In 2013, the Albanian Ministry of Culture envisioned a plan to improve the national cultural infrastructure, paying special attention to the renovation of existing historical buildings, reusing them with a new cultural program. One of the first projects included in this program was the Marubi National Photomuseum, which is especially important due to its pioneer character. The Marubi Museum has been the first Albanian modern museum born with the clear intention of creating an open, accessible and alive cultural landmark. It seeks to attract through educational programmes and open events a wide range of different social groups. The museum has enjoyed an enormous national repercussion because of the historical importance of exhibiting the photographic legacy created by three generations of photographers from the Marubi family as well as the work of other relevant Albanian photographers. Preserving and disseminating these works in a historical city such as Shkoder acquires also a strong symbolic significance that helps to promote the Albanian national identity, especially among new generations.

**DIAGNOSE BETWEEN TRADITION AND MODERNITY**

The Marubi Museum aims to promote a rich dialogue between tradition and modernity. The legacy of the tradition is underlined by restoring the historical building designed by the Albanian architect Iole Idromeno, while preserving its spatial and structural qualities. Conceptually, Idromeno’s building becomes an important “object” of the exhibition to be shown, contemplated and valued. A modern image associated to the new museographic program is achieved by installing five “functional boxes”, which are prefabricated and detached from the original building, working as pieces of furniture or sculptural elements. Tradition and modernity establish a dialogue in every corner of the building.

**MUSEUM IDENTITY**

The modern image of the museum is based on an abstract pattern inspired by the geometry of the aperture of the photographic camera that opens and closes to control the light. This pattern is used to design the structural layout of the exhibition boxes and integrates a complete and versatile exhibition system that includes frames to exhibit photos and documents, showcases for objects and video screens for slide shows and short movies.

The pattern, which is always mixed with the photos and objects of the collection, becomes the symbol of the museum. It can be recognized at different scales and in several parts of the building such as in the logo of the museum, in the design of the street showcase, in the layout of the functional boxes inside the building, and even in the structure of the new artistic back facade that
frames the views over the surroundings and filters the light within the building. Marubi National Museum of Photography acquires its own specific identity by linking all spatial, structural, functional, graphic and visual aspects, helping visitors to identify building and collection with a complete, rich and unique experience.

OPEN, ACCESSIBLE AND ALIVE CULTURAL LANDMARK
On the one hand, the museum program expands onto the public space and one of the “functional boxes” becomes a showcase installed in front of the museum, serving as a landmark that invites citizens to visit it. On the other hand, public space enters the museum and the project crosses the border between street and institution with a transparent and accessible ground floor. The project aims to create an open and alive museum capable of becoming a cultural landmark linked to the street life of Shkodër.

HOW THE PROJECT ADDRESSES THREE OF THE FOUNDING PRINCIPLES OF THE HASSETT CHARTER

PRINCIPLE 4 OF THE HASSETT CHARTER

The Marubi National Museum of Photography and National Archive has been made possible thanks to the collaboration among public institutions such as the Albanian Ministry of Culture and the Swiss Embassy and different Albanian NGO’s such as the Albanian American Development Foundation and the Albanian Development Fund responsible for sustainable social projects in the country. This kind of collaboration is new in Albania and has proved successful as a model to follow for developing new cultural institutions.

Within the current political frame according to which Albania is trying to become a full member of the EU in the coming future, the Albanian NGO’s have managed funds provided by the European Commission (IPA program) to improve the culture and tourism infrastructure of the country, currently underdeveloped.

The Marubi museum has been a pioneer in a series of developments focused on, on the one hand, recovering existing abandoned buildings with historical value and, on the other hand, on creating modern and dynamic cultural institutions, capable of attracting very different kinds of visitors. Both, public institutions and NGO’s have joined forces to catch international attention and to develop a podium for the rich history and culture of the country.
PRINCIPLES OF THE HASSELT CHARTER

The Marubi Museum has been consciously designed to become an open platform for all kinds of social groups, integrated into Albanian society, which is since centuries a multi-ethnic and multi-religious one.

Already part of the architectural commission was to envision a general curatorial and educational plan to guarantee the participation of different social groups in the daily life of the museum, which is something highly innovative in Albania.

The ground floor of the museum has been designed in close visual and physical contact with the lively Kole Istemi street and allows a free entrance visit to the multifunctional area, where lectures, workshops and other events are held.

The temporary exhibition area, called 'Marubi revisited' and a video lounge library have been also been placed on the ground floor in order to attract visitors of all ages as often as possible.

The main aim has been to encourage visitors to enter the museum repeatedly and to create the habit of visiting museums among all Albanians, as well as to promote cultural exchange, debate, discussion and reflection on different levels among scholars, institutions and general visitors.

INTERACTIVE CHRONO-THEMATIC EXHIBITION: INFORMATION AND EDUCATION COMBINED INTO A MULTISENSORY EXPERIENCE

The exterior side of the functional boxes located on the first floor of the museum presents a chronological exhibition, which is intertwined with the thematic exhibition inside the boxes. The chronological exhibition shows the life and achievements of the Marubi's dynasty with texts, historical pictures, videos and objects organized around the biography of the three members of the Marubi's dynasty. This information is put into context together with the history and culture of Albania and the city of Shkodër, thus acquiring an important didactic dimension.

The thematic exhibition complements the chronological one by stimulating a multisensory experience that makes the visitor interact with the space and with the devices of the three thematic rooms. These rooms show the photo-studio of Pjetër Marubi “Dritashkronja”, the darkroom of Kël Marubi and the Gegë Marubi’s archive.
Since the beginning of the design process, the Marubi Museum has been characterized by a rich transnational dialogue among museum experts and curators from Albania and from other countries due to the fact that, on the one hand, Casanova-Hernandez, an architect from Rotterdam, has included Dutch museum experts in their design team and, on the other hand, the future director of the museum was already collaborating with Italian experts in the restoration and preservation of photography and photographic objects.

After a very close collaboration with senior Dutch curators from FOAM (Fotografie museum Amsterdam) for the development of the museographic project that was also part of the architectural commission, FOAM has developed a stronger relationship with the Marubi Museum. After the completion of the museum, FOAM has established a solid collaboration with it and has promoted the exhibition in the Netherlands as part of the Marubi collection.

It is expected that this kind of events will develop over time and that more international collaborations will take place as planned in the approved museographic project.