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Art BNB #The Treachery of Images

Participant info

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Project info

For the past decades, the National Bank of Belgium (BNB) has built a sizable collection of contemporary art, that has only been exhibited in their offices. The closure of the bank in Liège gives the opportunity to rehabilitate this iconic building as a contemporary art foundation that would showcase this impressive collection of more than 1900 masterpieces.

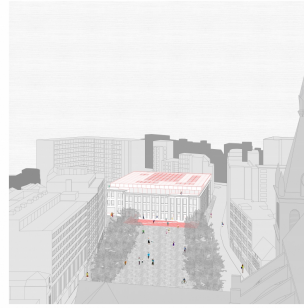
Behind a seemingly neoclassical façade, the building is indeed a modernist project of the renowned EGAU group from Liège. Despite some exceptions regarding the context and the complex plot of land on which it was built, the original project of 1968, from plans to façades was entirely prefigured by a square grid. Thus, the rehabilitation relies mainly on the reuse of this compositional grid, genesis of the original project, as a system of architectural projection. The intention is to highlight and transcend its initial formal expression by using it as a grid-system.

Therefore, the building which blends nearly seamlessly in its context is covered by a square grid steel structure. This cover is the final expression of the modernist grid, the crowning of the neoclassical façade and an icon sitting on one side of the Saint-Paul Square. The modernist nature of the building then morphs into the grid structure of the roof, symbolizing the rebirth of the old bank. This grid-roof system allows for the suspension of new circulation or exhibition spaces and is an opportunity to open the interior to zenithal light.

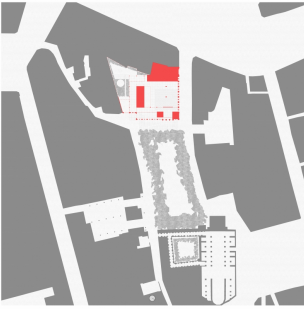
Finally, taking a critical position regarding the classical travesty of the original project settles this contemporarily modernist square grid roof intervention (#MiesVanDerRohe) in an architectural rhetoric in dialogue with the existing architecture. The building's metamorphosis from its conceptual core echoes in the transformation of the banking institution into a public art reservoir.



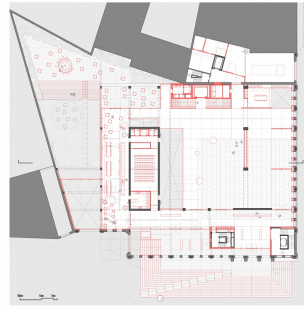
Art BNB - The Treasury of Images
Entrance



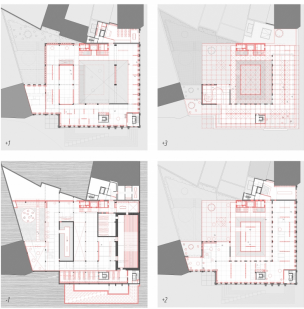
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Saint-Paul Square



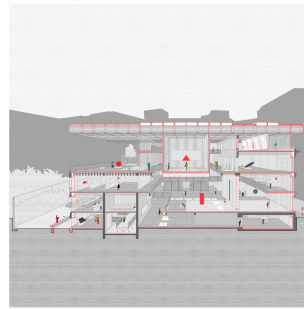
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Situation



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Ground floor



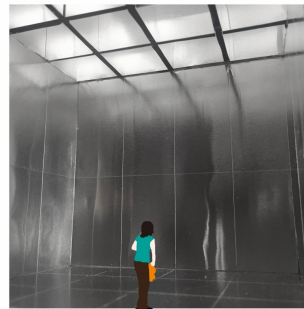
Art BNB - The Treasury of Images
Basement, first, second and third floors



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Perspective section



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Atmospheres



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The Box