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**Museo del Prado, Madrid:**

**National cultural asset renovated**

**The Prado in Madrid is a shrine to painting – and this was the case long before the recent extension by Prizker Prize winner Rafael Moneo. This renovation restored the Baroque cloister of the neighbouring Jerónimo Monastery, which had been destroyed in the Napoleonic era, and incorporated it into the museum of art, whose design was originally based on the Louvre. In 2020/21, thirteen years after the opening of this national cultural asset, Valerio Canals renovated the main facade using 30 elements from Jansen’s Janisol Arte system, which enabled him to preserve the character of the building.**

The history of the building reads like a historical detective story. Ten architects once set out to significantly expand the building, which was inaugurated in 1819 as the Royal Museum of Painting and Sculpture (“Museo Real de Pintura y Escultura”) in the Spanish capital, and to adapt it to the architectural conventions of the turn of the millennium for dealing with sociocultural heritage sites of this kind. On 16 November 1936, in an act of barbarism, German and Italian pilots carried out multiple air raids during which they bombed the building, which was originally built by Juan de Vilanueva between 1785 and 1808 and was later renovated for use as a museum by Antonio López Aguado. Meanwhile, the works of art had found a new home in Valencia, which was being defended against the fascists by the Spanish Republic. The spectacular reconstruction of the Louvre in Paris, which began in 1989, also served as a starting point for the – subsequently extremely flawed – competition, as the impressive Museo del Prado, which was established by order of the Spanish monarch Ferdinand VII, was originally inspired by its renowned French counterpart: after all, even kings need role models.

This would prove to be of little help during the tendering process, which began in 1996. The jury were sent 776 designs, which were judged worthy of entry into the second round. However, while the decision-makers were able to single out some designs for praise, and award one of them second place, they were unable to reach a final decision. Upon closer inspection, the jury’s vacillations were also due to the unresolved question of how much space would be available for the extension. Finally, a significant expansion of the exhibition space was planned while, at the same time, the potential expansion stretched as far as the neighbouring Jerónimo monastery, whose baroque cloister, which had been destroyed back in the Napoleonic era, continued to fall apart. In the meantime – despite the project being further hampered by local residents fearing their peace and quiet may be disturbed and whose reasons for objecting due to concerns over the preservation of historical monuments were likely only a pretext – the Spanish Ministry of Culture finally reached an agreement with the Church of San Jerónimo el Real and was finally allowed to include the aforementioned cloister in its plans for the extension of the Museo del Prado, which had been suspended for years.

**Exhibition area increased by 50 percent**

All ten entrants were admitted to the second phase of the competition. The contract was exclusively awarded to Rafael Moneo in 1997, who was now faced with the task of having the cloister removed and restored stone by stone, as well as adding a roof, so that sculptures could be placed partially between the balustrades. The new transverse axis begins directly at the Velázquez entrance, which leads visitors to the collection of paintings by one of the great masters of Hispanic painting. Ten years after the jurors selected the Prizker Prize winner, the extension, which was built for 152 million euros – six times the originally planned construction cost – was finally opened. As requested, the exhibition space was significantly increased by 50 percent – and the response has been positive: In 2019, for example, more than 3.2 million visitors came to visit the museum with its buildings connected by an underground passageway, which houses more than 5000 drawings, 2000 prints, 1000 coins and medals, as well as 2000 other works of art and a collection of more than 700 sculptures. Elsewhere, the Spanish painting department is world renowned, and, with almost 4900 works, is not only the largest in the Prado, but also the most extensive of its kind anywhere in the world. The 132 paintings covering all epochs and facets of Francisco de Goya’s art, are almost enough for a major exhibition on their own. There are also many El Greco works in the collection. Other must-see exhibits for art lovers taking a tour of the museum include the 30 paintings in the Sala de Tiziano, as well as works from Tintoretto, Caravaggio and Giambattista Tiepolo, who once visited the Spanish capital with his son Giandomenico Tiepolo to decorate the royal palace on commission. The list is almost endless, even including some Flemish artists, with the world’s most renowned Hieronymus Bosch collection, as well as individual works by Albrecht Dürer.

**Filigree design with a high proportion of glass**

With its steel systems, Jansen AG in Switzerland is represented in many of the most prestigious architectural projects. In addition to the tried-and-tested solutions for projects with demanding energy requirements, this is due in particular to the excellent statics, which enable a filigree, aesthetic design with a high proportion of glass. In the case of Janisol Arte, which was used by Rafael Moneo for the 30 elements of the main facade of the Museo del Prado, renovated by Valerio Canals in 2020/21, there is also a close focus on the design language, as cited by the Prizker Prize winner at the time of the large-scale expansion. Only the original iron windows were now replaced by balcony doors and partition constructed from the steel system; the height of the lower windows is 3600 millimetres. The metalworkers Sistema Global de Acero / Cerrajeria Teófilo and Valuarte Conservacion de Patrimonio SL, the latter specialising in listed window and facade designs, were tasked with preserving the basic appearance of the facade while exploring the technological possibilities of the market, and making use of them to achieve the desired optimisation.

In close coordination with the authorities, specialists then fitted the interior of the windows with the original torsion bar locks; the original window handles were extensively reworked and, after the completion of the renovation work in September last year, are still used today on the decorative ornamental elements of the Museo del Prado. The Jansen Janisol Arte profile series, initially developed as here for the restoration of listed facades as well as industrial and loft glazing, impresses in terms of both energy efficiency and aesthetics with its extremely filigree, thermally separated systems – and is increasingly being used in modern architecture, including the Janisol Arte 2.0 variant.

**Project details:**

**Client:** Spanish Ministry of Culture, Madrid/ES

**Architect:** Valerio Canals, Madrid, Spain

**Metalwork:** Sistema Global de Acero, Madrid, Spain

**Profile systems used:** Janisol Arte

**System supplier:** Jansen AG, Oberriet, Switzerland

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**Photos:** xxx

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**About Jansen AG**

JANSEN AG was founded in 1923 and is based in Oberriet, Switzerland. The Group develops,

produces and distributes steel profile systems and plastic products for various segments of the building industry. Since 1978, Jansen has been the exclusive Swiss sales partner of the German company Schüco International KG and distributes its aluminium profile systems within the construction sector. In January 2021, Jansen AG acquired the subsidiary RP Technik GmbH, which is also a provider of steel solution systems for façades, windows and doors, from the Welser Profile Group of Companies. Jansen handed over its automotive supply business to Mubea on 1 April 2021. To this day, the Jansen Group remains a wholly family-owned company and employs around 600 people worldwide.

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