



PRESENTATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL
COMPETITION FOR THE DRAFT PROPOSAL
OF THE ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN OF THE
NATIONAL MUSEUM OF MEMORY

International Competition
Architectural Design
National Museum of Memory



CENTRO NACIONAL DE MEMORIA HISTÓRICA

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2.1 Introduction

The International Competition for the Draft Proposal of the Architectural Design of the National Museum of Memory is framed in a scenario of unique meaningfulness, due not only to the political setting the country is going through regarding peace and to the very site upon which the project will be carried out but also because it has been an opportunity to re-examine the many methodologies and procedures associated with public bidding processes through Architecture Competitions.

Emblematically located in the city of Bogota due to its closeness to places of great national or local influence and to the major axes of mobility, the future Museum is seen as an essential part of the Axis of Peace and Memory, which links a succession of facilities, urban operations and sets of monuments, marked by collective purposes, in socio-spatial terms, of the political happenings of the country over the last fifty years.

This International Competition will demand of everyone a peculiar effort to unravel the subtle but unquestionable relationships between politics, city and architecture. As an active platform within the daily occurrences, museums have taken on a peculiar meaning in the world today situating them as transcendent examples of collective thought.

It is also certain, because this suggests an urgent rethinking of the "monumental" condition of architecture, not as an issue which appeals to the size or proportion of buildings but rather as a core movement of release and coming together of crucial social processes among which, and in our case, include the issues of memory and not remembering, intuition and knowledge, reason and emotion which must notably affect the form and contents much the same way that architects conceive of physical supports as being indispensable for life and the building of citizenship.

In keeping with the frame of mind of such a challenge, on this occasion the form of conceiving and organizing the foundations of the International Competition have been laid out, which implies an enormous effort to reinforce not only its image and methodologies but also to focus on those theoretical and sensitive contents which are pertinent to the theme of this public call and which encourage, in acknowledgement, an architecture which is more reflexive, transcendent and investigative and therefore, a greater relation between the expectations of the promoters, the current legal regulatory framework and the products produced by the architects.

2.2 Conceptual document for the National Museum of Memory

2.2.1 Legal Framework

Decree 4803 of December 20, 2011 which regulates Law 1448 of June 10, 2011, awards the National Center of Historical Memory the duty of “Designing, creating and administrating a Museum of Memory, with the purpose of achieving the strengthening of collective memory regarding the recent historical facts resulting from the violence in Colombia, ensuring joint efforts from the private sector, civil society, international and State cooperation”. This Museum, in accordance with the Law, “must carry out the actions aimed at reestablishing the dignity of the victims and spreading the truth regarding what has happened”.

Additionally, the Museum must attend to the regulatory mandate related with historical memory and ethnic communities as considered in three decrees with the force of law (4633, 4634 and 4635 of 2011) for the indigenous

communities, black communities, those with African descent and Raizal, Palenquera and Rom communities. This series of decrees, to the degree in which they are inspired by the conquests of social ethnic organizations in terms of institutional adaptation to the cultural diversity of the country, indicate a pathway of working that is necessary to articulate in the conception of the Museum, in the perspective of consolidating a truly intercultural exercise in the realization of the rights and responsibilities of historical memory. Therefore, the National Museum of Memory (NMM) is a decisive advance in the responsibility of the State in terms of memory that results in the guarantee of the corresponding right of the Colombian society as a whole in the permanent building of memory and peace; it becomes, in and of itself, one of the means of reparation and of satisfaction for the victims of the armed conflict in Colombia.

With this legal framework, the State responds to the demands of the different sectors of society, especially to the victim and human right organizations on the need to implement policies on memory directed at clarifying, understanding the truth regarding the armed conflict, giving dignity to the victims and to the construction of guarantees of non-reoccurrence. The museum is an institutional response to the continuing citizen mobilization which demands the right to memory and truth, as well as to the demands of recognition of memory practices and exercise from different sectors of society in numerous regions of the country.

