

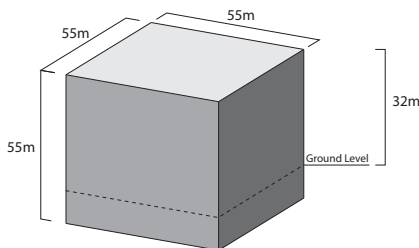
0031NL

The House of Arts and Culture

Located along the Ring road, the site oscillates on the borderline between the exclusive Down Town area and the more popular Bachoura neighbourhood. Committed to creating a truly public platform, the House starting from a timeless cube, undergoes a series of operations to allow an uninterrupted pedestrian flow, encourage social interaction and promote cultural exchange.

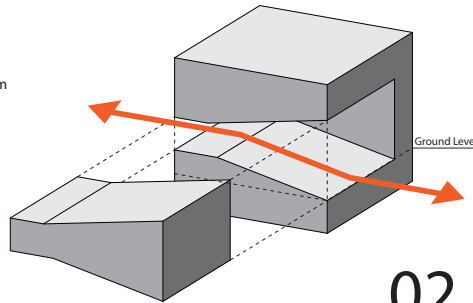
The major operations performed on site are:

- PLACING a classic a-temporal CUBE on site do
- CUTTING OUT the cube,
 - a. Allow an uninterrupted pedestrian link between the Ring road on the south and the Down Town of Beirut
 - b. Create a public playground
 - c. Maximise the north light on the public plaza
- INSERTING: the performance box as the CENTRE PIECE hanging over the public plaza.



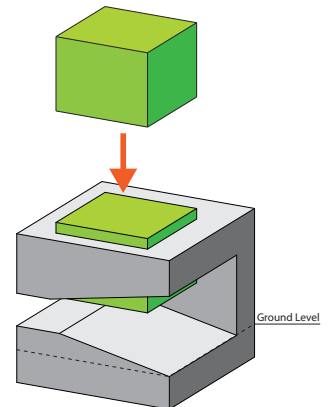
01

PLACE CUBE IN SITE
Fitting and Respecting
the Building Envelope



02

LIBERATE THE GROUND
By Cutting Out the Cube.
A PUBLIC PLAZA / OPEN AUDITORIUM is created
allowing for lateral flow between CBD and the City.



03

INSERT MEDIA BOX
Containing Performance and Congress
Program as center-piece hanging over
the Public Plaza.

Driven by the site geographical, social and cultural attributes, the operations transform the initial pure cube into a new volume. The resulting form aims at creating a truly public House of Arts and Culture through its architecture, its program, its organization, its audience, its outdoor plaza, its performance box, its circulation trajectory, its exhibition spaces, its structure and its mobile unit.

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ARCHITECTURE

The project's architecture reflects the house's independence and openness.

Far from the transient nature of fashion, the project's design doesn't lend itself to the trends of the moment; instead, it reveals the House's physical permanent and timeless existence. The House's bold architectural gesture will quickly inscribe itself in the collective mental image of Beirut, ultimately becoming the iconic emblem that is Utzon's Opera House to Sydney, or the Eiffel Tower to Paris.

Located on a prominent spot between the down town area and the ring road, the cut cube is highly visible yet unobtrusive. The cube mass emerges from the site, rather than sits on it, it is bold but remains welcoming, powerful but keeps its transparency, accommodating for the exterior public and the city beyond as much as for the visitors inside the house.

With its assertive presence and large open space, the House inscribes itself in Beirut, its scale, material, public spaces, colours and people. Beirut flows uninterrupted on the public open plaza, filtrates naturally inside the house.

AUDIENCE

The project aims at gaining a diverse public that goes beyond the few regulars that usually attend cultural events in Lebanon. In addition to the Lebanese regulars, and the Lebanese youth, the house aims at attracting the larger Lebanese public as well as a regional and international audience. Moreover, the flexible space and many facilities that the house offers will be a major attraction for local and visiting artists to exhibit, put together a performance, use the workshops or give a presentation.

PLAZA

The approach focuses on maximizing the public space, without separating it from the programmatic content of the House. The cut out in the cube creates a multifunctional public space that will also act as an outdoor auditorium, a projection area, an exhibition space, an artistic playground and a social plaza that opens up to the public square located to the north of the House. The urban ambiguity of the shaded plaza gives the visitor a feeling of being inside the building and out, reinforcing the fusion between the house and the rest of the city.

The public plaza is the common ground that draws people approaching from different angles to the House. Providing easy accesses from the Ring road and the lower down town area, the plaza also accommodates the pedestrians coming from the tunnel under the Ring road to directly access the public slope. Visitors and passersby will naturally be drawn on to the plaza, and from there inside the building. This truly public plaza will have a great influence on expanding the pool of visitors and making them feel welcome.

