The ever growing skepticism towards the capacity of the rigid nineteenth- and twentieth-century museum model to transgress its own institutional boundaries is paralleled by an unprecedented growth in scale and extravagance of exhibition spaces, reflective of the last three decades of art market’s expansion.

Further questioning the contemporary relevance of the museum is the fact that today the global media, a virtual place with no historical memory to which we are exposed through internet and advertising, has replaced the museum in informing our visual culture and our perception of art.

The aim of the unit is to reflect on the paradoxes of contemporary museums and their current ideological, cultural, social, structural and technological transformations. Stimulated by a dense programme of specialised seminars and workshops analyzing different scales and museum typologies (including state and private institutions, kunsthalles, galleries, provincial museums and temporary structures), students will work as independent researchers focusing, among other aspects, on: the notion of museum as repository; contemporary collecting and art storage practices; the rise of the curator; the inflation of the art market; the effects of the digital; museum franchises; the dogmatic constraints of the museum climate; and temporary art events.

In parallel to the research – which will be compiled in end of year books and will generate individual design proposals – all students will design an essential component of any contemporary museum: a pop-up art bookstore. Far from being an abstract design exercise, the project of the book pavilion – developed in close collaboration with Technical Studies – will be run as an actual design competition and the winning design will be constructed as a pop-up-store for Lars Müller Publishers. The detailed design brief, including the curatorial strategy of the book display, will be developed with the students in Zurich in occasion of our first unit trip to Switzerland and Italy.
part one research

Harald Szeemann
Experimental Curator of Documenta 5 and Kunsthalle Bern (61–89)
what is a museum?

[A museum is] “a building in which objects of historical, scientific, artistic, or cultural interest are stored and exhibited”.
Origin:
Early 17th century (denoting a university building, specifically one erected at Alexandria by Ptolemy Soter): via Latin from Greek mouseion seat of the Muses, based on mousa muse. Oxford Dictionary

“A museum is a non-profit, permanent institution in the service of society and its development, open to the public, which acquires, conserves, researches, communicates and exhibits the tangible and intangible heritage of humanity and its environment for the purposes of education, study and enjoyment”. According to the ICOM Statutes, adopted by the 22nd General Assembly in Vienna, Austria on August 24th, 2007. This definition is a reference in the international community.

[Museums in Western cultures manifest] “the will to enclose in one place all times, all epochs, all forms, all tastes, the idea of constituting a place of all times that is itself out of time … the project of organizing in this sort of perpetual and indefinite accumulation of time in an immobile place”. Michel Foucault, “Of other spaces”, 1984.

“A museum is a non-profit, permanent institution in the service of society and its development, open to the public, which acquires, conserves, researches, communicates and exhibits the tangible and intangible heritage of humanity and its environment for the purposes of education, study and enjoyment”. According to the ICOM Statutes, adopted by the 22nd General Assembly in Vienna, Austria on August 24th, 2007. This definition is a reference in the international community.

[A museum is] “a tool for defining the value and legitimizing the works of art”. Francesco Poli “Il sistema dell’arte conemporanea”

“For the second time in history the museum has deviated art from its original purpose and, by pushing artists to do self-referential works, has contributed to depriving these works of any meaning. It would be anyway absurd to follow the opinion of certain critics of the 20th century and to conclude that to solve art museums should be destroyed. [...] One should learn from this opposition that the museum can not be the direct receptient of artworks because this inevitably produces perverse side effects”. K Pomian

“The museum only makes sense as a pioneer ... The new type of art institute cannot berely be an art museum as it has been until now ... the new type will be more like a power-station (kraftwerk), a producer of new energy”. Alexander Dorner
GROWTH IN NUMBER AND SCALE

Since 1945 the amount of museums in Europe has nearly tripled reaching more than 40,000. Never before in history has going to museums been so popular.

