

SCIENCE AND INNOVATION CENTRE

Science is the systematic study of nature; that is the understanding, *framing* of Nature. This project for the Science and Innovation Centre at Kaunas' Nemunas island solidifies this fundamental definition into an original scheme which highlights the outstanding landscape where it is placed. The project is an extension of nature, whose very form reinforces the idea of centre, natural cycles and organic movement.

A curvilinear hill like structure with a total green roof blends with the island and would become its new referential point. From north to south, city and river, the building practically does not "exist". From east to west it clearly raises marking with an elevated arch the entrance to a circular, access plaza. This large outdoor area is divided into exterior lobby and outdoor exhibit areas, below, connected to the indoor galleries.

The circular form of this patio distributes the main public circulation from where people can move in the building while maintaining the link to nature. Reception, cloakroom, restrooms, cafeteria, temporary and permanent exhibit areas, event areas and shop, are all integrated into a functional cycle. At the north, an outer semicircular ring permits service distribution; corridor which is linked through a large elevator and stair to the back of house areas at the lower level.

On top of the building, an alternative public access links the "hill" with a ramp connecting the main access, axis from where it is also possible to move towards the west of the island, through a gentle ramp crossing under the indoor programs. The project operates as a curvilinear web that permits users to move inside-outside the building, crossing the nature frame repeatedly.

The new Science and Innovation Centre aims to redefine the relationship between architecture and nature, which it might be in our century the most important agenda for science itself. This is highlighted by a very remarkable effect of light and water within the galleries: as the circular patio locates at the south of the exhibition areas, the everyday path of the sun will project the water's movement onto the interior ceiling of these galleries, blending magnificently nature and architecture, movement and statics, greenery and white concrete. This immaterial feature would become an always diverse art-exhibit of science.

