

The House of Arts and Culture

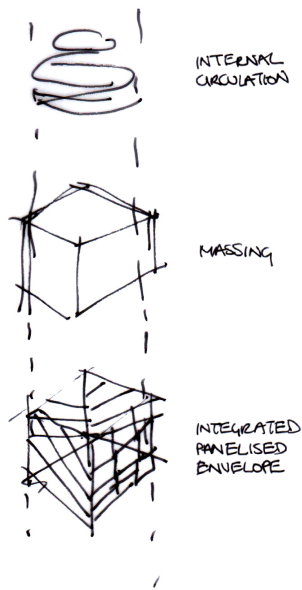
The Lebanese-Omani Centre

Submission 30 January 2009

Introduction

Beirut has long been the centre of different cultures in the past. Troubled by violence in Lebanon during the 70's and 80's, the city has now developed into an active caldron of creativity amongst various disciplines, bringing together the arts of theatre, poetry, painting, sculpture, music and photography.

The thriving cultural industry is crucial to the Arabic world, if it is to expand itself universally. The freedom of expression and creativity must be continually supported and it is within this proposed special arts and cultural centre that will help maintain the growing prosperity arts in the Middle-East.



Design Concept

Carefully looking at the surrounding context and proposed master plan, the aim was to provide a dynamic internal flow of circulation inside a powerful geometric form. We began by using the most purist geometric form, the cube, and developed an internal route that would create a balanced mixed of function and a bold architectural form. In doing so, a spiral stepped ramp has been developed to enable users to interact

Main spaces have been kept open to enable maximum flexibility of everyday use, that can also be enjoyed by the general public as well as the artists, so it is important that this is diverse as possible to welcome the enthusiasts attending the theatre and exhibitions.

The new centre is orientated to welcome visitors from the north and responds well to Nouvel's proposed tower. To the south lies the busy flyover, which provides an ideal direct route for incoming traffic to our underground car park and service deliveries to the theatre and workshops.

Programme of spaces

The ground floor is the main reception where visitors and artists enter the centre. It will also accommodate the movie theatre, cafe, ticket office and shops/boutiques, all of which these spaces are accessible to the public domain

The first floor is controlled access through the main staircase or the feature spiral stair leading to the exhibition floor. Completely open and flexible this space is also intended for special exhibitions and private function hire.



The second floor sees the main theatre space introduced. Base on mutli levels and seating tiers, the seating on this floor is retractable into the floor and can provide over 350 square meters of open space with a stage on the fore front.

Sharing the theatres multi levels are the administration spaces and cinematheque. These closed cell spaces enable adequate controlled protection of sensitive archive material from the harsh elements of the external environment.

The top level opens out and intends to be a light space, providing facilities to inspiring minds in creative workshops and a documentation centre for literates of researchers and young students. This inspiring top floor is accessible to all visitors.

The external envelope is clad in bronze panels giving a strong dominant facade, sliced with various openings of windows that give a glimpse of the outside. At night the cubic box reflects external street lighting with glowing slits to entice visitors, who can be reminded of the growing cultural expression in Lebanon.

Our main objectives:

- Respond to the site constraints to fully utilise the space providing an inspiring new cultural centre
- Create new external public spaces
- Encourage the growth of Beiruts young talents, enticing the general public to become involved at the same time
- Create a power pure architectural form to break the rigidity of the city grid
- Create new flexible spaces for unforeseeable uses
- Create new facades that respond to the surrounding environment
- Provide new ample underground car parking spaces



Site analysis