40,000 MUSEUMS AND ART INSTITUTIONS

1945

2015

“As critics have observed, the visual expression of privatization [of museums] has been the triumph of ‘stararchitecture’: museum’s external wrapper becomes more important than it contents... leaving art with options of looking ever more lost in post industrial hangars, or supersizing to compete with the envelope. Although museums have always endorsed signature architecture, the extreme iconicity of the new museum architecture is comparatively recent.” Claire Bishop
“The very success of the visitor numbers threatens, or at least completely modifies, the experience of the museum - you could even say it modifies the essence of the museum. You begin to get the impression that art is not simply an issue of contemplation, but rather an issue of assembling huge crowds.” Rem Koolhaas
ICONICITY AND EXTRAVAGANCE

PUBLIC MUSEUM
18 CENT

PRIVATE MUSEUM
21 CENT
MODERNIZATION OF UNIVERSAL MUSEUM
"The individualized viewer constructed or taken for granted in the European Museum was turned into a consumer in the US - a paradigm shift marked by the MoMA’s 1938 Bauhaus exhibition, in which critical intersubjective viewing gave way to a fashionable consumerist stance" Daniel Birnbaum, Hans Ulrich Obrist
"Museums must be mindful of showing works that may soon be destined for the marketplace" Missive from the Association of Art Museum Directors, 2010
Have you seen Pikachu hanging around DanFlavin's light installation? #CatchEmAll #PokemonGo bit.ly/29Kk84Z

10:01 PM - 11 Jul 2016

Cupid and Psyche
Antonio Canova

Mosaic floor
A Group of Russian and Italian artists
Nymph with a Scorpion
Barberini, Lorenzo
Cupid and Psyche
Canova, Antonio
Three Graces
Canova, Antonio
Portrait of General Pyotr Bagration (1765-1813)
Ostade, George
Sts Peter and Paul
Greco, El
Return of the Prodigal Son
Harmensz van Rijin, Rembrandt
The Peacock Clock
James Cox, Friedrich von der Marwitz
Kolyvan vase
Melnikov, Abraham
David and Jonathan
Rembrandt, Harmensz van Rijn
Flora
Rembrandt, Harmensz van Rijn
Holy Family
Rembrandt, Harmensz van Rijn
Dionysus
Roman copy from a Greek original
Psyche in a Gown
Teuresy, Pietro
Aphrodite (Venus of Taurida)
Unknown
Exhibitions have long played a key role in the institutional and discursive frameworks informing architecture ... [they] have been a productive and visible site of critical and experimental practice in architecture; ... central to opening new lines of research, testing new formats, technologies, ... launching new polemics ... [and] they have often marked the very forefront of the discipline's attempts to forge new paradigms". Felicity Scott Brown.
[Szeemann] “changed the way exhibitions worked and thus stood at the beginning of a major transformation of the museum as such, namely the transformation from an institution that reproduces meaning to an institution that produces meaning. The concept was encyclopedic as well as experimental. Documenta 5 demonstrated its authority as an institution not by imposing buildings, or masterworks, but by its conviction that there was nothing that could not be incorporated by the museum”. Philip Ursprung
“So here we are, in a position that threatens to become untenable, with vast storages that start to resemble cemeteries nobody visits any longer ... How many whole rooms made of perishable or obsolescing materials that will need to be restored, refound, or remade? Certainly, conservation is a topic that goes hand in hand with that of the storage ... Can storage be conceived at a wholly different scale, as an intrinsic part of a museum's plant and program?” Ann Temkin
The ambition of the unit is to encourage the students to develop a Thesis which reflects their personal critical position towards the transformations of museums, looking beyond purely Western perspectives.

To inform, develop, and challenge the formulation of the individual research agendas, the students will be stimulated by a dense programme of seminars, talks, interviews, and visits. These events will take the form of:

**Round Tables | RT**
To foster critical conversation within the unit and take advantage of the vast bibliography, students will be paired in groups of two and asked to give a talk to their colleagues on a given topic or reading. Following each presentation, the tutors will moderate a round table discussion within the studio providing additional input on the argument.

