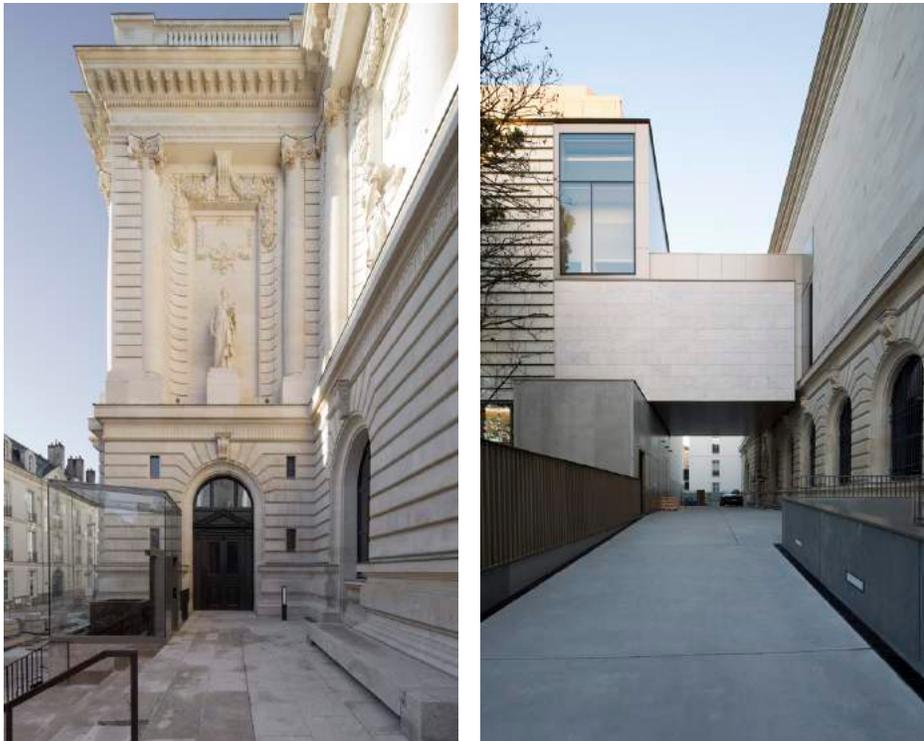


STANTON WILLIAMS

January 2017

Stanton Williams' transformation of Musée d'arts de Nantes is set to complete in June 2017



Stanton Williams' *Musée d'arts de Nantes*; photo © Stefano Graziani

Stanton Williams' €48.8 million transformation and extension of the *Musée d'arts de Nantes* will open to the public in June 2017. For this landmark cultural project, the London-based architecture practice has updated the historical site – an exemplary expression of the city's civic and cultural pride and one of the largest Fine Arts Museums in France outside Paris – adding a contemporary layer to an exceptional accumulation of historical monuments. This new design

blends a finely tailored museography around the collection with contemporary architecture - transforming the introverted image of the former Musée des Beaux-Arts into a vibrant, democratic and welcoming contemporary space that is open to the city and its people.

The *Musée d'arts de Nantes* incorporates several key extension buildings to the original 19th Century 'Palais', and 17th Century Oratory Chapel, with the addition of a 4,000 sqm contemporary art exhibition space. An auditorium, library, new educational facilities, archive, and external sculpture court have also been created. A fully integrated landscape design will lead the way to the museum from the surrounding Place de Oratoire and Botanical Gardens, creating new access routes and enhancing the museum's renewed central role in the urban fabric of the area.

The extension is divided into four levels of art galleries. Layered one above the other, each level is linked by broad clefts that convey natural light throughout. These bridges and landings are new public routes that allow visitors to navigate the complex trajectory of the collections, spanning from ancient art to contemporary with unique art installations. The cityscape outside is presented as another artwork - offering a reversed extension of space; it carries the imprints of the pedestrians, cyclists, and cars, as they journey around.

In keeping with the grand Beaux-Arts architecture of the Musée, a consistent palette of materials has been applied through the renovated spaces. This creates the impression that the museum is one monolithic volume - carved out of a single block of stone. The entire south elevation of the new extension is glazed with a translucent laminated marble - a reference to the time when alabaster and marble were used in order to draw natural light into Medieval churches whilst protecting precious artworks within. The natural light of the nearby Atlantic is integral to the redesign, and the new museum experience. The existing glass roof that used to light the galleries has been replaced by complex superimposed layers of glass, innovative stretched fabrics and modular stores. The result is a 'passing clouds' effect that retains and optimises natural light and emphasises the new focus on openness and connects the visitors with their environment.



