



CONSTRUCTION PERMIT FOR TR WARSZAWA'S BUILDING

On December 23rd, 2020 the Mayor of the City of Warsaw issued a construction permit for the new TR Warszawa's headquarters – one of the most cutting-edge theatre buildings in Europe. The Construction Permit became final on January 13th, 2021. TR Warszawa's building is designed by the Thomas Phifer and Partners architectural studio, in cooperation with APA Wojciechowski and Buro Happold, and the project engineers are ECM Group Polska S.A. and Portico Project Management. The new TR Warszawa's seat is an element of a two-building complex comprising the theatre and a new home of The Museum of Modern Art. The new seats of both institutions will form an integral part of a new development plan for the area surrounding the Palace of Culture and Science. The museum and theatre buildings will complete the space of the Central Square – the heart of a modern metropolis. Their launch will open new cultural possibilities to the city's residents and visitors.

THE NEW CITY CENTRE

The New City Centre is a long-term strategy, executed in multiple stages by the City of Warsaw. As a result of modernization actions and new investments, the heart of Warsaw will become not only a metropolitan, prestigious, cohesive and green space but also an open, friendly, accessible and safe environment for everyone. The construction of the Museum of Modern Art and TR Warszawa complex is one of the flagship cultural investments within the New City Centre project.

CONSTRUCTION OF THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART AND TR WARSZAWA THEATRE

Since 2014 TR Warszawa and the Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw have been managing the project of the construction of their new headquarters in the Parade Square [Plac Defilad]. Architecture of the building reflects values that are important to TR Warszawa's team, in particular openness understood as a pursuit of explorations and taking artistic risks, introducing new methods of theatrical expression to wide audiences, transparency, mobility and breaking down barriers. The new TR

Warszawa's seat is intended to be a safe, welcoming and easily accessible space for every member of the audience.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE BUILDING, FUNCTIONALITY



Architectural concept of the Museum of Modern Art and TR Warszawa buildings. View from the Świątokrzyski Park. Thomas Phifer and Partners

The urban context

The museum, theatre and the forum between them form a coherent whole, while maintaining distinctiveness from each other and their surroundings. Simple forms of the buildings contrast with the massive and striking Palace of Culture and Science and the commercial architecture in the area. The facades, constructed of simple materials, draw inspiration from abstract art works, epitomize the creative life of the capitol city and emphasize the key role that the Museum of Modern Art and TR Warszawa have in the development of the cultural center of Warsaw. The buildings could not be more different from their surroundings, which symbolizes a unique moment in the city's history.

The project encompasses not only the theatre and museum buildings but also a comprehensive vision of the spatial development plan, including the new infrastructure. The forum between the buildings creates an inviting, vibrant and open meeting place. Simple, strong facades of the buildings mark the edges of the newly designed Central Square and give shape to the more intimate internal forum. The forum is a bustling hub of cultural activities and an open-space meeting spot; both an entrance and a link – it connects the museum and the theatre with the new Central Square and Świątokrzyski Park.

Architecture

The theatre is strongly set between the Central Square, the Palace of Culture and Science and the museum. The cast metal facade adds to the building's constancy and the light reflected off the cladding and its perforations reveal vivid interior of the urban cultural institution, particularly at dusk, when day turns into night. The museum,

more active during the day, is white, bright and light. Its facade material is modern and innovative, corresponding to the modern art presented inside. Glass walls of the ground floor add to the buildings' lightness and create an impression that the building complex is nearly floating over the street. Each of the buildings has its own unique architectural identity but what they have in common is: the scale, proximity and the space between them. Both facades, in their own way, play with shadow and light and thus picture the flow of time – morning to night and season to season.

Authenticity of the materials

Selection of simple, authentic construction materials for the museum and the theatre clearly distinguishes them from the busy facades of the neighboring buildings. Both are authentic, timeless and tried. They express remarkable scale, significance, depth and artistry. Each of these materials gives the facade a specific color, tone and texture.



Architectural concept of the Museum of Modern Art and TR Warszawa buildings. View of the forum between the buildings. Thomas Phifer and Partners

Programme and functions of the theatre

Architecture of the theatre building reflects TR Warszawa's diverse activity that combines experimental art and performances for wide audiences. The building designed by the Thomas Phifer and Partners architectural studio, in cooperation with APA Wojciechowski and Buro Happold, houses two areas where performances, screenings, musical events and interdisciplinary shows can be held. The main auditorium has a maximum capacity of 700 seats and the smaller auditorium, located on the upper floor, 150 seats. In both auditoria the stage area and seats may be freely configured depending on the format and characteristics of the performance. The theatre's building is equipped with modern technologies, which enable swift change of

the repertoire and presentation of large scale performances, concerts, movie and interdisciplinary events, as well as high-tech streamings, low-key art forms, experimental works, and small music forms.