**Museum Talks | MT**
To take greatest advantage of the cultural offering of London (both in terms of museum typologies and of curatorial strategies), we will periodically stage our discussions within museum premises and seek direct confrontation with cultural experts. Providing an unique opportunity for the student to interview curators, artists and art administrators, these encounters will be documented and form part of the research projects.

**Workshops & Seminars | W&S**
Each Term the students will be invited to participate to a minimum of three Workshops and Seminars, to be held at the AA and other European cities. These events will be led by architects, curators, museum directors, artists, and publishers.

The events will be scheduled once a month, for

**Output**
The research project shall culminate in the formulation of a Thesis. Aiming to fundamentally question role of contemporary museums, the format in which the thesis is presented is at the discretion of the student. There is no overarching unit style or methodology. Each students is responsible to select a medium that best conveys his/her argument in a compelling manner. Formats could include the production of a book, a web-based initiative, the curation of an exhibition, the issue of a new magazine, etc.
part two design competition
The ever increasing role of most prosaic parts of the museums - i.e. its commercial component that generally comprises of the museum cafe’ and the usually book and souveniers shop - will be criticaly addressed in the format of a design competition.

Invited to design a Pop-Up Bookstore for Lars Müller Publishers in occasion of the Salone del Mobile in Milan, the students will not only provide design proposals but will fundamentally rethink the implication and potential of the commercial space within a cultural institution.

The project will be articulated in three phases:

**Phase I - Competition Phase**

In this phase each student is asked to develop a design for the pop-up bookstore in line with the client’s brief (which will developed in detail with Lars Müller in occasion of a dedicated workshop in Zurich). Consultants (such as engeneers, manufactures and consultants) will visit the unit on regular base to collaborate with the students on their project.

This phase ends with a Competition Jury on January 12th 2017. The jurors invited will be mainly external to the AA and will select a winning project.

**Phase II - DIP.15 Office**

In this phase, the students will collectively develop the winning proposal to a DD stage, acting as a “real” architectural office.

All students partecipate in the development of the selected pavilion by working in groups. During this phase, that will span for most of Term Two, the students will be exposed to the architectural production process. Schematic Design (SD) and Detailed Design (DD) documentation will be produced in collaboration with engeneering and manifactring consultants.

***

**Phase III - Assembly & Opening**

Following the producion of the individual components of the pavilion, during the April break, students and tutors will travel to Milan to assemble the pavilion.

The pavilion will open to the public on April 4th, 2017.

***

**Recording**

The whole design process - Phase I to Phase III - shall be documentent by means of photos, videos, timelapse images, etc. Upon return to the AA in Term Three, the students will have to present an edited video documenting the whole process of the design. Such video will be included in the end of year exhibition.

***

**Technical Studies**

The Design Competition will constitute the basis for the Technical Studies project. All students are to develop their individual pavilion for TS, and as a Unit we will commit to Option 1. All consultants that will be involved for the development of the winning proposal will be available for reviews for all projects to ensure equal support in the design development in light of TS.
A few facts on the competition brief ...

Our client for the pop-up bookshop is Lars Müller Publisher.
Quoting their website “Lars Müller Publishers is an internationally active publishing house based in Zurich, Switzerland. It came into being in 1983, as a result of the bibliophile passion of designer Lars Müller. The house has made a worldwide name for itself – and not just in specialist fields – with carefully edited and designed publications on architecture, design, photography, contemporary art and society” (www.lars-mueller-publishers.com)

In 2016 Lars Müller launched the project “Nomadic Bookshop. Analogue at heart”. To date the bookshop has occupied existing facilities in Copenhagen, Oslo, and other European cities.

The AA pop-up bookstore will be the first occasion in which Lars’ nomadic bookshop will set up a “tent”. As such the pavilion design should allow for future incarnations of the project. This entails a structure that can be dis-assembled and re-assembled easily, and which keeps in consideration standardized transportation means.

