

THE HOUSE OF ARTS & CULTURE ARCHITECTURAL REPORT

Vision

Like the bedrock upon which the city of Beirut is built, the House of Arts & Culture offers a platform for art and culture where artistic creativity can thrive. It is a place that will endorse freedom of thought where the Lebanese artists, writers and performers can express their ideas with no boundaries. The House of Arts & Culture will provide the means for the next generation of young talents to engage in the intellectual arena of art and culture.

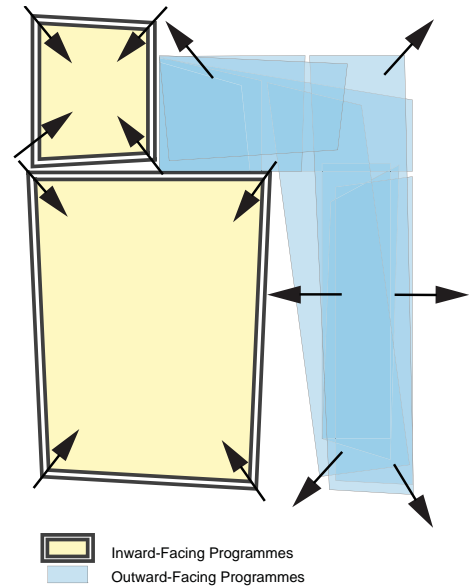
Urban Context

The site chosen for the House of Arts & Culture is located on the edge of Downtown Beirut in what is left of the old Ghalghoul. The south side of the plot is adjacent to the Avenue Du General Fouad Chehab, a ring road that encircles the downtown and acts as urban edge separating the city centre and the suburbs. The north side of the plot is facing towards downtown and the seafront. The site is located on a natural slope with approximately 8 meter difference between the ring road side that sits on the higher ground and northern edge of the plot at Ru Ghalghoul.

Urban Strategy

The proposal seeks to create a building that will enrich the public domain by providing outdoor spaces for social activities. The building will act as a gateway to the city centre, bridging the downtown district of Beirut and its suburbs with an external pedestrian street, the 'Street of Art & Culture', that runs north to south through the site. Like the Lebanese 'souks', this street creates a public space at an urban scale that will bustle with activities; outdoor exhibitions and performances where the spectator can interact with the artist.

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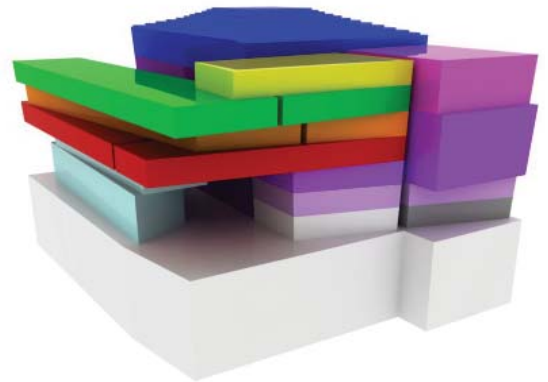


The two parts of the building are separated by the ‘Street of Art & Culture’ that connects Avenue Du General Fouad Chehab on the south side of the site with the side street, Ru Ghalghoul on north side. This space is used as an extension of the day-to-day functions of the building blurring the boundary lines between inside and outside, venue and audience. Facing the ‘Street of Art and Culture,’ the east facade of the large performance hall is wrapped in a steel mesh, revealing cascading escalators that carry people up and down the height of the building. The space behind the mesh is considered as semi-indoor zone, it is a transitional space between the performance halls and the outside.

The performance hall is conceived as modular space that can adapt to different stage configurations capable of hosting big dance and theatre performances, music concerts and congresses. The floor of the performance hall can be raised and lowered while the unnecessary seating can be stored below the floor. The dressing rooms are shared between the two performance halls and are located above the loading bay on the first floor and below the small performance hall on the second floor.

The exhibition and the restaurant are situated on the top floor and are easily accessible via escalators or a direct elevator. A long lobby space, shared by the exhibition and the restaurant, overlooks the roof garden on the opposite side of the ‘Street of Art & Culture’.

From this lobby one can also reach the observation area located above the exhibition.



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| Large Performance Hall | Workshops & Training Rooms |
| Small Performance Hall | Documentation Centre |
| Cinema & Cinematheque | Administration |
| Artists' Dressing Rooms | Restaurant |
| Exhibition | Delivery Area |
| Reception Area, Bookshop, Meeting Rooms, Cafe | Technical Areas |

Technical Concept

The main plant room is located at -1 level, underneath the loading bay. This plant room can be accessed via service core, car park ramp and an areaway for equipment replacement. The plant space has a direct access to three main risers for HVAC supply to the building. The system serving the performance halls will use low-supply or displacement HVAC system that relies on the delivery of air from a plenum below audience seating and create a temperate stratum at the seating plane, with warmer air rising into the return-air domain above. This green-building approach to cooling also offers significant operation cost savings and leadership in Energy Efficient Design (LEED) opportunities.

Structural Concept

The building will be constructed from a combination of steel and concrete structure. The western part of the building that houses performance halls, cinema and exhibition consists of a concrete shell with concrete floors, walls, and two cores that give the building stiffness. Large spans over the performance hall can be achieved with the use of steel trusses that are deep enough to allow technicians to access lighting and rigging systems above the ceiling.

The eastern part of the building that houses offices, library, workshops, and restaurant will be supported with the use of vierendeel girders that span between the exterior walls with bottom and top chords supporting floors. This system can maintain a column-free space allowing complete flexibility in plan.

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