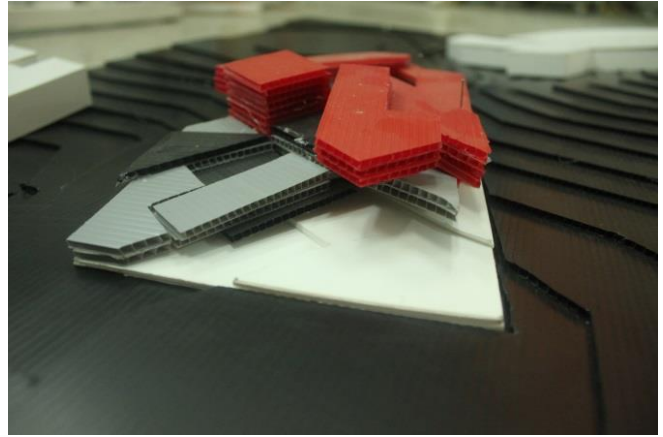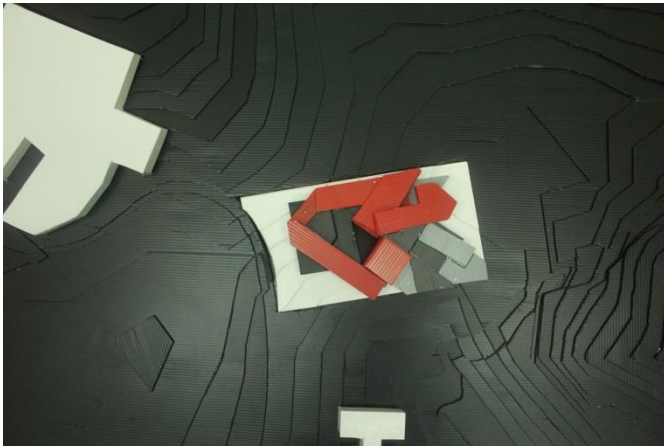
This part was a sequel to the previous form. Here the masses were re-arranged and further re-fined to allow for more open spaces and events.

The form created enclosures, some of which were visible from the outside while on some the visitors happened upon during their journey.
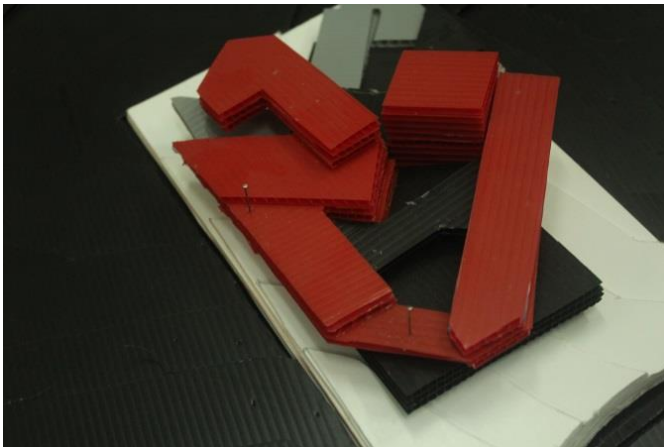
The form was more porous in the sense that it suggested more views both from the inside and towards the outside. Though it was still geometrical and insensitive to the site features.

During the process, there was an absence of an in-depth understanding of site topography and the surrounding landscape.