The occasion in which we will launch the pavilion is the Salone del Mobile. The choice of this event reflects Lars’s focus on publications devoted to design, architecture and art and his recurrent collaborations with designers that are often invited to the Salone.

On the Salone, citing their website: “Following the success of the 2015 edition – attended by 310,840 visitors – the 2016 edition featured the Salone Internazionale del Mobile along with the International Furnishing Accessories Exhibition, and more than 1,300 exhibitors ranged over 150,000 square metres”. (www.salonedelmobile.it)

In parallel to the Salone, Milan hosts the Fuori Salone (“outside the salone”). Seen as an extension of the Salone programme into the city of Milan, the Fuori Salone curates 1148 design events within 22 itineraries in Milan. (http://fuorisalone.it)

The site for our pavilion will be at the cross-road of two such itineraries within the Brera Design District, in a urban park tangent to two main circulation axis. Occupying a footprint of approximately 25 sqm, the pop-up bookshop liberates this cultural program from the walls of the museum, locating it in a contemporary, radical, and experimental urban structure.

The development of the bookshop will count of a number of partners and collaborators (design partners, engineering teams, manufacturer, lighting experts, etc). Amongst them will be Dott.Gallina (Turin) and Impresa CEV (Veneto), respectively a producer of polycarbonate/plastic materials and a general contractor who has been involved in a number of OMA projects. Students will be introduced to the material and structural qualities of the products and will be encouraged to find innovative applications for their use in the pavilion during dedicated workshops. A visit to the production sites of the companies will allow for detailed enquiries.

The reading list below is just an initial selection.
More texts, excerpts and readers will be provided during the academic year.

books

Barker, Emma, *Contemporary Cultures of Display*
Bechtler and Imhof, *Museums of the Future*
Bennett, Tony, *The birth of the Museum: History, Theory, Politics*
Bishop, Claire, *Radical Museology: Or What’s Contemporary in Museums of Contemporary Art?*
Debord, Guy, *The Society of the Spectacle*
Greenberg, Frugsson and Nairne, *Thinking about Exhibitions.*
Groys, Boris, *Art Power*
Krauss, Rosalind, *The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalist Museum*
Marcar, Ank Leeuw, *Willem Sandberg. Portrait of an Artist*
McLuhan, Marshall, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*
Obrist, Hans Ulrich, *A Brief History of Curating*
O’Doherty, Brian, *Inside the White Cube. The ideology of the Gallery Space*
Schubert, Karsten, *The Curator’s Egg: The Evolution of the Museum Concept from the French Revolution to the Present*
Scott Brown, Felicity, *Architecture or Techno-Utopia. Politics after Modernism*
Smith, Terry, *Thinking Contemporary Curating*

magazines and catalogues

*Artforum*, Summer 2010
*Curating Architecture*, LOG n.20, Fall 2010
*Experimental Art*, MACBA, Barcelona, 2009
*Biennials and Beyond: Exhibitions that Made Art History*, Volume 1: 1863-1959
The two agendas of Diploma 15, i.e. the Research Project and the Design Competition will run in parallel for Term One and Two. In Term Three, students focus solely on editing and formatting their research into a strong conceptual Thesis.

At least once a month, all tutors come for a two-day period for joint reviews and pin-ups. Events such as Round Tables, Museum Talks and Seminars will generally take place in these occasions.

An indicative calendar follows...