2.2.2 Rationale, why a National Museum of Memory

For more than five (5) decades, the country has been undergoing a bloody warlike confrontation that has brought about the deaths of more than 220 thousand fellow countrymen between the years of 1958 and 2012, the disappearance of more than 25 thousand people, the kidnapping of approximately 29 thousand, the forced displacement of almost 6 million inhabitants and the risk of physical and cultural extinction of 34 indigenous communities. Despite this horrifying magnitude, these

figures are approximations which do not fully account for what has occurred due to the fact that part of the dynamic and legacy of the war is the anonymity, the lack of visibility and the impossibility of fully recognizing all of its victims.

This has been a war of degradation in which the violence exhibited has predominantly been directed at the civil population. The victims have suffered all types of disgrace ranging from the inhumane language used by the armed fighters against them, to practices of sexual violence, torture, forced disappearance, kidnapping, public massacres, mutilation and death caused by the landmines, the devastation of entire towns and the destruction of civil goods through the use of non-conventional explosive devices such as cylinder bombs. For this reason it has been called a war without limits, ruthless and drop by drop which has left death and the banishment of thousands of boys, girls and young people, of adult women and men and of the elderly in its path. It has also left community and social processes shattered by selectively pursuing spiritual leaders and authorities.

The Afro-Colombian and indigenous communities have been hit especially hard due to being the inhabitants of lands

in dispute by all the armed actors. Historically vulnerable social groups, excluded and stigmatized by their political or religious position; by their sexual orientation or by their ethnic identities have also suffered the rigors of war.

Even though the entire Colombian nation has suffered the effects, its impacts have been most intensely felt in the Colombian countryside and in the outskirts of the cities. The scenes of horror have been especially felt in the small villages and townships far away from the larger cities which in part may explain the indifference of so many Colombians who have not had to experience the rigors of war directly.

In the midst of this war, intolerance and distrust have set up camp. Practices of symbolic and physical negation and elimination of those in opposition, those who are different and dissident have become accepted and the recognition of the rights of thousands of Colombian men and women have been denied and furthermore social polarization and the loss of hope and even resignation have become established.

Nevertheless, having overcome the pain and suffering endured, the victims have motivated dynamics which speak of life and of alternatives and resistance to the war. Social

mobilization, collective action, recognizing rights, waging peace and exemplary experiences in the construction of democracy have been present throughout the years of the armed conflict as a shared narrative which claims its place and its visibility as a response to its fate of historical silencing.

In this clamor, the political violence in Colombia has been complex and difficult to explain not only due to its protracted character and to the motives and reasons accompanying it, but also to the ever changing participation of a myriad of legal and illegal actors, due to the geographic area it covers and to the unique situations it takes on in each region of the countryside and in the cities as well as due to its overlapping with other violence battering the country. The explanations regarding the beginnings, the causes and the responsibilities are the object of great controversies as well as new confrontations. Despite there being agreement that there are factors involving political, economic and cultural order that have contributed to the war, there is enormous dissent in terms of the emphasis placed on each one of them and especially in terms of who is to be held responsible for them.

The NMM will be a place, then, to make the magnitude of the tragedy visible and to recognize, reflect and debate the causes and conditions that led to the war, degraded

the terms of the confrontation and prolonged it for various decades. It will be a place where the country can find keys to critically reading its past and therefore based on this critical reading, can jointly construct the conditions of a new future.

Likewise, the NMM will be a platform for recognition and strengthening of places and initiatives of memory that are permanently constructed around the country and which are bearers of interpretations, meanings, proposals and dreams of a better life. More than just a Museum Research Center, or a Bogota-focused Museum, the NMM wants to be a space that articulates, creates dialog, and makes visible the innovative and creative work of building memory of the diverse regions and populations of Colombia.

2.2.3 The functions of the Museum, what purpose does a National Museum of Memory serve

Repairing function: recognize and create dignity for the victims.

