

THE PROJECT

The architectural project (design?) of the New Egyptian Museum (Museo Egizio?) is signed by Aimaro Isola, ISOLARCHITETTI, Dante Ferretti (scenography), Paolo Marconi, Giancarlo Battista and Gabriella De Monte (restoration), ICIS (design, construction site, structures and safety supervision), Proeco and Itaca (technical plants).

The project won the international competition announced in 2007 by the Turin Museum of Egyptian Antiquities Foundation. Aimaro Isola is emeritus professor at the Politecnico di Torino, Academician of the Accademia di San Luca, Member of the Academy of Sciences of Turin.

Aimaro Isola with Roberto Gabetti (until 2000) and Isolarchitetti are among the most important in the history of Italian architecture. They introduced into modernity the values of tradition and landscape.

They signed many innovative and surprising projects (Bottega d'Erasmus, Olivetti Residential complex, Eni Fifth Office Building, IBM Headquarters, Archaeological Museum in Turin, Museum of Contemporary Art in Benevento, Accademia Carrara in Bergamo, Restoration of the Royal Hunting Residence of Stupinigi etc ...)

The design of the Egyptian Museum

The architectural project fits and continues the cultural history of the building of Guarino Guarini enriching and completing the meanings and functions that have occurred over time: Jesuit College, Academy of Sciences, Natural History Museum, Sabauda Gallery. A careful philological work and the use of the most advanced technologies have allowed bringing to light the values expressed by the Savoy culture.

To the volumes of the original Museum and of the Sabauda Gallery, recovered and restored for the exhibition functions, the project has added three new floors under the courtyard area, to give wider space to hospitality services, to technological plants, to new depots and workshops. The project has also searched for additional spaces by raising the building in Via Duse to create a charming roof-garden and has rehabilitated all the attics for the most sophisticated plant equipment.

MUSEUM ITINERAY

The visitor crossing the courtyard of the Palace, enters the "manica Schiaparelli" which hosts the library, the cafeteria and the "oasis" of the roof garden.

The reception is located on the first floor underground with ticket offices, cloakroom, bookshop, workshops, services, etc. Large skylights provide natural light and optical continuity with the courtyard. Fast vertical paths - escalators up to 24 meters of difference in level - lead the visitor directly at the highest floor of the museum, accompanied by the line of the Nile, a fascinating installation of Dante Ferretti.

The museum visit itinerary, about two kilometres long, will then go down through spaces variously characterized: at the top the great ark of 40 meters displayed on three levels collects and shows archaeological findings belonging to collections that remained hidden for years in the museum storage rooms. At the lower floors the itinerary goes through the historic halls, the gallery, the transept and the new spaces. Whenever possible traces of the museum displays that were used during the times have been recovered, as the one of Schiaparelli and the most questionable one of the Sabauda Gallery of Sanpaolesi. The 19th century staircase of Mazzucchetti, carefully restored, has been extended to the floor underground to bring back the visitors to the services located at the exit of the museum.

THE SETTINGS OF DANTE FERRETTI

The Maestro Dante Ferretti, has developed models and drawings of the scenery of the various rooms in accordance with the project of Isolarchitetti.

In particular, his work has characterized the huge hall at the top floor, the elevators, the great Nile, the Gallery of the Kings.

THE EXHIBITION DISPLAY CASES

Alongside the gravestones and statues, the outstanding archaeological finding that are the real stars of the museum "float" inside more than one hundred transparent, essential and sophisticated exhibition display cases that have been carefully designed by Isolarchitetti.

The rediscovered historical rooms and the essential modernity of the interventions are among the strength points of the architectural design that allowed here to put into effect the new "scientific program".

THE RESTORATION

The architectural and artistic restoration of the Museum has brought back in some rooms of the first floor the oldest aspect that was possible to recover below the several layers of paint that were put into place over time, allowing to retrace some stages of the life of the Palace-Museum. The best preserved examples can be found in the oldest wing of the building, corresponding to the block facing Via dell'Accademia.

In the Sarcophagi Hall, the beautiful decoration of the vault was brought to light and carefully restored. It was realized with "mezzo fresco" technique dating back to 1825, with animals of each species and architectural motifs, witness of the Museum of Natural Sciences, hosted here from 1802 until 1876. From the same period are the wall decorations, with painted medallions and "marmorino" finishing of different colours, which bring back to their impressive original appearance the two great halls of the wing facing Piazza Carignano, built on a project by Arch. Talucchi in 1825-27.

Also in the Epoca Tarda Room it was chosen to reveal and restore the rich decoration of the vault, a symmetric architecture with deliberately projecting elements, such as capitals and frames embellished with garlands of flowers and swallows, framing the sky that appears in the central part on the vault. The precious decoration is completed on the wall with fake symmetrical windows with *trompe l'oeil*, that are present also in other rooms of the most ancient wing. Finally, in the transept of this latter wing, the restoration has enhanced the decorations of the "Egyptian-style" exhibition display wanted by Ernesto Schiaparelli, Director of the Museum since 1893.

THE STRUCTURES

The relevant structural works allowed the building to be adapted to the needs expressed for the new museum and to the requirements of the latest regulations of the sector including the seismic ones.