So I backtracked a little and introduced the landscape into the site through an organic mesh structure. This extended all through one side of the site, opposite to the walking track and guided the visitor's eye towards the *Lotus Lake.* On the other side, the building programs dug into the contours in such a way that they were not visible from the outside but opened up as the contours deepened and flowed downwards.
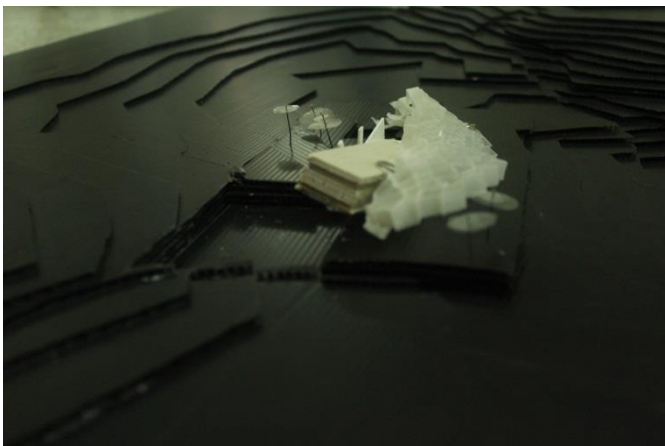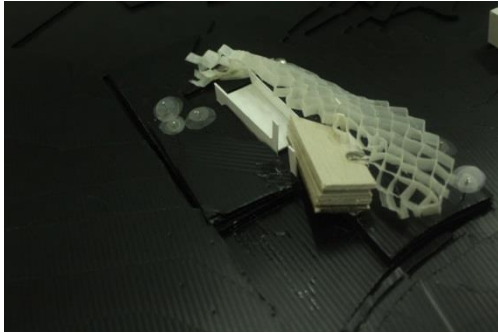
In the later part, mesh started to engulf the site and gave cues of zones and activities through its formal qualities. The building masses seemed to extrude out of the mesh and there was an interesting interplay of solid and void.
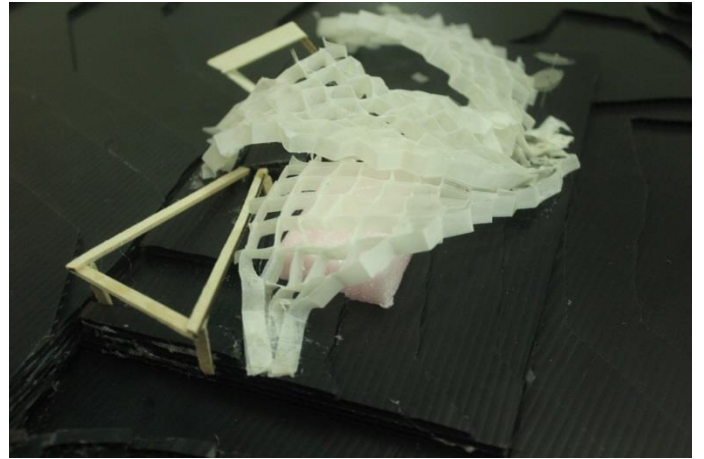
The mesh gave an organic character to the building form. The trees and the surrounding landscape seemed to flow in towards the site.

The mesh created vault like structures. This suggested another idea of using the ground as an open freely flowing platform, above and below which, the building masses could be juxtaposed.

Even though that the mesh introduced an organic character to the building form and further refined the character of how spaces should formulate the narrative; there was a missing link between design concept and mesh structure.
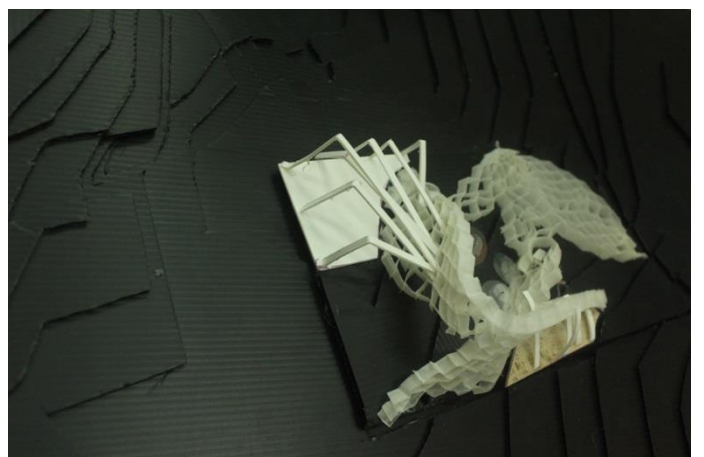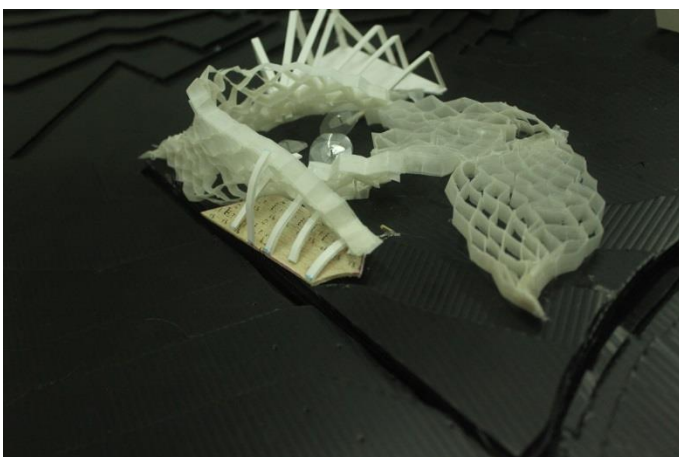
At this stage, the form finding process reached to a temporary halt. There were a few conclusions drawn from the previous process:

- The porosity in a building form cannot only be achieved through the introduction of an alien structure. Since the building is so responsive to the site and its features, the porosity as a concept should enter into the building. This can be done through the juxtaposition of masses; use of building materials that are permeable to light and wind etc.
The concept of porosity was important because the user needs some clues to build his/her narrative upon. If the building gives away nothing such as the nature of events taking place inside it; the user won't feel compelled to move on or even enter the space.
- The site's contours are so shaped that the masses dug deep on one side open up on the opposite site. One space is enclosed by soil from a side but that same space opens up on the ground level at some other side. This provides opportunities for an interactive building form. The concept of happening upon is easier to achieve this way because user cannot predict the parameters of the building form unless he/she visits the whole space in detail.
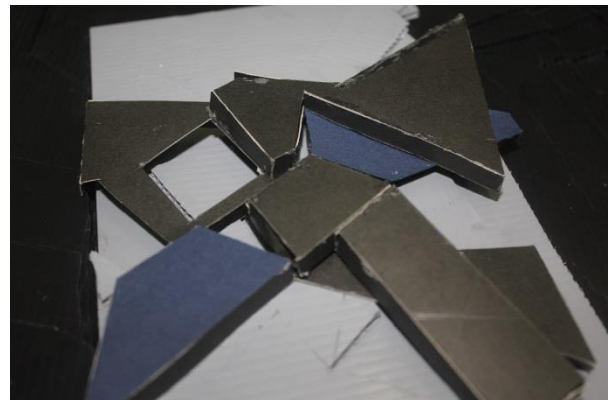
So the form finding process retraced the earlier ideas behind relationship diagrams for building programs and started dealing with resultant activities from the programs rather than the masses themselves. The nature of the activities shaped the space and all the voids/residual spaces transformed into transition zones; later being called as the user paths where the visitors construct their narratives[5].

---

[5] Narratives that are a resultant of the collective memories evoked through the artist's work being displayed along the user's path.
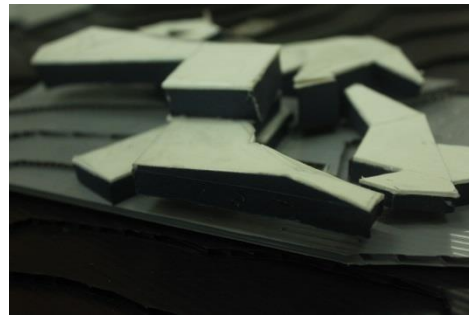
The building forms carved into and about the site. The voids were left as part of the landscape; where the visitor meanders upon as part of its journey. The masses were further refined on the basis of views they catered, their functionality and circulation patterns formed. Heights were adjusted and links were created both visually as well as programmatically.
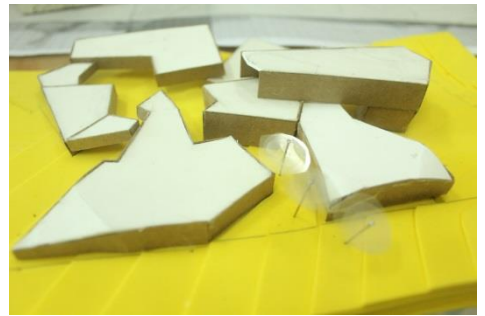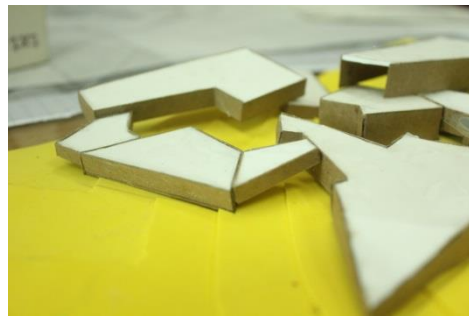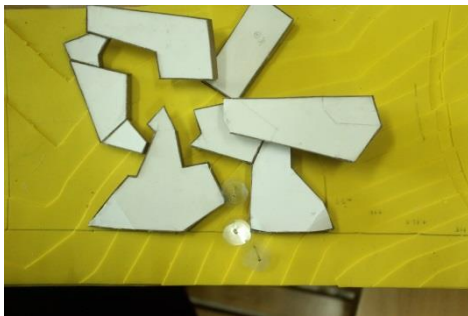
The final form was the resultant of an evolutionary process. It is by no means an end to this experiment nor can it be the only way of realizing the design brief or the design concept. The series of events leading to this materialization of final form, just like contemporary art, were a process of refining an idea. Ideas are intangible. So their realization cannot be justified in terms of aesthetics or formal qualities.