Inscribed in the framework of the law of victims and in the law-decrees for ethnic communities, the NMM must be a space which contributes to the reparation of all victims. The voices,

realities and experiences of the victims must find a central and leading role in the NMM. It is about settling a historic debt which is the result of exclusion, being made invisible, negation and stigmatization that have been suffered. The central importance of the experience of the victims responds thusly to their right to reparation while at the same time contributing to the construction and widening of the restricted Colombian democracy. The experience of the victims in the NMM, located in the Capital City, is aimed at bringing the existence and humanity of the victims to all those, be they Bogotanos or visitors, that have not had access to the reality of a country that seems all too distant and alien.

The voices of all the victims without distinguishing their interpretations, their wagers, proposals, expressed in diverse languages, must allow for putting a face on the figures and recognizing the denied and segregated otherness. The NMM will be, therefore, a homage to the victims, a recognition of the realities and ideals which made part and still do, a place of sorrow and retreat, a place which evokes absence, damage, devastation and also heroism, bravery and generosity. A place which shows the unrepairable, the absurd, the intolerable and the unacceptable of violence. All this will allow mobilizing emotions and empathy with the victims.

Illuminating function: contribute to the knowledge and critical analysis of the contemporary violence and of the deep violations of human rights.

The NMM must become a place that offers distinct keys to understanding the violent facts, registering them in the contexts which made the horror possible. The NMM will contribute elements and activities so that Colombians can discuss the causes, the actors, the historic milestones, the relations and factors that began, maintained and degraded the war. Knowing and reflecting on the past from distinct and diverse voices and reasoning must lead us to comprehend the complexity of our present and to unravel the lessons of history to remove and transform the obstacles which inhibit the free exercise of democracy and peacebuilding.

Together with the voices and interpretations of the victims, the museum must put into circulation other versions and narratives regarding the violence, even that of the murderers, which allows for adding complementary as well as contradictory collective interpretations of what happened into the discussion with the purpose of adding greater depth to the stereotypical, simplistic and Manichean readings regarding the reality of the country. For this purpose, there will not only be exhibition spaces, but also spaces for consultation, creation, research, reflection and awareness-

raising (files, laboratories, observatories, academic and cultural scenarios), that multiply the possibilities of social appropriation and exercises of memory.

Pedagogical function: contribute to the building of a culture of respect for differences, diversity and plurality which contribute to establishing bases for guarantees of non-reoccurrence.

The NMM will also be a space for Colombian society. A place in which critical debate, collective reflection and controversy are encouraged and fostered; a place in which plurality and difference are valued and where otherness is recognized. A space which examines the place of each person in history, in their current existence and their role as active agents in the transformation of the country.

A place for pedagogical wagers which do not offer only one version nor absolute truths but rather which propose dilemmas and complexities. A place which despite requiring consensus also values dissention.

The NMM has the final aim of the labor of being an educator that tends to promote a pedagogy of recognition. It deals with a labor of making the conflict visible and not as a distant

happening but rather as the condition of a country in which the possibilities of change start with a collective implication, where we can rethink the forms of relating which have been constructed between each other, as a society, with politics, culture, etc.

Therefore, the pedagogical work has the challenge of proposing attitude changes and of questioning stereotypes and prejudices for which it is necessary to implement encounter and dialog methodologies and to have flexible spaces available (classrooms, forums, auditoriums, stages) and creative resources (documentaries, archives, testimonies, etc.) which raise awareness and promote reflection.

2.2.4 The themes of the Museum: Keys for the museological script

As a place of recognition, dignity, clarification and memory, the themes to be addressed upon continuation will be outlined and these will be the basis for the construction of a script. These are themes which likewise must define the spatial and aesthetic characteristics of the place without, however, necessarily being laid out in separate compartments.

What has happened: dimensions, methods and characteristics of contemporary violence.

This deals with exposing the magnitude of the war in terms of the number of victims, the methods and the repertoire of violence used. The time lines, maps, computer graphics, photographs, videos and audios must illustrate the type of violence suffered, its continuities and discontinuities, its sectorial, ethnic and territorial expression.

