

**The great egyptian museum. The new museum in Giza: a project for the international architectural competition**

by Marianna Carrera, Alessandro Co', Andrea Perona

Tutor: Marco Trisciuglio

Co-Tutor: Michela Barosio

This work represented to us not only an academic exercise, but the first experience of a professional activity: an **architectural competition** which involved thousand of professionals all over the world. It was a competition with a prominent cultural value: **the project of the first virtual global Egyptian museum.**

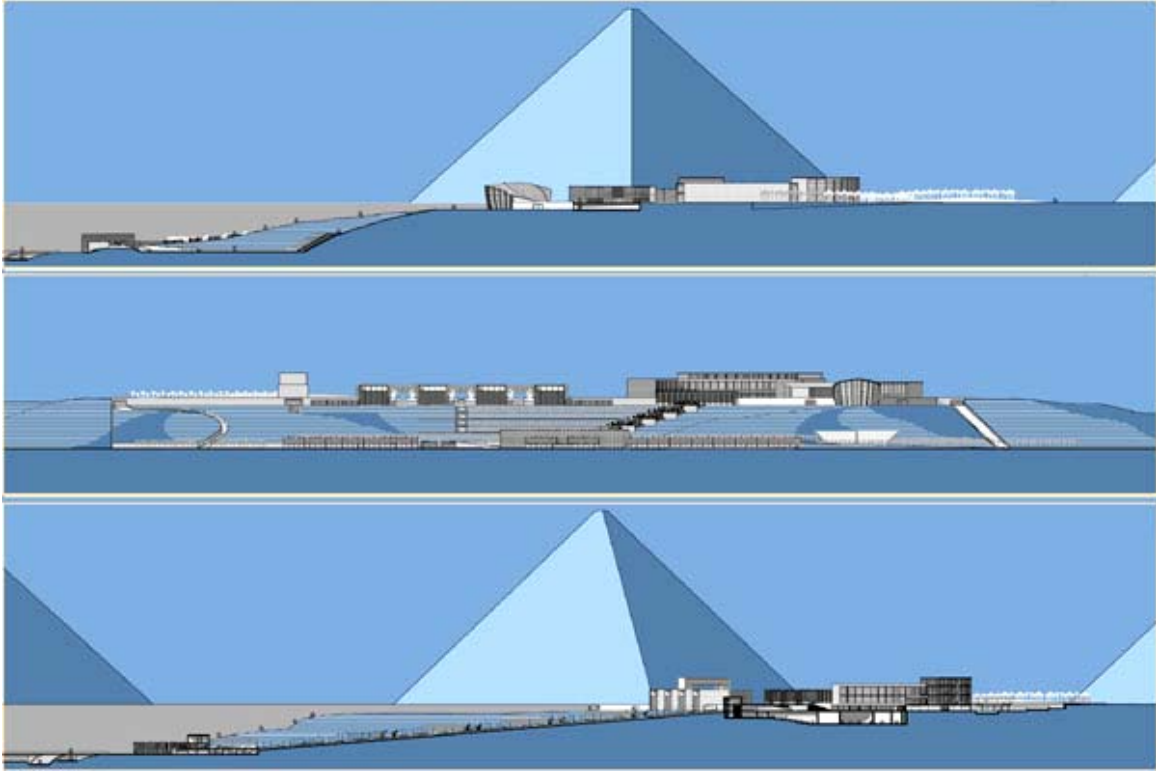
At the present there are two great Egyptian collections in the world: the first, situated in the National Museum in Cairo, built in 1900 by French architect Marcel Durgnon, exhibits more than 120.000 items collected by Egyptian Government since 1835; the second one is Egyptian Museum in Turin which exhibits one of greatest collections in the world (more than 8.000 items), with exceptional documents collected by Savoy dynasty since '600.

Both museums lack of suitable areas, they are located in ancient buildings that can't satisfy the requirements that the social role of a modern museum needs, and they haven't adequate technological systems.

In this international outline, the Arab Republic of Egypt Ministry of Culture proclaimed, in may 2002, on web site [www.gem.gov.eg](http://www.gem.gov.eg), an architectural competition addressed to all professionals in the world, in order to build **a great Egyptian museum located at 2,5 Km from Giza ruins, the wonderful Cheope, Chefren and Micerino Pyramids and the great Sphinx.**



General plan



Frontal view and cross- section of the complex

The interest in this competition doesn't concern only the original geographical location, in a particular historical, cultural, climatic and natural context, but it is also involved with the new concept the museum intends to represent: a global and virtual museum. This structure, maintaining educational purposes, the exhibition and the conservation of ancient objects that show the value of the Egyptian culture, is also directly connected with the other Egyptian collections in the world, thanks to the most advanced technologies.

In the **Great Egyptian Museum, GEM**, people from different nations and with different culture shall plunge into the ancient Egyptian culture, with its five thousand years of history. The advertisement of the competition proposes the project of a **great digital machine**, and also **architecture capable of dealing with the place, of showing and preserving, of educating and amazing**.

The Great Egyptian Museum is also **a privileged way** to be in contact with Egyptian territory and art, being located at the beginning of the archaeological tour on Nile river.

The GEM is on a deserted area, "the last dune behind the city". In our project it is presented as a **contemporary acropolis**, with its own urbanized, compositive rules, accordingly with Richard Meier project for Getty Center in Los Angeles.

The GEM is a **collage** of shapes recognized on plan and that can be attributed to a specific prospect, but ironically denied in reality. This compositive play refers to James Stirling and Michael Wilford's WZB in Berlin.



Model photo

GEM architecture compares with a deserted background and from it takes its colours: local stone coverings deal with landscape and pyramids.

The bright natural light, symbol of life, divinity for the ancient Egyptians, is filtered through frontal *brise soleil* and through the skylights in the squares, in order to light adequately the exhibitions and services.

Building's architecture merges with the theme parks one, that explains the landscape, they evoke the concept of river Nile's fertility and they offer equipments for the *loisir*.

The GEM is the project of the first museum conceived as the digital machine of communication, but it is also the project of **environment**, a system where architecture, technology, art and landscape merge.

For further information, e-mail:

Marianna Carrera: [m.carrera@libero.it](mailto:m.carrera@libero.it)

Alessandro Co': [colessandro@libero.it](mailto:colessandro@libero.it)

---

Maintained by:

CISDA - HypArc, e-mail: [hyparc@polito.it](mailto:hyparc@polito.it)