Chapter 06

Conclusion
- **Design culmination**
- **Findings/ design questions answered/ design insights**
- **Impact/ longevity (depending on the project)**

Conclusion:

The project is based on the display design for the work of a contemporary artist. This involved the design of an art gallery and open air performance space. The concept behind this project was to design a series of spaces fostering a variety of events, on which the visitor happens upon and taking cues from that; constructs a narrative of his/her own.

Starting off, the project used site's features as the starting point for building up the narrative. Site, a naturally rich landscape with lush green surroundings; is a hub of the cultural and artistic activities of the city. Also the site has a historical value. A walking track, built in the 1960's towards its right leads to one of the landmarks of Islamabad i.e. The *Lotus Lake.* The project used this landmark as the culminating point for the visitor's journey through the *Art Gallery.*

Apart from this, the project was also an exploration of the architectonics of display space. The quality of ergonomics, light, order, hierarchy, structure, spatial quality, material, hapticity and form, required for a contemporary art gallery were discussed and incorporated in detail. Since contemporary art has a quality of ephemerality about it, no definitive space could be justified for its use. So here, the role of a space to become an efficient machine which facilitates an artist was the goal of the project. But the project was unique in the sense that apart from facilitating the artist, the space had syntax of its own. Not only that the user built up a narrative through the contemporary art process displayed by the artist; but the space also had a story to tell. This story was the enticing factor that led user from one point to another, until the whole space was experienced to its utmost potential.

Site features, surrounding views, architectonic elements; led a design process of form finding that efficiently achieves the project goals. This by no means was the only way. Architectural space can have multiple languages depended upon its context and usage. Although the process that led to the final outcome is a witness of how the design evolved through a continuous exploration of finding the right set of elements to convey the idea; but again this could have been done through some other means. It must be taken into account that the accuracy of the final outcome was not the intended goal behind the project. This output is a stage in the process that can be led further on to evolve more forms and better spaces. Just like contemporary art, it's the process behind the project that was important.

Impact/Longevity of the Project:

The impact of the project can be predicted through following categories:

1. Site regeneration:
   The site in shakarparian will be regenerated because of the interesting building form and use of site features in ways that further accentuate the landscape quality and the site's historical value. *Lotus Lake* will be remembered as an important historical landmark of the city and shall instruct the value of respecting nature and ecology.

2. An artist's platform:
   For the first time, a project in the city has been designed which gives a well-established platform to the artists of the city as well as the whole country to convey their work to the masses. The site is easily accessible to the residents of both the twin cities. The building form and the programs incorporated, invite users of all types to be attracted and experience the art produced. Also the project invigorates the creativity of the artists because of its lush green surroundings and the variety of spaces generated. The space acts both as a facilitator as well as an activator for the happenings and art related activities that will be taking place. So the building offers the artists an exploratory ground on which they can fully exert their creative potential and explore ways to enhance the display quality of their work.

3. A space for contemporary art:
   The project explores the dynamics of todays' art in detail. It not only discusses the issues involved but also strives to provide solutions to them. Since it evolved from an iterative process, the project has the ability to grow with time and seek new ways of exploring the art quality and an artist's creative potential. The project being sensitive to the context gives a solid foreground to the artists to establish connections between their work and the city.

Works Cited

Akram, Muhammad Sajjad. Interview. Mashal Zaheer. February 2015.

Akram, Shireen. Interview. Mashal Zaheer. november 2014.

Alexander, Mary. Museums in motion: an introduction to the history and functions of museums.
        Rowman & Littlefield, 2008.

Bataille, Geroges. "Museum." Leach, Neil. Re-thinking Architecture. n.d. 22-23.

Boltanski, Christian. contemporary artists in conversation Tamar Garb. October 1996.

Botton, Alain de. "The Hedmark Museum in Hamar, Norway : The ruins of the Bishop's Manor." Living
        Architecture (1993): pp. 132-145.

Calvino, Italo. Invisible Cities. n.d.

Corbusier, Le. L'Esprit Nouveau. 1922.

Doudlas Grieco, Wendy Ing, Nina Rappaport. Hadid Studio Yale. n.d.

Friedman, Jonathan Block. Creation in Space. n.d.

Hansmeyer, Michael. michael-hansmeyer.com. n.d. 4 November 2014 <http://www.michael-
        hansmeyer.com/flash/l-systems.html>.