The very shallow steps covering the plaza create an uninterrupted circulation across its surface. However, in some instances, flat areas are inserted in the slope creating social pockets where people can gather. These flat insertions in the sloped plaza, will allow visual peeks and natural light to enter into the workshops and training spaces embedded in the

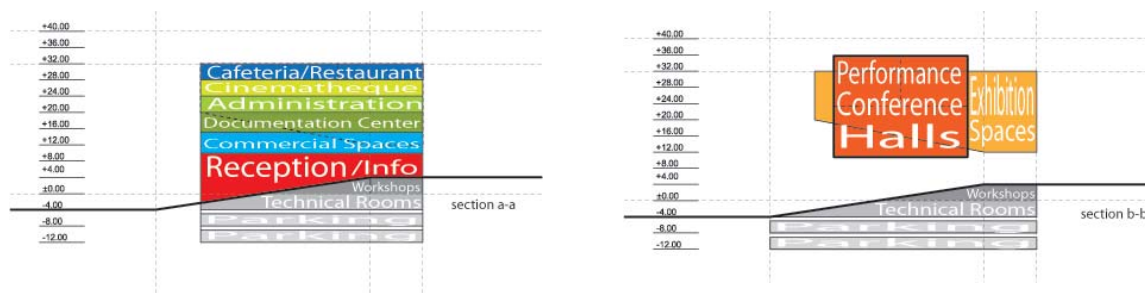
plaza mass. The configuration of this plaza, and the workshops embedded under the public surface, will encourage interactivity between the public and the artists rehearsing in the studios. This exchange will naturally activate the plaza, while revealing to the visitors a glimpse of the art production process behind the scenes.

Because the openness and transparency of the House are major components of its design, the architectural approach encourages exchange between the house, its artists and its visitors, by creating physical or visual encounters.

BLACK PERFORMANCE BOX

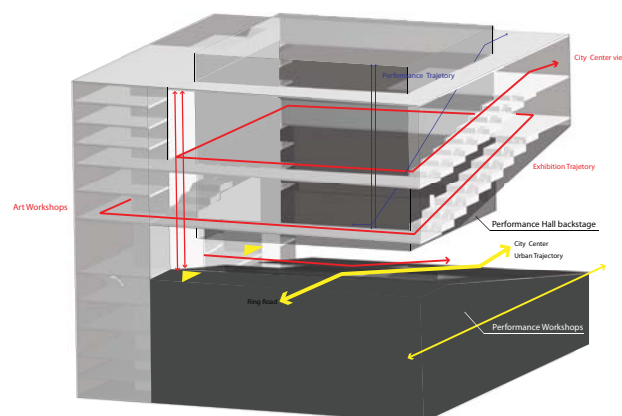
Inserted as the centre focus piece of the project, the performance box contains all the performance and cinema programs. To the outside public, it is a media box continuously broadcasting to the city around.

Along the circulation trajectory, visitors are exposed to parts of the backstage areas otherwise hidden in typical theatres. In addition, within the performance box, a public stair allows the public to circulate easily between the large performance hall, the small hall, the cinema, the meeting rooms, the hall as well as the backstage areas.



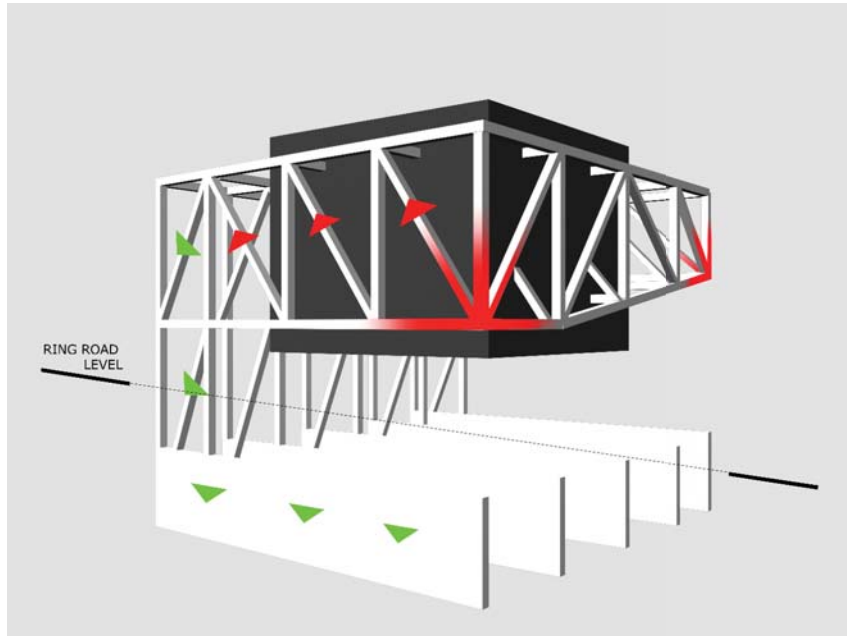
EXHIBITION / CIRCULATION TRAJECTORY

The house aims at naturally drawing visitors/passersby in, and gradually engaging them within the House. The circulation of the House is designed to be a continuous loop that progresses from the backstage production to the end result exhibition. The loop connects all the floors and forms a single composition, which unfolds for the visitors as they go. The circulation trajectory starts on the public plaza, goes through the different programmatic departments, widens at times to create the large exhibition spaces, provides the connections to the performance box and finally reaches the party deck on the roof. As such, in a single day, a visitor is granted easy access to the many events taking place simultaneously in the House.



STRUCTURE

To achieve a continuous flowing public plaza and an unobstructed visual openness through its site, the project's structure is conceived as a steel truss frame. The load is transferred from the cantilever's farthest points upwards to the counterbalance wall, through which the load is transferred downwards to be anchored in concrete toes underground. Within that truss, the performance box is a rigid frame with very little openings.



MOBILE UNIT

To reach those not able to visit the house, the project has a mobile unit. A piece of the North West corner of the project detaches itself from the building and can be mounted on to a truck front, to drive around the country. This container-like mobile unit is a projection surface that will broadcast while driving around of the roads of Lebanon.

