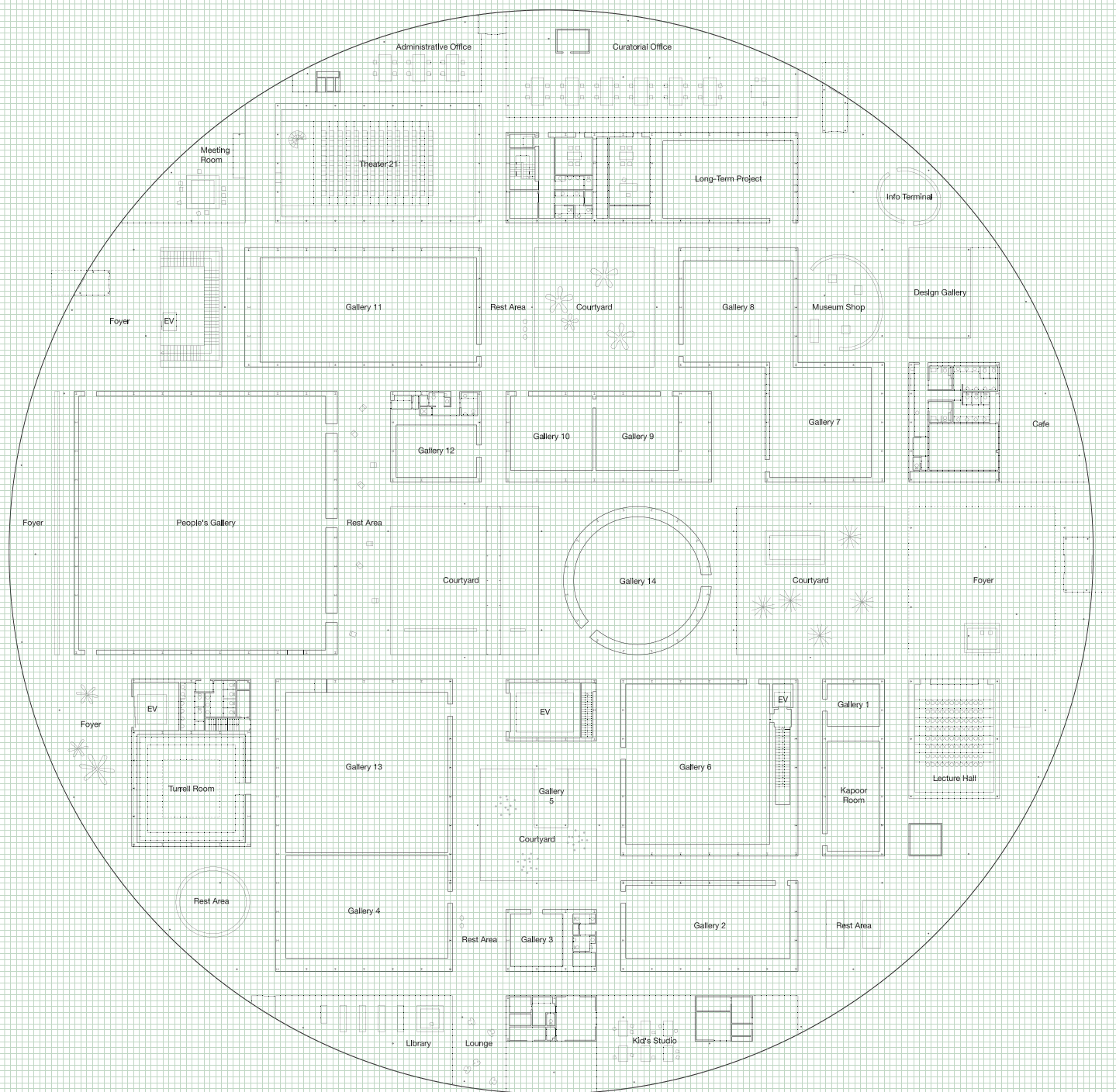


21ST CENTURY MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART, KANAZAWA, ISHIKAWA PREFECTURE, JAPAN

KAZUYO SEJIMA + RYUE NISHIZAWA/SANAA

'Tactical translucency' is a distinct characteristic of the work of SANAA's **Kazuyo Sejima + Ryue Nishizawa**. In the 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, it was applied as a strategy in which to blur the boundaries between the city and the interior space of the art museum, creating a type that fuses areas for public activities and the more contemplative gallery spaces.