Hurmat-ul-Ain. Untitled Mashal Zaheer. 27 februaury 2015.

Idrees. Current functional status of PNCA Mashal Zaheer. 1 November 2014.

Kappraff, Jay. Connections. 2nd . Denver: World Scientific Publishing Co. Pte. Ltd., 1990.

Krish, Sivam. en.wikipedia. 2013. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Generative_Design>.

Lavalou, Armelle. "'Sverre Fehn: special issue'." Architecture d'Aujourd'hui (1993): 81-125.

Lyngstad, Sverre. Scandinavian Review (Winter 1997/1998).

Mirza, Quddus. "Editorial." march 2015. artnowpakistan.com. 24 may 2015
        <http://www.artnowpakistan.com/articles.php?article=Editorial---March-2015>.

Piano, Renzo. Interview. Charlie Rose. 17 02 2005.

Pollio, Marcus Vitruvius. <u>On Architecture</u>. Penguin Books Ltd, 80 Strand, London WC2R ORI, England, 51-58 BC.

Rana, Rashid. <u>In Conversation with Rashid Rana</u> Madyha Leghari. 2015.

W.Moore, Charles. <u>Chambers of a Memory Palace</u>. n.d.

Zafar, Farhat. Interview. Mashal Zaheer. February 2015.

Annexure

Interview with a CDA official regarding *Site Selection*

Interviewee: Abdul Waheed
              Director Environment Wing CDA
Interviewer: Mashal Zaheer

MZ: There are many illegal art galleries privately functioning in the city in spite of the presence of PNCA. What's your take on that?

AW: Yes there are. These are not allowed to work without the permission of the authorities. Countless times they have been granted notices for immediate closure but they extend it through appeals and unofficial means.

MZ: How does CDA work in-terms of any proposed changes in the original master plan of Islamabad?

AW: CDA doesn't allow any construction other than allowed in original master plan. But if feasibility proposals are made, exceptions can be catered to.

MZ: Are there any former examples of such changes in master plan?

AW: Yes, the construction of Monal restaurant is one such example. In this project, government was approached from the prime minister level and thus changes were made in the plan. Although, Margalla hills come under green zone and are not open for construction.

MZ: If a feasibility proposal is made to the CDA for an art center on the site adjacent to Japanese park, will CDA consider it?

AW: Yes, CDA authorities do consider all such proposals. And can allow for constructions if rendered feasible.

Interview with Visual Artists & Critics regarding *Project Relevance & Typology*

Interviewee:

Shireen Akram

BFA from National College of Arts Lahore

MA (art gallery and museum studies) from the UK

Teacher, painter, critic, musicologist and *art critic*

Interviewer:

Mashal Zaheer

a. What do you think of museum as an edifice?

A museum as an edifice can add a lot of character and its disposition as a public space whether for educational purposes or entertainment can change accordingly (depending on who the museum is catering to)

b. Who is the primary user of a museum?

The public (in my opinion at least in the West, the trend of museums and visiting them is not the same here as it is there).

c. What social and cultural purposes does a museum have?

Museums have always had to modify how they worked, and what they did, according to the context, the plays of power, and the social, economic, and political imperatives that surrounded them. Museums, in common with all other social institutions, serve many masters, and must play many tunes accordingly. The success of a museum can be defined by the ability to balance all the tunes that must be played and still make the sound worth listening to. At the present time, in many areas where decisions are now being made about the funding and maintenance of museums, hard questions are now being asked about the justification of museums, about their role in the community, and their functions and potentials. Museums and art galleries have been in the forefront of representing cultural values and have been utilized as locations of instruction for centuries.

d. What is required of a museum in any particular context or region?

The functional requirements of a museum are to be able to research, conserve, preserve, educate and entertain.

e. If museum has an educational purpose then can a built form effectively serve the purpose of educating people or act as an easily approachable archive?

Yes it most definitely has an educational purpose. The museum is a public institution where learning (conscious or subconscious) happens. Museums interpret their collections for visitors in one way or another. A museum is only a warehouse, an archive or a storage place for objects if it doesn't welcome visitors and, in some form, attempt to educate them.

f. If museum is a public space, how should it locate itself?

