Through Architecture, a museum can frame external context, both physical and conceptual, as well as internal exhibits. In a museum, framing is typically found in the form of physical frames around a painting or a glass case around an object or artifact and it is seen as a way to separate that which is on display from its surroundings. However, as Janet Marstine writes in her book, New Museum Theory and Practice: An Introduction, “rather than isolating a work from the wider world, framing links the two.” This thesis project is primarily an exploration of that idea and how it extends beyond the physical limits of a museum to the physical and conceptual context that surrounds that museum.

The design of this museum stems directly from the idea of framing in both the physical sense and the conceptual sense. From the outside, one will see the building as a group of objects within a case. From the inside, one will see the surrounding city as pictures on a wall, framed by the building itself. Beyond the confines of its walls, the museum is framed by the surrounding structures of downtown St. Paul. Beyond its physical context, the museum is framed by the global concepts of architecture.

One can argue that the real museum of architecture is all around us in our built environments. Each city is a gallery in flux, with new buildings standing next to centuries old structures; on display for anyone passing by. In order to bring this global museum of architecture into my museum, I designed a sculptural frame that could be placed anywhere in the world. When people pass by the frame, they would be encouraged to pause, document their surroundings with a picture, and post that picture to the internet. In the museum in St. Paul, those pictures would be projected on surfaces throughout the structure. The result is a museum that draws its contents from within and without.