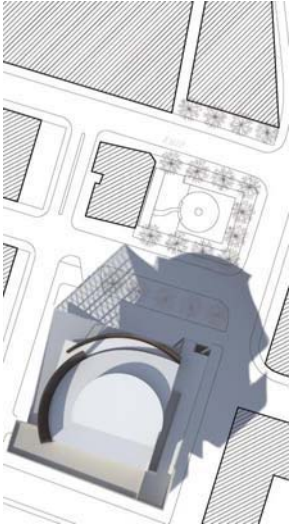


## Urban and Architectural Objectives



The House of Arts and Culture (HAC) offers two distinctly different faces to its urban context. Two protective arms shield the HAC from the visual and aural noise generated by the ring road just south of the site. Facing downtown, the northwest corner of the site is the point of arrival to the HAC and reveals an open and dynamic face to the city. A striking metal clad circular performance tower is enshrined in a delicate glass enclosure that is transparent, inviting, promising and welcoming. The two faces also speak to the moment in time. The solid sandstone-clad protective wings anchor the enduring foundation of art and culture in Lebanon. The celebratory openness and transparency of the glass facades embrace the hope and aspiration of a new millennium, a new beginning, the anticipation of a world of art yet to come.



The performance and exhibition spaces are vertically arranged, creating a sculptured tower with symbolic meaning. The volume that encloses the art spaces takes its inspiration from the form of a circle, which has deep resonance in both Western and Arabic performance tradition. The circle is not a closed form, but an open one, with a centripetal force to it. This form looks to the Arab tradition of the halqa (circle) and its open, invitational approach to public performance. Performance and art are understood to attract a gathering crowd, and the drift of people who gravitate spontaneously to a performance is reflected in the shifting and open enclosure of the central volume. On a practical level, the main performance hall is adaptable to a complete theater in the round as well as a Western proscenium, to accommodate all forms of theatrical tradition.

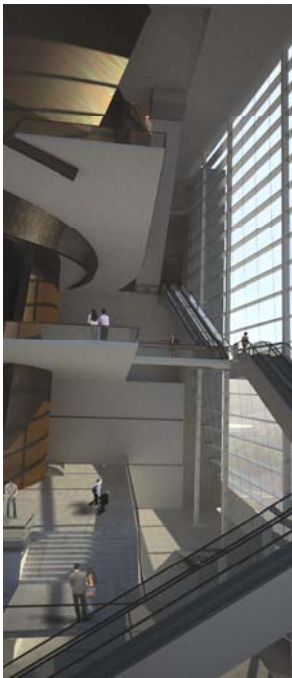
The vertical organization of the performing and exhibition spaces allows for a large open space that contains the public circulation. It acts as the generator of anticipation and excitement. It is a dynamic space that will display and dispense information and occasionally serve as exhibition area for new and innovative arts.

## Functional and Spatial Organization

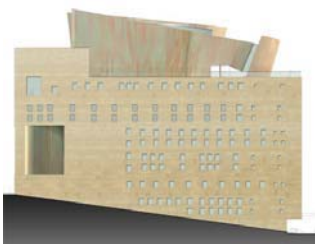
### Summary



The point of entry is along a new access road between the landscaped area on Rue Chalchoul and the north elevation of the House of Arts and Culture. A generous canopy protects a 27 meter wide area designated for arrivals and departures. Upon entering the reception hall, the towering lobby space is the centerpiece of the HAC.



A split level arrangement at the ground floor of the lobby connects important program elements to the reception area. The entrances to the large performance hall are three meters above the lobby floor and are reached by either a gracious stair or glass-enclosed elevators in the reception hall. Stairs and a ramp lead down to the cafe/restaurant and the shop area 1.5 meters below the entrance level. A large escalator system leads from the ground floor up to the balcony level of the large performance hall, then to the multimedia performance hall and cinema, and finally to the exhibition hall at the top level. The entire vertical circulation system is visible from the reception hall and emphasizes the connectedness between the performance and exhibition venues. The vertical organization of the performance and exhibition spaces allows for this open L-shaped circulation space which invites communication and participation amongst the arts. It is the hallmark of the HAC. Public gathering spaces sit at the entrances to the performance and exhibition spaces on all major levels of the open circulation space. These gathering spaces are open to below, with striking views out of the glass facade, creating a connection between the arts within and the city beyond.