Yes it is most definitely a public space. It should be accessible to the general public which would include th*e handicapped and senior citizens.*

g. *How can architecture play its role for achieving an effective museum design that not only educates people but also efficiently displays the objects of historical or cultural significance?*

Museums have different strategies and, to some extent, they have a strange and schizophrenic attitude toward their visitors. The goal of art museums is generally for people to look long and hard at works of art. But museums also tempt visitors to keep going on to the next object since they have so many objects displayed. The way people visit museums creates tension between really focusing on learning how to see, and pursuing all sorts of other goals. Museums are also social places. People tend to visit in groups or families. So that contemplation and reflection on art is undercut by the other ways that museums serve the public in our culture.

h. *What role PNCA has played in the past few years to promote the art and artists of Pakistan and how effective these efforts were?*

The purpose of the PNCA specifically the National Art Gallery was to display and exhibit Pakistani artists (from the Masters to the contemporary artists) as well as to hold exhibitions from overseas. I feel it has not done enough to promote Pakistani artists or to hold exhibitions as effectively as its purpose was. A whole museum team is required to make it a success but in the PNCA there is a lack of qualified people and bureaucracy and nepotism runs deep.

Interviewee:
Hurmat-ul-Ain
Masters in Fine Arts studio (School of Art Institute of Chicago)

Assistant Professor
Department of Architecture, SADA NUST H-12

Interviewer:
Mashal Zaheer

What do you do?

Im an artist and art educationist. So I see myself as thinking art and talking about art. And sometimes as making art, for everything that I do in the intention of making art turns out to be art in the end no matter if it's a commodity or an object.

What kind of work you excel in?

I don't excel at anything. I'm finding my medium and I guess I'll always be defining my medium. My own self, my body and my able thinking is my excelling point.

I like to create images. And I don't think there is any medium that would restrict me as to how to create those images.

So do you normally collaborate?

I do both. I work solo as well as in collaboration. I think every day we do is in collaboration. I don't see myself as this solo artist who has any fixed ideas about their own individual role.

So how do you think your individual work can be collaboration?

Well because I think my individual work is in collaboration with the subject matter which is not very individualistic. Its post-modern so it's very much context driven and very content driven. So it's very much based on what kind of image I'm making and whose image I'm making; where am I making it and where I chose to display it.

So you feel context has to play a major role in your work and the changing scenarios have affected it in some way?

Definitely, I think my work is constantly in flux or transition. That's something, I think is a good thing.

So you think this has affected the process and identity of your work, maybe techniques as well?

Yes, but there is something that has always been in work is *the self* and the *social structures* that define the self and the other. So how my work has evolved or transformed at least in one direction that is that I have started working a lot with these national identities, as how different nations build character based on simple things like hospitality, or sharing of food or sharing of ideas and looking at art and how do

they perceive art and what do they wear and what is acceptable and otherwise? What's a norm and what's an anomaly? And what is convention and what breaks convention? So definitely, living as an immigrant in another country developed this awareness of what you do and where you go.

So has it affected your medium as well?

I did start off as a painter but I hardly painted. I hardly painted even when I was supposed to be painting. So no, I don't think my medium has changed a lot. I go for very effective mediums or very efficient mediums. I don't have a lot of patience. So I don't go for a lot of time consuming or labor intensive mediums. I like to work with creating images that can be done instantly and can be communicated instantly also. I like to use opportunities or windows to create those images. So photography becomes a very important tool here.

So how do you choose your display or performance spaces? Is there a specific criterion for that?

No, I think I make do with what I get. Well most of the time or almost all of the time, I have been invited to perform in a particular space. And that's very different or I mean contrary to me suggesting that this is the kind of space I would want this to happen. But that also means that I have very fixed ideas of what I want to do inside this space. I'll usually go and have a look and then propose where and how I want that. So I want some kind of a space where people are looking inward from outside. So you know even inside the space if there is a glass or a window that can create a distinction so there is a kind of a perforation between the viewer and the watched. So I'm interested in these kinds of spaces that have some kind of a framework to them.

Do you think articulate display spaces are necessary for an artist?

Yes, I think they are. Because of the different structures that have been developed since a very long time. There are these structures that facilitate the display of art without a lot of clutter; otherwise you can display work in your own homes as well. For homes and residential spaces, they are meant to provide comfort; they are functional in a very specific way. So be able to view art, you have to sometimes get rid of the context also; or if the context is there then use it very very consciously. So you can't expect of a lot of different artists with a lot of different mediums to be able to display in the same kind of space. but that's just one side of the story, I think that the contemporary art is so conscious of its origin and its regional bearings, ethnicity or its indigenous origin that it does not shy away from using those contexts to their own advantage.

So if you have performed in a particular space and then you're asked to re-enact that same performance someplace else, would you agree to that?

