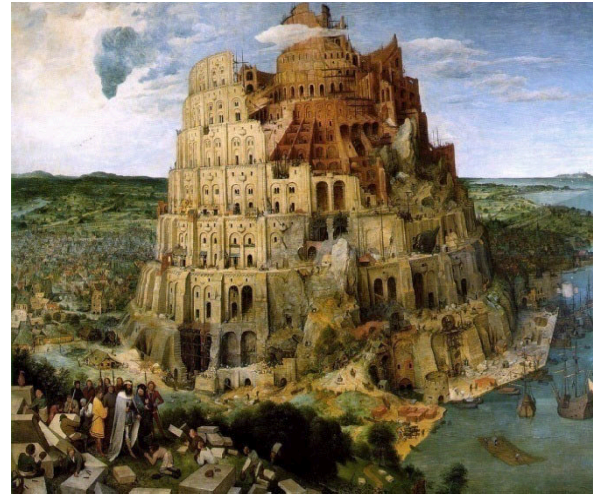


The project has been inspired by the legend of the Tower of Babel. The Legend describes that mankind wanted to build a city with a tower that would reach all the way up to heaven.

In this way their name would become known and that would not have to be spread across the world.

God stepped down to look at the city and the tower and said. "Here everyone is of one people and one language. This is only the beginning. Now nothing is impossible for them, whatever they do."



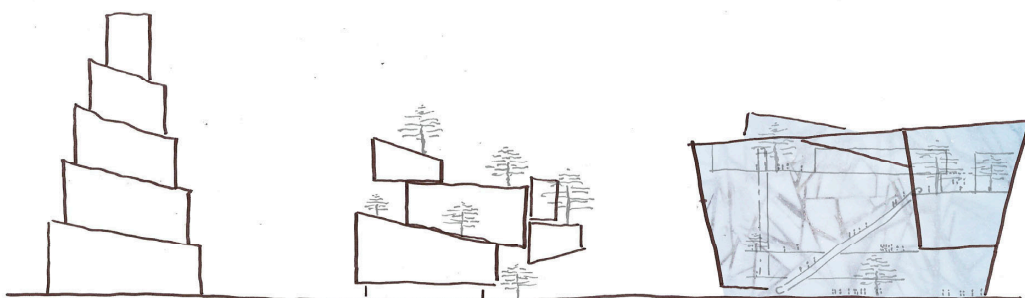
After this, Gods reaction to the city and the tower was that he wanted to create a great confusion in their language, so that they would not understand each other.

Imagine this monument at the exact moment when the tower was falling down – right there we freeze the picture we call it **the frozen monument**. Look at the picture below, an ice block from the Polar Regions. Look very closely at it. Do you see how the tower has broken down into large building blocks – they are inside the block of ice, the building blocks are disconnected, disjoint. Large gaps have appeared in this frozen moment – building blocks hover freely inside the ice block. Between these building blocks we can see people moving up and down, back and forth. We see the escalators, stairways and elevators and the hanging gardens.....



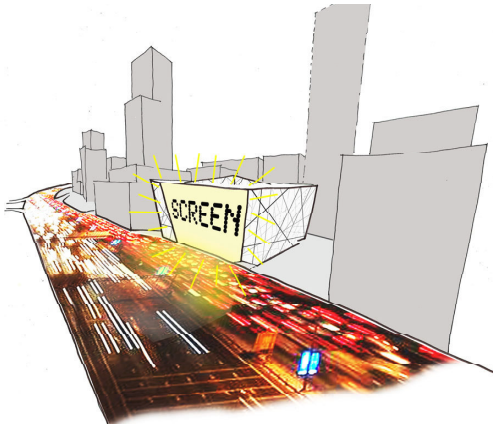
These are the ideas from which the House of Arts and Culture originate. Language originating from the art is a language that can be understood by many people. From this frozen moment we see a possibility for this new building to recreate and improve upon communication between the people of the region.

Beirut is the bridge between the Orient and the West. The House of Arts and Culture is the doorway where cultures meet.