The intertwined public and museum zones are designed to provoke interaction between potential user groups, with the public spaces encircling the museum.



Bird's-eye view of
the museum.



The scattered bulk of the galleries also creates transparency and a feeling of openness marked by long vistas through the entire depth of the building.



opposite: Interior
view of the gallery.

below left: View
from the foyer to
the courtyard.

below right: View
from the circulation
space to the outer
courtyard.



below left: Site location plan.

below right: View from the foyer to the city.

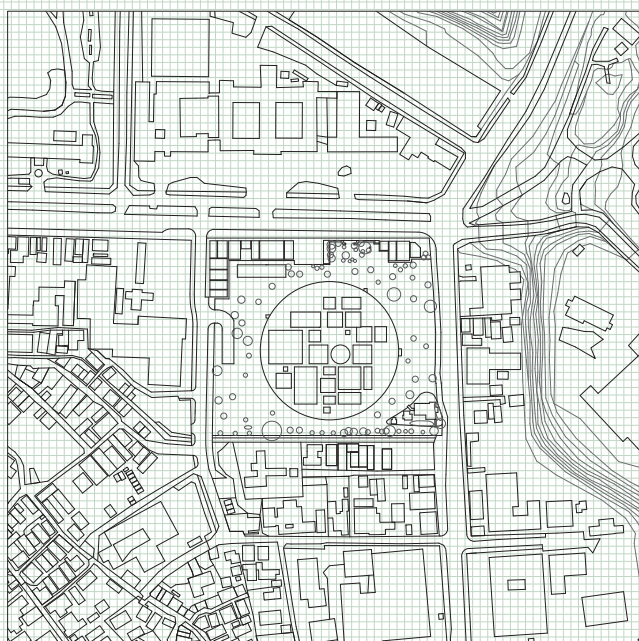
opposite: External view of the foyer and gallery.

SANAA's work is characterised by a persistent preoccupation with the rethinking of boundaries, their removal, blurring, and clarification. Their concern with transparency has created both a subtle phenomenal translucency and a highly effective process of diagrammatic reduction.¹ As a result of the optical and programmatic translucency anticipated in a project such as the firm's Moriyama House (2005), the museum in Kanazawa succeeds in radically rethinking the relationship between interior and exterior volumes and spaces, between the room, the building and the city. The subsequent typological challenge of the museum, the transformation of the traditionally highly representative physical nature and programmatic interiority into an extended yet delicate fragment of the city, the dematerialisation of the museum

itself, can be understood as conditioned by tactical translucency and motivated by the convergence of opposites such as inside and outside, private and public, individual and collective, or programmatic and formal.

The 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art sits in the city centre and, in addition to museum spaces, includes community gathering spaces such as a library, lecture hall and children's workshop. The intertwined public and museum zones are designed to provoke interaction between potential user groups, with the public spaces encircling the museum.

The site links together the diverse but equally important municipal functions surrounding it. Circular in form, the building has no front or back, allowing exploration from all sides. The exhibition area is fragmented into numerous galleries, all of



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which are embedded in a field of circulation space. This approach provides individual gallery spaces with different characteristics while creating flexible museum circulation that allows for a variety of expanded or contracted areas. The scattered bulk of the galleries also creates transparency and a feeling of openness marked by long vistas through the entire depth of the building. A walk just inside the curved glass of the exterior facade smoothly unfolds a 360-degree panorama of the site.

Gallery spaces have various proportions and provide diverse lighting options; from bright daylight through glass ceilings to spaces lacking any natural light. The heights range from 4 to 12 metres (13.1 to 39.4 feet). The materiality and sequence of the circulation space is geared towards use as additional exhibition areas. Four fully glazed

internal courtyards, each unique in character, provide ample daylight at the centre of the building and a fluent border between the public zone and the museum zone. Despite its size, the building feels bright, open and free. This is consistent with SANAA's typological intent to open the museum (architecture) up to its surroundings, to the city, its activities and people. Typological consistency, however, is reinstated – if displaced – by considering the project not as a building, but as a piece of simulated and extended fabric of the city: a translucent and edgeless mat-building typology. Δ

Note

1. Toyo Ito coined the term 'diagram architecture' for Sejima's work in 'Diagram Architecture', *El Croquis*, 77.1, 1996, pp 18–24.

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