Definitely, I think that one of the limitations in the kind of work that I do has to do with time and has to do with space. So time and space are always changing. You can never get the time back and even in the exact same space you cannot recreate the exact same performance. So why even try it? So that's not something I am worried about at all. I do not look for similar spaces where similar performances can happen by the given limitations of that specific time and space.

So this generates another kind of argument that every art piece has to accommodate with the given space because that's how these situations are going to be.

Yes, but every art piece is not built as a structure. Sometimes, art pieces are just built as objects and then objects need certain kind of an environment to be able to be seen or experienced. So maybe a certain kind of wood sculpture will need some specific lighting or a viewing distance or elevation and in that case the requirements are so specific that you cannot do it without.

How do you see the art culture in Pakistan? How do you feel it has progressed through time?

I think it's really changing, it's really growing also. Well, when I was young I remember we never thought of anything outside painting or sculpture maybe but then it has really evolved. We think of many other objects apart from painting for instance we are thinking of artist's books as collectible items also. So they are an art piece itself.

Lately there have been happening these literary festivals also, in all three cities. So the kind of supplementary art activation that happens within these main structures where all the galleries in the city get activated to put up their own show in that one weekend under the umbrella of the LLF. So they are picking spots in the city, different sites that get activated at the same time, almost in unison. I think that that phenomenon is changing the way we perceive because initially we only used to consider art for the audience. But now the festival has a little bit of music, little bit of books, bit of politics, it has a bit of social activism and it has very middle class normal people leaving their homes to listen to Zia Mohiuddin; because he is a celebrity but also because he is an artist and a performer. So there is so much happening in these venues that is quite a change and I think it's a positive change.

So that notion of 'art for art's sake', does it not hold legal grounds any longer?

If you look at post-modernist ideas, that has already gone out. That is a modern concern. We need to understand that concern and we need to accept it also. But we also have to understand that post-modern art is a step ahead of that. It doesn't deny it completely but it does say that art for art's sake is also something that is limited by its regional context and by its indigenous craft and by the yellow light that you can have in south-Asia and that every photograph that you take over here will have that light whereas every photograph that you take in Canada will never be able to pull that light. So how can you put those both together and say it's just a formal work? It's not a formal work; it also involves the histories and contexts of both of those people and their lives in it.

Do you choose or would like to have a choice in your audience?

Sometimes I do, sometimes I do want to choose my audience that was only going to be for women. So we were marginalizing a specific class of the society which was intentionally excluding a specific part of our society. I think as long as one does not worry if the art work is going to be viewed by the sort of said

members of the society then you can be really open to these ideas of sharing or including. I think the work defines that. The kind of work will define the kind of members or audience I'm interested in sharing the work with.

So you think the audience is the litmus test for the quality or authenticity of your work?

I don't know. That's a very difficult question. Sure, because it's important to share the work and it's important to get some kind of a feedback from them but I wouldn't say that they are just a vessel. I think taking the art to them is important but what they do with it is not important. So they don't become a vessel, they are only a medium.

Do you like the idea of such designed spaces that particularly signify our culture or society or do you think MOMA would work just as fine here as it is in New York?

No certainly I don't think that art can exist out of these context driven spaces. because if you even could get the exact kind of material and building and exact kind of hanging structures, then even the way we handle art and hang art and show art is also very different. So we are not that professional about it, to be honest. So that will change the kind of space you are going to build for it. So even if you build MOMA here because you have a piece of land here, it won't act the same way and that's what we are interested in rather than how it looks like.

So who is your end user/stakeholder?

I think I'm my end user. Because as an artist you are responsible to yourself before anybody else. It comes down to you. So it's more of how you feel about your work rather than how people receive it or perceive it.

Interviewee:

Muhammad Sajjad Akram

Teaching currently at COMSATS department of architecture and design.

Sculptor, visual artist, writer

Interviewer:

Mashal Zaheer

a. Current scenario of visual art in Pakistan, specifically Islamabad?

Two different cultures exist right now:

1. Embassies: they promote the art of the countries they represent. Also such venues are held where meeting up of cross-cultural ideas is promoted.

2. Government: it promotes the production and propagation of art on a national level. A lot of factors such as bureaucracy, budget and political influences affect this category.

b. In which ways can architecture help to promote their work?

Space for an artist matters a lot. Some artists work in 2D while some in 3D. Even miniature comes into an entirely different category. Availability of sufficient space to accommodate to the changing needs of an artist is the prime requirement of architecture.

c. What's the role of existing galleries and PNCA in the capital? And how effective is it?

