**“NEW MNIR” DESIGN COMPETITION**

**Urban connection and historial concentration**

The acceptance/bearing of the proposal is to achieve simultaneously the horizontal connection in the urban spontaneous tissue and promenade by introducing a new public open plaza, like a garden-chamber in the traditional tissue and the multi-layer historial assemblage, each with a specific architecturally symbolic presentation. Of course is meaningful to specify that, on the other hand, once inside from the city liveness, the *garden courtyard acts as an oculus of spatial stabilization and recovery*, therefore loaded with steady geometrical clarity.

**The historic significance layers – the essential past**

The first layer to approach, the nucleus of the entire composition connected to the city , plain and simple is the *hypostyle chamber, the garden-courtyard* understood both as a representation of the roman forum/ agora and an urban garden for the inhabitants and visitors of the town. The covering, desired to be a heavy but almost *non-gravity slab*, with columns that seam more tighten than loaded (supporting), are distributed uniformly random, forming in-between the places for the main historial references: the base of the Roman Column, perceived from the sight level, as its original condition, but without the solemnity, and the capital curatorial exhibited, the Saint George statue, the Tombstone, Trajan’s head sculpture, the statue of the Roman Citizen, the Osiris Altar, the House of Books. The model of old Bucharest guards the entrance to the Old Town exhibition. The “suspended” slab leaves the inner facades of the old building visible and exhibited, allowing the light to flow and elevate its relief and decoration.

The second layer, the *mono-style chamber*, changes the area of argumentation as it refers to compression and concentration in a discourse of tectonics. It shelters the frieze of the Column in a total perimeter circular perception, with the model of Rome by Gismonti and the Antiquity exhibition.

The third layer (in-between) is dedicated to the laboratories for restauration and conservation, that changes the expression accordingly, *the septum-divided*, with close connection to the deeper general storage levels on which they are addicted, with microclimate control. The presence of structure remain significant to the lowest levels, where it expresses the density and serried.

There’s also a major conceptual stratification that comprises the whole Museum, existing and new: the underground of the Museum contains the fundaments of nation’s history: Prehistory, Antiquity, the Historical Treasure, the Column frieze, the patrimony storage, the restoration and the conservation laboratories, artefacts; the ground floor with the hypostyle court but also with the public lobby connection to the city, more open, more lively, contains the temporary exhibitions, the cafeterias and restaurant, the exhibition of the Historic Center of Bucharest and the Museum of Romanians Abroad; the upper floors are dedicated to historic section from middle ages to nowadays; the top (second floor and attic) individualizes the auditorium and the library in central view referential position, emphasizing the structure of the main cupolas and the wing on Calea Victoriei.

**The significant structure**

The provided information presents the building 120 years old, with a high vulnerability to earthquakes of significant intensity action, under the current rules. This refers both to the building as a whole and to some components whose stability is precarious, such as ornamental elements from the roof and cornices. The proposal took into consideration the requisite that major interventions will be needed to increase the load capacity to horizontal action forces, whilst keeping the rigid character of the vertical structure, made of massive masonry walls and pilasters.

We consider that there are sufficient structural walls with ample thickness, compact or with functional openings, whose capacity can be increased through several methods, up to all-height concrete plating including the flaring of the foundations. These elements of great rigidity and lateral increased capacity, can provide the necessary protection for the other punctual vertical elements, such as columns and pilasters, to which interventions are more difficult. Still, there’s also an extra reserve for a vertical drilling solution also for these elements, if necessary.

Also, from the same information, the floor upper-ground levers are made of metal beams type I on one direction and a concrete poorly armed slab at the bottom flanged of the beams; over the beams there are wooden elements on the other direction and parquet flooring.

All the structural steel elements are assembled by riveting and are designed strictly to the calculated value of the effort presumed, without any significant bearing capacities reserves. It is likely that it will need to be consolidated at the floor levels with a rigid slab of reinforced concrete. To ensure the fire protection of the steel beams, it is recommended their embedding in concrete, and in the same time increasing the bearing capacity with soft reinforcement at the lower central area of the beams.

Creating the rigid slabs would improve the overall behavior of the building and would ensure the horizontal transport of the seismic inertial forces to the vertical earthquake-resistant elements. This is imperative on the east side (parallel to Calea Victoriei) where between the two tubes under the domes, on a distance of 35m there’s no vertical element seismic-resistant.