Stanton Williams' *Musée d'arts de Nantes*; photo © Stefano Graziani

In response to an all-encompassing brief, Stanton Williams has collaborated with Cartlidge Levene to redesign and develop *Musée d'arts de Nantes*' overall visual identity. This includes bespoke design of the lobby, café, museum shop, cloakroom and reception, and the overall formulation of a clear visual identity, which unites the museum's exterior and interior, and creates a holistic museum experience that will have a lasting impression on visitors.

Patrick Richard, Director at Stanton Williams, leading this project, says: *"We are grateful to the city of Nantes for entrusting us to transform and extend the City's Museum of Art, as well as designing the exhibition spaces for their exceptional and valuable art collections, providing flexible galleries for temporary art installations. We have also had the unique opportunity to transform the main street leading to the museum and, alongside graphic designers Cartlidge Levene, create the graphic identity and signage for the Museum. The new Museum has been conceived around the existing collections; creating an intimate dialogue between art and architecture that firmly embeds the new Museum within the distinctive historical setting of the city."*

ENDS

Press Contacts

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Project Details

Key Values

Contract value: 48.8 M€ (tax-free)

Key Dates

Appointed: 2009

Start on site: 2014

Completion due: Spring 2017

Delivered on time

Building Details

Location: Nantes, France

Size: New Building: 4,000m²

Renovation (Palais): 13,000m²

Total: 17,000m²

Nantes Information

Client: Ville de Nantes and Nantes Métropole

Under ex-Mayor of Nantes: Jean-Marc Ayrault

(also ex-Prime Minister, is now Minister of Foreign Affairs)

Mayor at appointment: Jean-Marc Ayrault (1989-2012)

Interim Mayor: Patrick Rimbart (2012-2014)

Current Mayor: Johanna Rolland (2014-present)

Musée d'arts de Nantes

Director: Sophie Lévy

Previous Director: Blandine Chavanne

Project Team

Contractor: Bouygues Bâtiment Grand Ouest

Cost Consultant: ARTELIA

Structural & Envelope Engineer: RFR& SEPIA

Services Engineer: Max Fordham & GEFI

Fire Safety: Casso & Associés

Signage/Graphics: Cartlidge Levene

Approved inspector & CDM Coordinator: VERITAS

OPC: E2CT

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Notes to Editors:

About Stanton Williams

Stanton Williams are a multi-award winning architectural design practice based in London. The practice has developed its portfolio from an initial focus on museums and galleries towards a wide variety of projects, all of which demonstrate its overarching objective of putting the user's experience of space, light and materials at the forefront of the agenda, as well as creating places that sensitively respond to their cultural, social and physical context.

Current projects include: the relocation of the Museum of London to West Smithfield; a new academic facility for UCL East; university key worker homes and local centre in the North West Cambridge Development; a research centre for Great Ormond Street Hospital and the new glass entrance pavilions at Tottenham Court Road Underground Station. Recently completed projects include a student residential building in King's Cross; Riverwalk, a residential development located on the River Thames and The Lighterman, a three storey restaurant and bar also in King's Cross.

[@_SW_News](http://www.stantonwilliams.com)

About the Musée d'arts de Nantes and its original building

Since its inception, Musée des Beaux-Arts de Nantes (which will be renamed as the *Musée d'arts de Nantes* when it reopens in 2017) has developed a rich collection of over 10,000 works from the period ranging from the 13th century to the contemporary, showcasing large-scale installation works by prominent international artists, such as Anish Kapoor and Ernesto Neto. The richness and diversity of this heritage enables the Museum to implement ambitious programmes to audience both domestic and foreign.

The existing museum, the former "Palais des Arts," which Stanton Williams has renovated, was designed by Nantes-based architect Clément-Marie Josso and opened to public in 1900. The core of the structure was the "patio" - a central courtyard covered by a skylight. Two floors of galleries and exhibition rooms surrounded the patio, which was reached via a vaulted lobby, equipped with a monumental double staircase, which is now part of the protected heritage. Josso took inspiration from the Grande Galerie in the Louvre to design the skylight upstairs, using the latest technology in metal framing developed at the time.

La Chapelle de L'Oratoire, or Oratory Chapel, is an integral part of the museum now. Consecrated in 1665, it is a fine example of Counter-Reformation architecture. It was entrusted to the museum when it was restored in 1988.