Presence of galleries is a significant factor in the promotion of art. The number has also increased significantly with the passage of time. Though PNCA, by far hasn't played that role which was the reason for its conception. Initially it was operating in a small house but now that government has turned it into a complete institution, it greatly requires fulfilling its duty as a place for the production and propagation of art in the city. Maybe it's because of their limited budgets or the location itself that created the gap between the institute and the general public; but this definitely needs to be looked into and catered for.

d. In terms of scale and spatial quality of galleries, PNCA should be a viable option for artists but still most of the artists prefer to display their work in the small private galleries working independently in Islamabad. What do you think is the reason behind this?

There are two things that are required for an artist, one is the space required for display while the other is a viable clientele for profitable sale of the work. PNCA lacks the second requirement. The clientele that is attracted to the small galleries in Islamabad is much better than that for PNCA. In case of projects financed by the government or the embassies, it's easier for the artists to accommodate to such scale and budget. But for a free-lance artist, it's difficult to meet up the budget needs without the possibility of a resourceful clientele.

e. Who is the primary user of a museum?

Primary user is the artist himself/herself. First he or she needs to explore the requirements of space to properly design and create the work for that space. Secondary user will be the viewer or the visitor of space. For he or she perceives or comes in contact with the displayed work later.

f. What social and cultural purposes does a museum have?

To convey and promote a common man's voice. To promote ideals and issues of a society and an artist.

g. What do you think should be the probable location of recreation zones in Islamabad? Is Shakarparian justified to be such a place?

As an artist, I prefer that your surrounding is full of art and filled with inspiration. Location doesn't matter much. Also most of the recreational spaces are concentrated in this zone so it's a logical planning. Art should be accessible to the common man because an artist wants to educate and enlighten people.

h. Would you prefer secondary programs to promote the office of art galleries and museums?

Artists are shifting knowledge from themselves to the public in general. It can be done in any kind of space if it meets the requirements of a display space. The spaces can be customizable. Even an office space can work for a gallery. Open area, pavilions, shopping malls, especially mobile galleries can be a great solution to our contextual issues. Multi-functional spaces are great because they cater to a variety of users.

i. Would do you think is the potential location for a future establishment of a museum in Islamabad?

The area behind Club road, Shakarparian is quite scenic and yet untouched. It holds a great promise for a place for a museum.

Interviewee:

Saadia Mirza

BA in *design architecture* from NCA
MA from HARVARD
Lecturer at School Of Art, Design and Architecture, NUST

a. In which ways can architecture help to promote their work?

Architecture should make it accessible to the people. Architecture should reach out to the people who can't reach it to themselves.

b. What do you think of museum as an edifice?

Globally the idea of museum is changing. People are looking at museums as places where only the rich can afford to go. So it's important to make a distinction of what kind of user you are catering to. Public spaces, open areas can also work for me as an artist. Also it depends upon the medium of work.

c. Who is the primary user of a museum?

For artist, the space is an instrument while the viewer will be the primary stakeholder. In terms of visual art, artist will tune the instrument but in case of performance arts, artist will only act as a catalyst. The viewer will direct the dynamics of space.

d. What social and cultural purposes does a museum have?

Museums in the past were meant for elite. People who needed to express their wealth by going to huge monuments of pride and strength. But now the role of museum or how it's been looked at has changed. Art is looked upon as a free source to be looked at. And it should be the role of a museum to make it so.

e. If museum is a public space, how should it locate itself?

A public space can be anywhere. It can be mobile. It can travel.

f. How can architecture play its role for achieving an effective museum design that not only educates people but also efficiently displays the objects of historical or cultural significance?

By making it accessible to the people.

Interviewee:

Farhat Zafar
Visiting faculty (teaches ***art history****)* Fatima Jinnah University RWP

Landscape artist

> She is a landscape painter and loves to paint fruits and plants. She enjoys her work and believes that art is for enjoyment and should be for promoting happiness. She believes that it's not the role of a museum to help the artist get across their thought process. Because if the message isn't getting across then it's the fault of the artist itself that he or she didn't portray it well.

a. In which ways can architecture help to promote their work?

From architecture, artist requires two things:

1. Spacious display
2. Proper viewing area

b. *What role PNCA has played in the past few years to promote the art and artists of Pakistan and how effective these efforts were?*

The art galleries in Islamabad are playing a great role in promoting art in the city but the problem with them is their capacity. They are operating in houses and are not spacious enough to accommodate to the needs of currently working artists. While PNCA was designed with a specific goal but the problem is with its location. Being in the red zone hinders its accessibility.