Our proposal for the new courtyard extension is based on the all above considerations. Its above ground-level is detached from the inner façade of the existing building, more controlling the lighting of the actual spaces, together with the possibility to see and to be seen from the outside. Indeed the above ground level has a vertical structure made of pure gravitational columns, irregular but uniformly distributed, allowing reduced size sections, seemingly unnatural. They support a tridimensional structure, which in a lapidary aesthetics, at the lower part has a thin slab of perlite concrete, apparent in the court, a replica of the slabs of the old buildings floors. Moreover, the solution would allow minimizing the mass in vibration at this level by connecting on two perpendicular sides to the existing building strengthened. Connections can be done with two or three small section bars, on each of the two sides.

The fragile columns do not penetrate all through the underground levels. At the slab of the court the efforts are discharged/ downloaded through a system of metallic arc beams, leading to the perimeter walls (distanced from the inner façade) and the central strong pillar, in the mono-style exhibition hall. Lateral thrusts are taken by buttress walls.

Underneath, the restoration laboratories and storage levels, that penetrate the groundwater level, are solved distanced from the existing building limit of the court, allowing the works for the slurry waterproof walls in good conditions, with a minimal influence on the foundations of the existing building.

Worth mentioning that the horizontal seismic loads transferred to the consolidating existing building are below 15% of the area equivalent to one level of the actual construction. This means an increase of 3-4 percent of seismic load transferred to the existing consolidated building.

**The presence towards the city and neighborhood – the facades**

The limits of the Museum become both firm and permeable. Whilst the court is allowing the inhabitants and the tourists through the two vaulted passages all through the day, also independent from the museum schedule, our proposal opens in the limits of the historic study the former entrances of the historic Post building: from the Franceza street, animated with new terraces of cafeteria and pubs, we opened the portico entrances to our restaurant and cafeteria, and the separate access to the library; from the Stavropoles street we proposed the access for the temporary exhibitions; to the Postei street we opened the 6 secondary access, out of which is meaningful to mention the direct entrance to the Exhibition of the Historic Centre of Bucharest and Museum of Romanians Abroad.

**SPIRITUALITY AND FUNERARY PRACTICES EXHIBITION**

Set into the underground level, as already mentioned, part of the fundaments of the nation’s history, we considered proper the small height, low, heavy ceiling. The scenery of the uncovered brick walls and concrete top, is the scenery to expose the small objects of the collection, for which we proposed a typology variation:

**TYPOLOGY OF EXPOSURE**

**TROUGH OR THE MEAL CHEST** The meal (flour) chest, carved in soft wood, with a form traditional symbolic, keeps/shelters together related objects, as if offered to the sight

**EXHIBIT SLAB** The slab cantilevered from the walls, supports either the individual object as is or in a window-showcase

**THE CONTAINING BEAM** The small objects find their exposure places carved, one by one, in massive wood beam, as they mark the space around them. The beam, suspended on thin metallic legs, rises the objects to the suited height for perception. It supports either the individual object as is or in a window-showcase

**PIEDESTAL** Made of massive wood, it exhibits singular objects, preferable in window-showcase

**THE BRANCH BEAM** Moreover than the containing beam, this exhibit variation ads with an “embracement” the place for the visitor to get close to the objects and feel surrounded by them

**THE CHEST** Traditional furniture form for depositing and storage, arranges several grouped objects

**THE CANTILEVERED BEAM** Similar to the containing beam, straight and parallel to a wall that advances and retreats, is supported by thin metallic cantilever out of the wall

**THE MODERN ROMANIA EXHIBITION**

The Modern Romania Exhibition is part of the Modern and Contemporary Section, for which, similar to all the sections we looked for or created the architectural proper space. Here the decision was for a proper vertical conformation on the Franceza Street, form the 1st level to the attic. In that wing of the building we restored mainly the original section with skylight pavements or direct openings in between these floors. This facilitates a scenographic approach of the exhibited objects, exposed either in glass-showcases or on open exposure. The disposition has as base a metallic structure, inspired and connected with the structure of the new repositioned skylight, in a lapidary expression.