Why has it happened: the causes of violence and the responsibilities:

Interpretative lines are offered on the causes of the violence, its beginnings, the interests in the dispute, the actors in the confrontation, the responsibilities. Due to the fact that these are polemic topics, the NMM will offer distinct versions regarding what has happened, diverse and interpretative takes, without being an excuse to denounce and question the illegality and the anti-ethical or to elude to the attribution of responsibilities. **Being a prolonged war, the NMM must also offer the public the opportunity to understand how it has changed over time.** More than a static war, with the good and the bad, the Colombian war has been dynamic: its actors have transform themselves over the course of the war and at the same time have transformed the war itself. The citizens who visit the NMM must carry with themselves

this sensation of fluidity and dynamism which precisely prevents viewing this as ONE war.

Who are the victims:

The NMM must give a name and face to the victims, identifying their profiles and characteristics, their ethnic and cultural sense of belonging, the lands they come from, their political appointment or participation, their gender, sexual orientation, organization, etc. It is about illustrating not only how many people have been victimized but also determining why and who has been individually or collectively victimized. The victims, in addition to having a human face, tell stories; they are the carriers of life projects and of struggles; they transform their own surroundings and reclaim a life of dignity.

What are the damages caused to the victims, to society and to the country.

The impacts and the costs of the war on the bodies, subjectivities, and the territories will be exposed. Likewise, the damages to democracy and to Colombian society will be specified. The damages will illustrate the devastating character of the violence, that which can and cannot be repaired from the war. It is essential to show that the damages and impacts

affect men, women and other gender identities, Afro-descendants and indigenous peoples, children and young people and older adults without differentiation. The war impacts territories, the countryside and the cities, political parties and social movements in different ways; it also affects practices, ways of living and perceptions of the world. It does not, therefore, deal with a uniform effect in its dimension nor in its meaning.

Dignity, resistance and initiatives of memory and construction of democracy and peace.

In the historic account of the war, it is also essential to recognize the individual and collective efforts of the victims and of other sectors of society, not only to confront what has happened but also to conserve and defend their culture, affirm their identities and to construct options of life, coexistence and peace. The Museum must make the multiple exercises and initiatives on constructed memory in diverse regions of the country and by distinct social actors visible as well as the organizational processes and social mobilization.

Memory in current time. Memory for the future.

The NMM will be a space to reflect on the present reality, what violence and resistance still persist to this day. It will show the dynamics to be transformed and

the pending and urgent tasks to advance the efforts of peace. The museum **will describe the current state of affairs** (Peace dialogs in the middle of the conflict) and the social, political, economic and cultural challenges that we must assume as a society to incorporate a culture of peace into daily life. For this reason, it will take on the challenge of reserving a space for the present situation understanding that violence does not necessarily finish with the signing of an agreement; and for this there will be devices available which will allow for constant updating on the current state of affairs. Otherwise, as expressed by Jose Luis Foncillas, a leader from Tumaco, a place of memory which only tells the memory of the past, can end up being immoral, while people continue dying. Facing the future challenges, a series of **recommendations to head toward a more just and equal society** will be outlined. Furthermore, to complement these recommendations, practical experiences from other countries that have gone through substantial changes during periods of transitional justice will be shown.

2.2.5 The National Museum of Memory: its spatial conception

The building must be a memorial, which is to say that it must have a commemorative architecture, which gives form to the intention of the contents. Therefore, the monumentality of the Museum has to be different from those conventionally celebrated: here it is about respect, plurality and diversity, of remembrance, criticism and creation: “a daily encounter with the unspeakable” (Barry Bergdoll).

The internal space of the NMM and the external space of the Democracy Square form a continuum of expression of knowledge, grief, resistance, creativity and resilience with respect to violence demonstrated by all of the Colombian population from all the different regions. In this sense, the space of the Museum is a spatial synthesis of the diverse sites of memory built in the different locations where violations of human rights are commented upon.

As a result of this, the architectural and urban design of the spatial complex of the NMM is set in a modern public space facility in as a reflective remembrance setting, of systematic study and of creative expression about what makes each and every one of us a nation.