term one

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Events</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>W1</td>
<td>26th Sept</td>
<td>Diploma Presentations, Interviews</td>
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<tr>
<td>W3</td>
<td>10th – 14th Oct</td>
<td>Group Tutorials, Group Reviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W4</td>
<td>17th – 21st Oct</td>
<td>RT + Pin-Up, Individual Tutorials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W5</td>
<td>24th – 28th Oct</td>
<td>Workshop on Representation, Individual Tutorials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W6</td>
<td>31st Oct – 4th Nov</td>
<td>UNIT TRIP, Unit Trip to Switzerland and Italy dedicated to the Pop-Up Bookstore design Competition</td>
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<tr>
<td>W7</td>
<td>7th – 11th Nov</td>
<td>Individual Tutorials, Prototyping workshop</td>
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<tr>
<td>W8</td>
<td>14th – 18th Nov</td>
<td>RT + Structural Workshop, Individual Tutorials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W9</td>
<td>21st – 25th Nov</td>
<td>MW + Individual Tutorials, Individual Tutorials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W10</td>
<td>28th Nov – 2nd Dec</td>
<td>RT + Pin-Up, Individual Tutorials</td>
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<tr>
<td>W11</td>
<td>5th – 9th Dec</td>
<td>Individual Tutorials, Undergraduate Submissions</td>
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<tr>
<td>W12</td>
<td>12th – 16th Dec</td>
<td>Individual Reviews, End of Term Crit (Pavilion &amp; Research)</td>
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break

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
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<tr>
<td>break</td>
<td>17th Dec</td>
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term two

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
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<th>Events</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>W1</td>
<td>9th Jan – 13th Jan</td>
<td>Design Competition Final Jury</td>
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<tr>
<td>W2</td>
<td>16th – 20th Jan</td>
<td>SD pavilion, RT + Individual Reviews Research</td>
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<tr>
<td>W3</td>
<td>23rd – 27th Jan</td>
<td>Research Pin-Up, SD pavilion</td>
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<tr>
<td>W4</td>
<td>30th Jan – 3rd Feb</td>
<td>SD pavilion, Individual Reviews Research</td>
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<tr>
<td>W5</td>
<td>6th – 10th Feb</td>
<td>UNIT TRIP, Destination chosen in relation to research preoccupations, Kazakhstan</td>
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<tr>
<td>W6</td>
<td>13TH – 17TH Feb</td>
<td>TS review option 1, Individual Reviews Research</td>
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<tr>
<td>W7</td>
<td>20th – 24th Feb</td>
<td>Individual Reviews Research, DD Pavilion</td>
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<tr>
<td>W8</td>
<td>27th Feb – 3rd Mar</td>
<td>Individual Reviews Research, Individual Reviews Research</td>
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<tr>
<td>W9</td>
<td>6th – 10th Mar</td>
<td>SD pavilion, Individual Reviews Research</td>
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<tr>
<td>W10</td>
<td>13th – 17th Mar</td>
<td>TS Option 1, Individual Reviews Research</td>
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<tr>
<td>W11</td>
<td>20th – 24th Mar</td>
<td>15/16 4th Year Previews, Tables</td>
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<td>W12</td>
<td>24th – 28th Mar</td>
<td>5th Year Previews, RIBA Part II</td>
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<th>Week</th>
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<td>25th Mar</td>
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4th April: Salone del Mobile opening

term three

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<tr>
<th>Week</th>
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<th>Events</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>W1</td>
<td>24th April</td>
<td>23rd June</td>
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<tr>
<td>W2</td>
<td>2nd – 5th May</td>
<td>TS High Pass Panels, exhibit</td>
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<tr>
<td>W3</td>
<td>8th – 12th May</td>
<td>MT: Venice Biennale Vernissage (optional)</td>
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<tr>
<td>W4</td>
<td>15th – 19th May</td>
<td>4th Year End of Year Reviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W5</td>
<td>22nd – 26th May</td>
<td>Undergraduate School Fortnight Juries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W6</td>
<td>30th May – 2nd Jun</td>
<td>4th Year End of Year Reviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W7</td>
<td>5th – 9th Jun</td>
<td>7th-8th: 4th Year End of Year Reviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W8</td>
<td>12th – 16th Jun</td>
<td>Assembly of Dip 15 Exhibition - now onwards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W9</td>
<td>19th – 23rd Jun</td>
<td>20th-21st: RIBA examinations, 23rd Graduation awards, Exhibition</td>
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* GF & EG will be at the AA on Mondays and Tuesdays