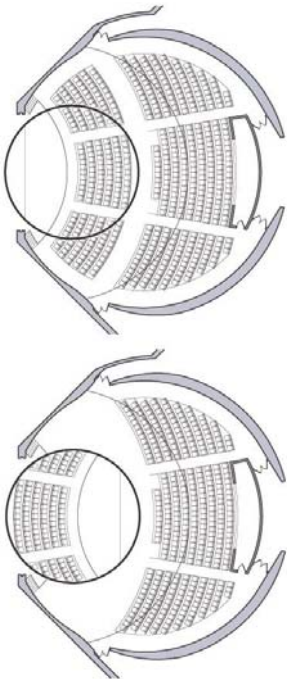


An L-shaped bar building that embraces the central circular tower to the east and south contains all additional program functions. A large, 4x5 meter service elevator connects all levels with a receiving area and the loading dock at the southwest corner of the building. Vehicular ramps leading from the north, on each side of the main entrance, reach three underground parking levels. There are 278 parking spaces provided.

## Detailed Description of the Organization

Levels: 0.00 and -1.50m

Level 0.00 features the reception hall with vertical connections to all levels above as well as parking below. Ticket and information booths, cloakroom, restrooms, infirmary and a security office are also on level 0.00. A stair and a ramp connect the reception hall to the gift shop area and the cafe/restaurant. Both are at level – 1.50m. The non-public areas on level – 1.50 contain miscellaneous spaces, storeroom, workshop, archive, waste storage, staff room, lockers and restrooms for staff as well as ample secondary storage below the auditorium. The kitchen for the restaurant is also on this level.



Level +3.00 m

This level features the large performance and conference hall, spaces for intermission and receptions, the meeting rooms and public restrooms. The performance and conference hall seats 556 persons on the main level and 256 persons on the balcony level for a total of 812. A 13.5 meter turntable is incorporated into the auditorium that can transform the space into a theatre-in-the-round. A moveable orchestra pit is built into the turntable. The non-public areas include the main stage and adjacent staging and receiving area, the loading dock, service entrance and a butlery.

Level +7.50m

This level contains the first of three levels designated for the administration in the north east corner of the building. All other areas are open to below.

Level +12.00m

This level coincides with the first landing of the escalator system. It features the balcony level of the large performance/conference hall, the entrance to the artist's reception area and the individual and double dressing rooms beyond. These dressing rooms and the collective dressing rooms on the floor above are connected to the performance venues by a private elevator. The administration's directorate is located on this level as well. The three levels of administrative offices are connected by an additional internal stair.

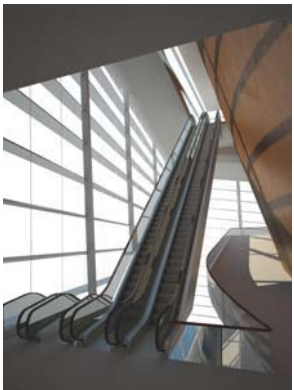


#### Level + 17.00m

The control rooms for lighting, film projection, recording and interpretation booths for the large performance/conference hall are accessible from this level. The artist's collective dressing rooms and the administration's planning section are on this level as well. The administration's planning and leasing department is located above the other administrative units.

#### Level +22.00m

This level features the multimedia performance hall showing 246 seats and the cinema with 195 seats. Connected to the second landing of the escalator system is the intermission reception area with a butlery. A backstage assembly area and a furniture storage room are adjacent to the service elevator and the elevator for performers. The workshops and training rooms are on this level as well.



#### Level +27.00m

This level houses the documentation centre as well as the National Cinematheque. The internal offices of the Cinematheque are sky lit from above.



#### Level +32.00m

This level features the exhibition hall, a reception lounge with butlery; a workshop and restrooms for visitors and staff. A large garden/sculpture area extends the exhibition hall outdoors to the east.

### **Technical and Building Solution**

The underground parking structure and the retaining wall on the south side will be reinforced concrete construction. The structure above ground could be either reinforced concrete construction or steel construction, preferably a combination of both with the central tower and the glass enclosed atrium of steel construction and the L-shaped wing structure of concrete construction. The principal exterior materials are stone cladding for the wing structure and high performance glazing with integrated shading structures at the west side.