

# **An approach of the microstructure of the gallery space: The case of the Sainsbury Wing**

67

**Kali Tzortzi**

University College London, UK

## **Abstract**

The aim of this paper is largely exploratory. The intention is to contribute to the description and understanding of the intricate pattern of interdependencies between the two parameters of the gallery space, the spatial configuration and the exhibition layout. This paper reports the analysis of the Sainsbury Wing, the extension to the National Gallery London. Firstly, the paper explores the pattern of spatial organisation of the gallery and identifies curiosities due, among other things, to a graph problem. Secondly, it demonstrates that the strongly localised movement is explained by the syntactic patterns of depth and connectivity. Thirdly, it analyses the conceptual strategy of the arrangement of paintings to favour thematic or aesthetic relationships rather than promoting the uniqueness of the work of art. The conclusion is that on one hand, the layout of the display uses the spatial potentials to maximise the impact of exhibits and, on the other hand, the power of space overrides the intentions of the curators when it comes to the morphology of movement and exploration.

## **Keywords**

Gallery layout,  
display, axially,  
visibility,  
perspective,  
movement,  
exploration, graph

[kalit@otenet.gr](mailto:kalit@otenet.gr)

67.1

## **Acknowledgements**

The author is indebted to Professor B. Hillier and to R. Diamond for their continuous and generous support. She would also like to thank the National Gallery and especially P. Fortheringham and R. Cripps (Building and Facilities Department) for supplying the gallery plans, I. Hunter and M. Watton (Libraries and Archive Department) for facilitating the archive search, and Dr. A. Sturgis, Exhibitions and Programme Curator, for a very useful discussion on the rearrangement of the collection.