The building is connected with the Parade Square and Świętokrzyski Park via two portals. The 14-meter-tall north and south gates open to their full height which enables organization of open-air artistic events on an unprecedented scale in Poland. With the glass walls of the main auditorium and its location on the forum level, the city becomes a natural background for the performances held inside the building and open-air events. Pedestrians on the Parade Square will be able to observe the rehearsals and everyday preparations for the performances and other cultural events. Main entrance to the theatre is located in the forum. The foyer is a space for meetings and programme-related events. There is also designated space for a restaurant, bistro, box office and cloak room. The foyer is open to the city residents and visitors throughout the day and long after all the theatre performances and other artistic events are finished. The upper floors house a center for artistic exploration, residencies, and educational activities as well as audio and video studios and rehearsal rooms (including a dedicated room for read-throughs). Technical rooms and backstage facilities are located in the core section of the building and underground. Access to the loading docks of the Museum of Modern Art's warehouse, theatre's warehouse and workshops and a shared underground parking with spaces for persons with disabilities are also located at underground level.

Functions of the museum

The museum considers accessibility of public spaces to be a priority and that is reflected in the new headquarters' design. The ground floor's objective is creation of a new quality of city that invites people to spend time with culture on a daily basis and in comfort. Proximity of the tree-lined street and Świętokrzyski Park, which is greatly expanded towards the museum, is intended to encourage it. Visitors are able to easily enter the building from all sides. The glass-walled ground floor invites people inside. On this level there is an open and publicly accessible auditorium (visible from the outside), educational areas and so-called rapid response galleries as well as a café, bookshop and a staircase that connects this level with the exhibition areas located on the upper floors.

The main exhibition spaces of the museum are located on the first and the second floor, around the central staircase. Each of them houses two sets of interconnected galleries. The ones on the top floor are additionally lit by a diffused light from the skylights. On the -1 level there is a cinema for 150 people, an additional educational room, conservation workshops and storerooms.

Exhibition rooms are interspersed with so-called city rooms – areas with city views, where visitors may rest and take a look at the city from a completely new perspective. The building provides opportunities for individual contemplation, but at the same time it is open to the needs of a large audience.



Architectural concept of the TR Warszawa building. View from the Parade Square [Plac Defilad].
Thomas Phifer and Partners

Thomas Phifer: Performance and Art are Essential to Life

Poland has a rich and profound history in the arts. When I first arrived in Warsaw five years ago, I discovered that a renaissance of the city's artistic culture was underway. With this magical revival, it is investing for future generations in a lasting presence in the arts. I saw a youthful, optimistic, and aspirational civic spirit, culturally ambitious and forward-looking while full of pride for its communal history and communal experiences.

TR Warszawa and Museum of Modern Art are the soul and voice of the arts in Warsaw. These two institutions belong together- the visual arts and the performing arts are inextricably linked together as one. They form a cultural heart in the center of this great city. TR Warszawa and Museum of Modern Art frame the Plac Defilad. It is a place that is alive, a place of important history, and a place of gathering, bringing people together to celebrate the arts. In this time of the pandemic we have learned once again to celebrate civic works of architecture and planning that bring us together.

TR Warszawa and Museum of Modern Art are joined together by an outdoor forum, a living room in the heart of the city, that connects Park Świętokrzyski, with Plac Defilad. This forum is a place that is shared between them, both symbolically and physically. It is a flexible place for outdoor performances and outdoor art installations. These two institutions establish a cultural order to the artistic experience in Warsaw that celebrates their presence. These two institutions are in constant dialogue and conversation together, united by the artistic expression of our time.

The architecture expresses their ethos of openness and accessibility, a welcoming presence, inviting people to participate in the artistic experience. They are catalysts for expression and offer an important place of discourse and dialogue. We searched for an architecture that expresses the true ethos of each individual institution, separate and unique identities that speak to one another. They are each strong and present works of architecture that evoke a sense of permanence in order to live proudly next to the Palace of Culture and the adjoining commercial architecture along Marszałkowska Street. The architecture is contemporary reflecting our time and our values, and celebrating the vital importance of these two institutions. It should not mimic what has come before or attempt to satisfy some nostalgic tendencies, rather it should endeavor to expand the contemporary uniqueness of each institution. Great cities are made stronger through a rich diversity, not only through the expression of current technology, materials and construction capabilities, but also in the collective imagination and spirit of their people.

The architecture of TR Warszawa opens to the city. The large glass and steel doors open to connect the performance hall with Plac Defilad and Park Świętokrzyski. Public participation is the program and the poetry of the architecture. Everyone is welcome, and everyone is involved. Performances can be shared between the square and the theatre inside. When the theatre sets are being constructed the doors can open and the people of Warsaw can wander through and witness the wonder of a working theatre. The performance hall is large and completely flexible. The placement of sets, the lighting, the stages and the audience can move and change depending on the performance. Flexibility is the program. The enormity of the performance hall permits limitless theatrical creativity, erasing the boundary between audience and stage, and expanding the creative possibilities. The black box theatre, the rehearsal halls, the lobby theatre, all have large windows opening to the forum, to Plac Defilad, the forum, and to Park Świętokrzyski. Openness is the program. Because of this unique transparency every performance becomes a shared experience with the city. The city and the arts become one. The building is dark grey, providing an elegant backdrop to the sets, actors, lighting, and the audience. It celebrates the performance. As the curtain rises, and as the large doors open, the magic begins as the performance unfolds.

TR Warszawa and Museum of Modern Art will redefine these institutions while projecting Poland's cultural imagination domestically and abroad in buildings that represent a new Warsaw with an international presence. We offer a direct, open and optimistic architecture with a sense of permanence, establishing a home for the culture of the City in all its forms.