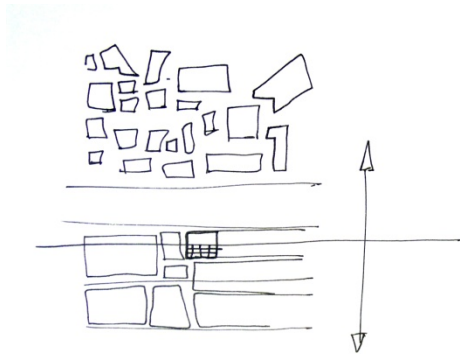
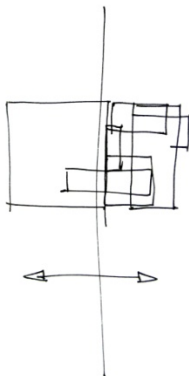


## Dualities and Symbioses of Oppositions

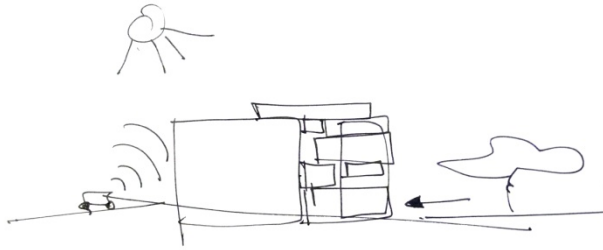
Lebanon/Beirut is caught between Past and Future / East and West



Site is where urban order meets chaos and where planning conformity gives its place to anarchy. Specificity of the site must offer the opportunity to turn its constraints into an architectural opportunity. Oppositions and dualities observed on territorial and historical terms are taken as a starting point for our architectural approach. The south-north axis of the building is a response to the aforementioned tension between Solidere and the city.

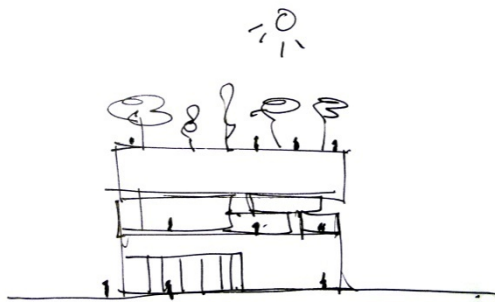


Façade towards the highway (south façade) is open only in terms of communication, by transforming a white wall into a surface where large-scale images can be projected. It is closed in terms of 3-dimensional openings, avoiding therefore noise, pollution and strong sunlight during the day. This façade is the exact opposite of Beirut. Mute...Behind the south façade, one finds the long auditorium, the biggest, above ground, single volume of the building (there is also a three floor underground parking for 288 cars), which does not require any natural light at all.



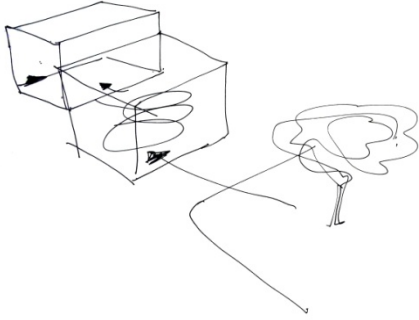
Façade towards Solidere (north façade): Large glass surfaces, and out of scale cantilevered concrete volumes, superimposed, protruded, extruded and juxtaposed in an apparently random manner, attempt to enter into a dialogue with the pristine, almost perfect image of Solidere.

The majority of all the other functions of the House (i.e. apart from the large exhibition hall) have been accommodated, mainly, on the north façade of the building that overlooks the piazza. In such a way, working, using or visiting the House becomes an even more pleasant experience.



Apart from the south façade and the large auditorium hall, the rest of the building is the result of the conception of the House for the arts and culture as a group of piled up programmes (i.e. a three dimensional accommodation of different functions) that eventually manages to generate several covered (green) spaces of public access between and above the different pieces that compose it.

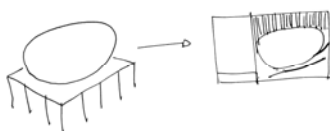
The full height glass façade of the reception and the foyer, emphasize, reinforce and represent the House's constant openness to the visiting public as well as to the different types of art in Lebanon to be housed in the building respectively. Furthermore, by situating the reception across the existing piazza, the former achieves the strongest possible visual and spatial connection with the latter, hence taking full advantage of one of the few public urban spaces of the area.



The entrance of the House can therefore be seen as a continuation of the urban fabric (and vice versa), and its design as an act of weakening the strict distinction between inside and outside.

Upon entering the building's reception, one sees the information desk, the ticket office, the shop as well as a spiral ramp that takes visitors up to the first floor's recessed foyer. The ramp, seen clearly also from the outside, achieves a well-balanced opposition to the overall orthogonality of the south façade and the perpendicular grid of the reception.

Once on the first floor, the visitor has direct views and easy access to both auditorium halls as well as the movie theatre. Furthermore, the foyer's recessed floor combined with its glass façade offers unobstructed views towards the reception and the piazza. The adjoining rooms, as well as the service lift, are situated on the west side of the first floor and within close distance to both backs stages, facilitating therefore the easy movement of actors and the transportation of stage materials respectively.

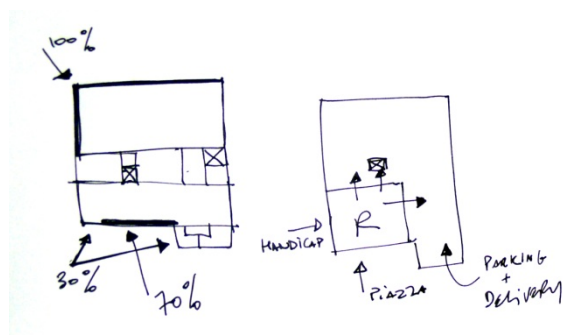


The large auditorium hall is a highly adaptable space, thanks to the mechanism under its floor that enables quick transformation of the overall seating arrangement. The sound breaker with a shape reminiscent of the concrete shell in Solidere, consists of thousands of small LED tubes/cables, the luminosity of which can change according to the event held in the hall.

The workshops and meeting rooms are situated along the north side of the second floor (overlooking the piazza), above which one finds the documentation centre, whose double height glass façade ensures the maximum amount of natural daylight possible.

The modular, easily transformable and column free exhibition space is also along the north façade, and vertically connected to the cafeteria above it. The light entering the space through its skylights is constantly controlled by a system of remote controlled louvers, thus ensuring the best possible light condition, and therefore enhancing the aesthetic pleasure of the space's visitors. The cafeteria is found on the last floor of the building and consists of both indoor and outdoor spaces, offering a 360° degree unobstructed view of Beirut. Its size and design give it the possibility to host several events of various sizes. Special attention has been given to the landscaping of its outdoor spaces, creating two different types of open-air gardens. Apart from offering just a pleasant outdoor space in Beirut, these gardens will also help, to a large extent, the overall passive cooling of the building, especially during the hot months of the year. This, combined with a whole program of sustainable design will significantly reduce the running costs of the building.

The decision was taken to cover 100% of the available lot and not reach the maximum available height, since it is believed that in the future, and considering the site, any possible extensions (temporary or permanent) could be better accommodated vertically rather than horizontally.



It should also be noted that the skin of the building is in accordance with the built to line guidelines, as these were seen in the building regulations document.

Finally, it should also be stated that after a careful estimation of costs, the building should not exceed the cost of 19.5 million dollars.