The careful approach to the historical construction led to an extensive on-site testing to address the design choices, to monitor the existing structures, to assess the processes in progress, to verify the finished works.

The three and a half years of construction site saw the delicate "top-down" realization of the underground floors in the courtyard next to and below the historic facades, the rebuilding of much of the low concrete building on Via Duse, the works of demolition, reinforcement and consolidation of the walls and of the vaults in the original wings on Via Principe Amedeo and Via Accademia delle Scienze.

The main construction and building materials that have been used are: solid brick (most often recovered from demolition works) and natural hydraulic lime mortar; concrete (in good measure with lightweight aggregates) with reinforcing bars and nets in stainless steel; steel for the metal carpentry of the hanging mezzanines of the spectacular exhibition volume on via Accademia and for the structures of the "roof garden".

Now, if the visitor does not notice - except when punctually wanted - that there are historic structures rehabilitated and new structures, it is a sign that it has been reached one of the most important goals: the respect of the existing.

THE BUILDING SITE

The recent experience of the restoration of the oldest wing of the building, still used by the Academy of Sciences, had taught us that these ancient walls can hide surprises that the drawings and documents from the archives do not tell.

Even the building site of the Egyptian Museum was, from this point of view, a confirmation: in fact unexpected surprises were not missing.

Positive surprises, such as the discovery of the first floor decorations on vaults and walls of quality and extent far greater expectations and bad surprises: during the excavation of the courtyard we find out an old tank that had contaminated the courtyard soil

A challenging construction site, in which daily invasive workings and heavy machinery, coexisted with scalpels and paintbrushes of the restorers, and where the facilities of a modern museum have been able and had to adapt to the geometry of a baroque palace to the works of reinforcement, necessary for a structure of four centuries old, weakened by countless transformation and the wounds of all kinds of events, including the bombing in 1943

Hall by hall, room by room, it was found, the balance between different requirements, sometimes conflicting, without compromising the objectives of the project and the quality of the realisation.

Among all, the most difficult challenge was to maintain, for the duration of the construction site, the museum open to visitors, without moving even a single archaeological object outside of the building and without missing a day of work.

MECHANICAL SYSTEMS (air conditioning, water and sanitary system and fire protection).

Technical plant, in particular for energy production, has been designed and realised according to the most recent environmental friendly criteria with a geothermal system to ground water and terminals at low temperature for maximum energy savings, in accordance with the criteria for the preservation of the artworks, the comfort of the visitors and the integrity of the building.

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DESIGN PROJECT

ARCHITECTURE AND GENERAL COORDINATION

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I.C.I.S. s.r.l. (C. Turvani, G. Donna, A. Faletti, L. Luciani, M. Luciani, D. Russo, M. Valente)

RESTORATION

Arch. Giancarlo Battista
Arch. Marco Grimaldi
Prof. Arch. Paolo Marconi
Dr. Maria Gabriella De Monte

EXHIBITION TECHNOLOGIES AND DISPLAY CASES

ISOLARCHITETTI s.r.l. (A. Isola, S. Isola, F. Bruna, M. Battaglia, A. Bondonio, S. Peyretti)

EXHIBITION SETTINGS

Maestro Dante FERRETTI
ISOLARCHITETTI s.r.l. (A. Isola, S. Isola, F. Bruna, M. Battaglia, A. Bondonio, S. Peyretti)

STRUCTURES

I.C.I.S. s.r.l. (G. Donna, A. Baracco, I. Favaro)

TECHNICAL PLANTS

PROECO s.s. (S. Bonfante, F. Pautasso)
ITACA s.p.a. (R. Bellucci Sessa, S. Quintano)

GEOTECHNICS and SUBSERVICES

ICIS srl (S.A. Accotto, G. Bee, S. Loprevite)

CONSTRUCTION SUPERVISION

SITE SUPERVISOR

Arch. Cosimo Turvani (ICIS) with the collaboration of Eng. Fabio Maglione and geom. Marco Figazzolo (ICIS)

EXHIBITION DISPLAY CASES SUPERVISOR

Arch. Stefano Peyretti (ISOLARCHITETTI)

SAFETY IN EXECUTION COORDINATOR

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Arch. Flavio Bruna (ISOLARCHITETTI)

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Arch. Saverio Isola (ISOLARCHITETTI)

ARCHITECTURAL RESTORATION CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER

Arch. Giancarlo Battista, Arch. Marco Grimaldi

ARTISTIC RESTORATION CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER

Dr. Maria Gabriella De Monte

STRUCTURES CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER

Eng. Giuseppe Donna (ICIS)

FLUID-MECHANICAL SYSTEMS CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER

Eng. Giuseppe Bonfante with p.i. Feanco Pautasso (PROECO)

ELECTICAL AND SPECIAL SYSTEMS CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER

Eng. Roberto Bellucci Sessa (ITACA) with Eng. Stefano Quintano (ITACA) and Eng. Paolo Ronco (STIEL)

ACCOUNTING CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER

Arch. Giancarlo Battista with arch. Carla Ceraldi