Firstly, the NMM and its adjacent surroundings of the Democracy Square formalize the foundational milestone of Bogota's "Axis of Peace and Memory", which has been recently launched by the City Administration. Its construction constitutes the founding event of the above-mentioned urban milestone, and, for this reason, urban, landscape, aesthetic and meaningful articulation relations must be established with the other spaces and structures, which all along El Dorado Avenue, give it material structure and cultural identity: the Municipal Center of Memory, Peace and Reconciliation, the Renaissance Park, the various cemeteries and, more toward the eastern side, ending up at the Andes Mountain Range, with the Museum of Modern Art and the National Library.

In this same direction, the architectural design has to be conscious of its significant landscape relation with Monserrate, which is seen as a visible landmark that inevitably brings about contemplation, recognition and identity.

Additionally, its architecture must be modeled on the new relations that citizens must establish with nature, aware now that the environment has also been tremendously deteriorated and destructed by the predatory action

of violence. In this sense, not only do the construction materials and techniques need to be environmentally sustainable but also the way it works together has to be aimed at fighting global warming and allowing for the use of clean renewable energies.

In its internal workings, it must have the latest technological facilities and conditions such as: intelligent structures, automation, connectivity, structured cabling, CCTV and video, voice and data network, air conditioning and illumination systems, noise reduction and particle material contamination reduction, among others.

It is important to include in the Museum design and construction requirements which help to mitigate impacts on the environment and which help the sustainability of the same. It should be thought of as a green (LEED certification) and intelligent building which will imply significant initial investment but which will allow for economic sustainability over time. It must be a museum which facilitates its use and accessibility to persons in situations of disabilities and which, as with all centers of high attendance around the contemporary world, fulfill the requirements of prevention and attention to risks of natural or manmade disasters.

Its spaces must provide high security for the items stored in the museum, while at the same time giving an open and welcoming appearance to the public visiting it or accessing archives.

The internal spaces of the museum must respond to activities and dynamics which make this a live and active place:

The NMM will be a place for grieving.

There must be an intimate and comfortable space for the victims and for society in general. This refers to a place in which the visitors can express that deep sense of respect and solidarity which has mobilized the victims and different social sectors, to maintain the memory alive and to reaffirm the irreparable character of the absence of loved ones. In this place, society shall have a space of appropriation, of identification with those affected by the violence and the conflict, of intimate reflection and tribute. The conception of the place of grief must also be sufficiently flexible to attend to the particularities that this notion may have in ethnic communities for whom death and pain lead to festive and joyful expressions; in other words, give place to diverse notions of funeral and mortuary rituals.

A Place for consulting and gathering information:

With materials such as books, magazines, pamphlets, videos and digital documents, among others, the service of consultation will be offered to researchers, organizations which work for the protection of human rights and of the victim population of the armed conflict, academic community and the public in general. In addition to being able to borrow books and consult in within the facilities, Colombians will also have online and phone access and there will also be a Documentation center directed at the spreading of historical information and citizen access to the collections of documents, textual archives, photographs, iconographic, movies with sound, audiovisuals and objects. The documents of the archive are direct sources for the study of the recent history of our country, maintaining the full caution of the law.

Place of reflection, encounter and deliberation:

Through the programming of events such as forums, roundtables and spaces available for public meetings, the NMM will carry out activities which foster debate and analysis, while at the same time contributing to strengthening organized activities. For such purposes,

there must be auditoriums, meeting rooms, classrooms, gathering places for public activities, etc.

Place for research and pedagogical reflection:

The NMM will have the necessary spaces available for research activity related with its own obligations, in coherence with its nature as a permanent place under construction and constantly being updated. In the same way, these spaces, together with auditoriums and conference rooms, will allow for open pedagogical reflection and, regarding groups of special relevance such as students, through the provision of courses, the production of texts and other materials for school or community use.

Place for expression, creation and artistic and cultural exhibitions: theater, dance, film, sculpture, etc.

The NMM must be equipped with spaces characteristic of state-of-the-art cultural centers in which in addition to carrying out a wide ranging and well-developed repertoire of artistic and cultural activities, public spaces will be made available for the creation of plays and works of art. Furthermore, settings designed for communicative exercises through radio, video production, web pages, etc., will be incorporated.

