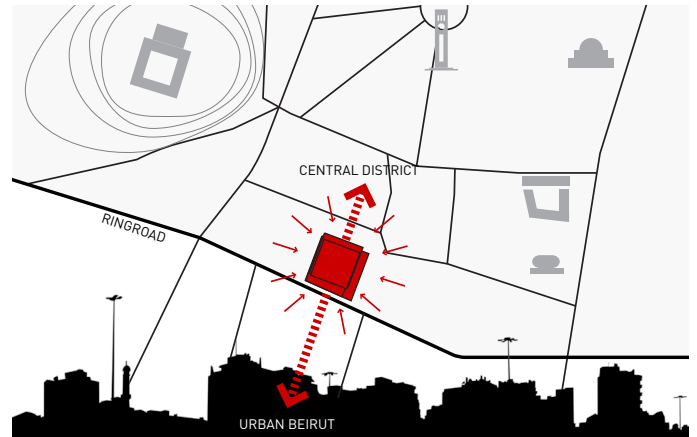


HOUSE OF ARTS AND CULTURE

URBAN CONNECTOR

The site is situated along the ring road, directly on the border between two typical Beirut city faces: in the north, the remodelled, archaeological preserved “conceptual” heart of the city, in the south, urban structures that reveal traces of the 30 year civil war. Take an institution like the HAC - The House of Arts and Cultures - and let it capitalize the potential of this particular context. Projected on this highly visible perimeter the HAC will become a connector between those two worlds by providing a reuniting programmatic mix which will investigate once and for all, the strong connection between art and culture, and the present thoughts and beliefs of this specific country. It will therefore become a symbol for Beirut; a destination for it's people.



PROGRAMMATIC CLUSTERS

Analyzing the program, we have identified five programmatic clusters and `combined` and consolidated them in such way that, while their particular needs are respected, their coexistence insures maximum mutual influence. Each cluster is architecturally defined and equipped for optimal performance, with different sizes, densities and opacities.

The five spatial compartments: 1) reception, 2) administration, 3) library / workshops, 4) performance halls and 5) exhibition are dedicated to and equipped for their specific duties. We do not believe that a black box space should overwhelm or compete with the program presented within it, particularly, when it comes to contemporary art. So we have attempted to make spaces that are inviting but straightforward. Flexibility can exist within each section, but not at the expense of any of the other compartments.

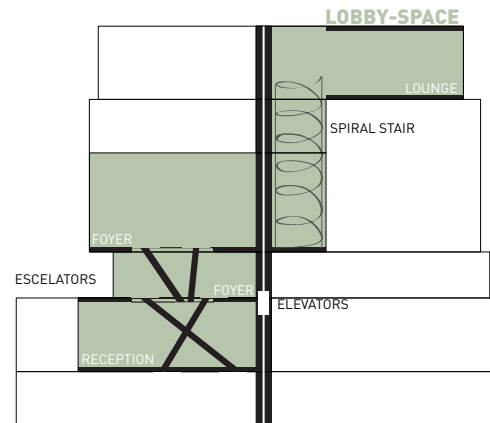


HOUSE OF ARTS AND CULTURE

VERTICAL LOBBY SPACE

The HAC is a public building: it is our task to provide a setting that makes the experience of visiting and working in the building an event.

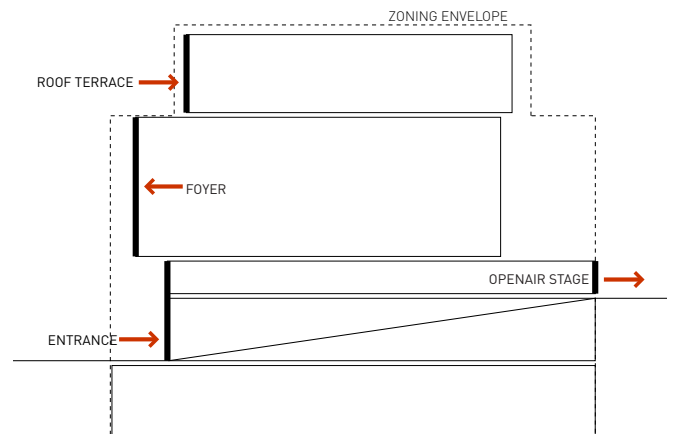
In classical theatres, the space reserved for foyer, lobby and grand staircase - the space for public display - often exceeds that of the auditorium itself; in the HAC, by joining and connecting the public areas reserved for the reception, the two individual halls, the cinema and the exhibition foyer, we create a 3-dimensional "lobby space", that will be more than the sum of its parts. This interfacial space transforms the in-between spaces into the main attraction of the centre: a place for communication, interaction and play.



VOLUMETRIC COMPOSITION

The solution for the volume emerged through an extensive period of trial and error. We conducted numerous study models based upon the programmatic disposition, the demands of the site i.e. zoning envelope and the urban context.

First we arrived at the notion of the boxes themselves showing directly the sizes and needs of the consolidated program clusters; each one representing a specific piece of the house. Then we shifted the boxes to render the inside of the building more accommodating and open, with more possibilities for daylight to enter and views to appear at various points in the interior. Correspondingly outside spaces like the large open-air stage, the main entrance or the public terrace leading to the library, are emphasized by these volumetric shifts.

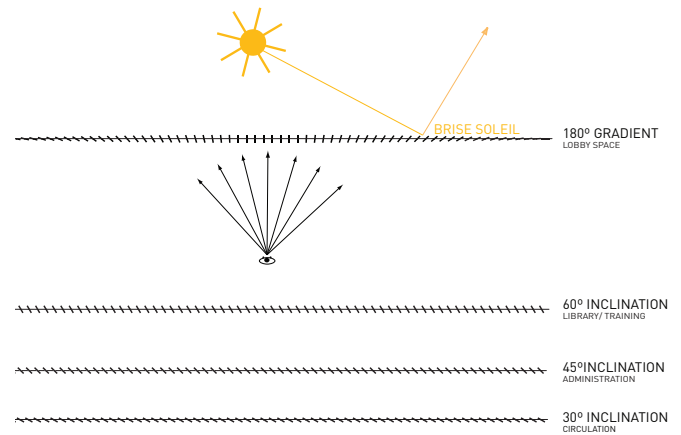


HOUSE OF ARTS AND CULTURE

FAÇADE CONCEPT

The steel construction of the HAC is clad with galvanized, brass-plated steel blades; depending on the program and the orientation the blades are inclined in a fixed angle. This way views from the outside as well as from the inside can be controlled specifically. Due to the brise soleil we were able to design a transparent, open building in the sense that we are not hiding what is happening behind its surface. Sometimes it mimics, sometimes contradicts, and sometimes just shows the movement behind it. At night the metallic exterior disappears and the building turns into a gigantic lantern with the vertical lobby space appearing as the HAC's "eye" to the city.

The roof of the exhibition floor, designed as the fifth façade of the building, is punctuated by skylights and provides a consistent and optimal light exposition.



PERFORMANCE HALL CONFIGURATIONS

Unlike traditional theatre typologies, which are wrapped by support spaces, stage house, loges and orchestra pit the performance halls of the HAC are organised on a single level. This way both halls can work independently or can be linked to one space holding up to 1100 seats.

The large theatre is connected to the outside open-air stage by a 30-meter-wide opening, allowing the public to look in on performances and theatregoers to look out on the city skyline forming an extraordinary stage design for experimental performance.

Due to the neutral configuration we achieve maximal flexibility in use, while maintaining the maximum quality of the individual hall.

