

The House of Arts & Culture

The Lebanese-Omani Center

Project Description

Conceived as a space for both traditional and emerging arts, the building serves as a cultural incubator that enlists its architecture and internal logic to create an open space of artistic expression that heightens the visitor's experience and awareness of art and culture and fosters connections between the arts.

Inspired by traditional urban forms, the project was envisioned as an arrangement of separate volumetric components connected around a larger urban courtyard. Within this courtyard, a central circulation system creates a "vertical street" that connects layers of program and allows visitors to experience a variety of activities at each level. By establishing this open dialogue between programs, the assigned functionality of each space begins to dissolve as workshops and rehearsals become spontaneous performances to curious observers and allow informal, impromptu dialogues and exchanges that lead to creativity.

To unify the building's programmatic volumes, a steel mesh façade wraps the building in a subtly protective layer, creating the public face of the building. Used to provide shading and temperature control, the structure is at once both shielding and transparent – at times obscuring views into the building, while at other times revealing movement and activity. At the ground level the façade lifts up to reveal the building's interior ground level to engage the street and nearby public plaza for larger, open-air performances.

From all points of entry, circulation begins along a large entry ramp that wraps the building's interior toward a main ticket/information desk. From the desk, circulation becomes a shared experience through a vertical system of elevators, stairs and escalators that guide visitors through the building's programmatic levels.

In place of a more traditional excavated parking structure, vehicular circulation is directed by an automated system used to stack vehicles vertically along the south wall of the building – both engaging the activity along the busy highway to the south and creating an interesting and constantly changing installation that can be viewed throughout the House's main interior volume.