Place for archives:

The NMM will store the Human Rights Archive. For this purpose, it will have a space for collecting and conserving important documentation in the present and future exercise of constructing memory. There will be spaces for internal use for personnel specialized in the work of registering, doing inventory, characterization and digitalization of the materials received (photographs, audio and video records, press archives, academic texts, legal documentation, letters, oral testimonies, among others, coming in from families of the victims, judges, humanrightsorganizations, independentcommunication media, civil servants, private businesses, providing evidence of the plurality of sources and perspectives regarding the conflict). The archive zone will have a space for the public to consult documents onsite, as well as an online strategy for virtual consulting which will facilitate the access of information to citizens, organizations and specialists inside the country and abroad.

The narrative allows for glimpsing the confluence of voices and becomes a conversation between different versions of the truth disputing for legitimacy. A dispute in which it is the responsibility of the museum to show its support for the victims and the subordinate sectors.

2.2.6 Regarding the criteria for the construction of the Museum

As a way of synthesizing what has been explained regarding the narrative of the museum, upon continuation we propose the following criteria to bear in mind for the construction:

Differentiating attributes:

The museum expresses a polyphony of voices which clamor for differentiating acceptances associated with gender, age, ethnic pertinence and social, cultural and political roles of the actors who have resisted the conflict. In this dimension, it is necessary to recognize the voices, proposed perspectives and claims of the population in situations of disability, the aged and the LGBTI population.

Land:

The Museum presents a multi-scaled and multi dimensional reading of the national territory, able to integrate the regional frameworks of the war, to a narrative that creates a sense of nation. The cultural diversity expressed in the regions and ethnicities of the country, require considering the existence of distinct concepts regarding space and time.

Symbolic

The Museum uses symbolic language as a potent mechanism of using metaphors, able to transcend a literal narrative of the facts toward the expression of affectations which manifest what words cannot.

Aesthetic and poetic:

The Museum will seek to put into dialog a wide variety of contemporary and traditional creations, generating communicative and aesthetic contrasts aimed at questioning visitors of different ages, ethnic groups and social sectors.

Dynamics:

The Museum must allow for the mobilization and updating of discourses and exhibitions. Its spatial formalization will be made up of ample and versatile hallways which will allow the Museum, its script and activities to be renewed and redrawn over time.

Dra. Martha Nubia Bello

Technical Director—National Museum of Memory

"The multi-dimensional production of territory allows for investigating the idea of land not only as physical space, but also internalized, cultural, imaginary, symbolic, affective, and evocative. This approximation (...) is complemented by a multi-scaled perspective on this. In other words, a look at territory as a concept which contains numerous spatial scales or overlapping levels which vary from the intimate levels of the individual (the body as territory), to the national or planetary territories. Both perspectives have been taken from the proposals of Gilberto Giménez (2001:2000)". In: Orozco, Ana Catalina. "Representations on territory based on the context of forced displacement". Master Thesis in Anthropology, UNAM, November, 2007. Pag. 41.

2.3 Architectural Benchmarks

The unsuspected abundance in the contemporary world of memory architecture, witnessed by uncountable buildings—be they inhabitable, monuments or commemorative—, turns out to be as surprising as are the unsuspected number of social conflicts, wars and regrettable events that much to our dismay continue, begin or have just finished in the recent history of our societies.

Architecture can be the bearer of an unusual amount of feeling when it appeals to the most precious human feelings, as can be the defense of life or social justice and inclusion, when it sets itself up as an effective antidote to the natural tendency of mankind to choose, consciously or unconsciously, the inane comfort of forgetting.

If we assume that architecture is an art of tradition and sedimentation which chains each new experience within a historical tradition that combines constant changes and immutable permanences equally. We will understand the relevance of recognizing many references close to us over time. Those references were erected with similar motivations to those that today make this International

Competition possible. It is testament to the series of challenges enriching the reflexive and creative acquis among architects.



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