Urban Context.

The site is located on the northern side beside a large ring road- Avenue du general Fouad Chehab. Here the traffic pushes its way through. This is both a problem and an opportunity. The problem is amongst other things noise and pollution. The possibility lies in the proximity of the flow of traffic, for this reason we have placed the main facade towards the ring road and built a supersized media screen- a fantastic opportunity to communicate people within the traffic flow.

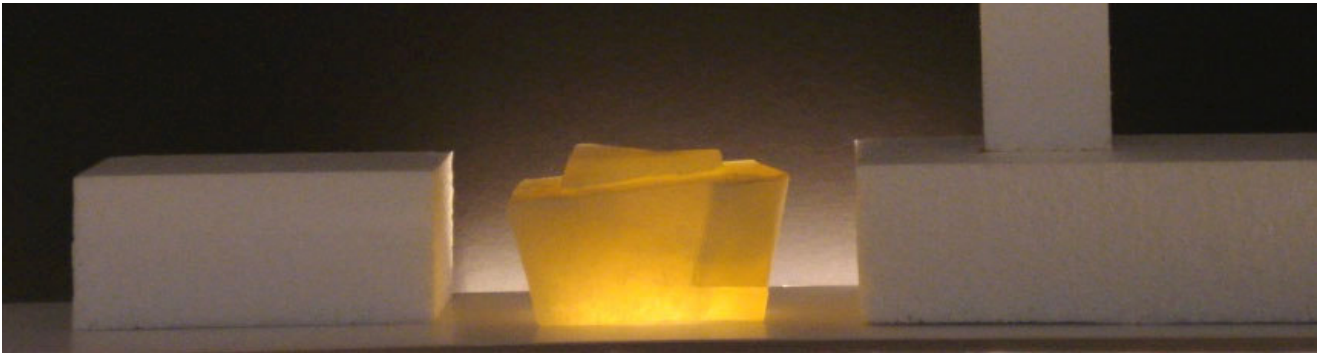


The surrounding buildings, west end east of the site are at a planning stage. The content of these buildings is uncertain at this time. The volumes are decided, the western building will contain a tower approximately 150 meters high. The height of the House of Art and Culture is not to exceed 40 meters above the existing ground level. With these preconditions we realize that we cannot create a landmark that is based upon height. We must work with an entirely different architectural expression.

North of the site there is today a park that can be included as a part of the planning of the House of Art and Culture. Beirut city center is a little further to the north.

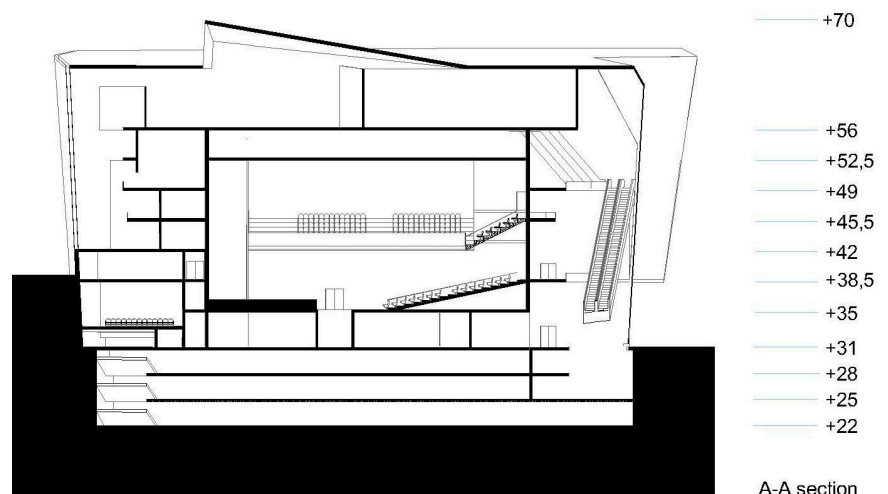
Our Building. Has its main entry in the North West corner – facing the park and the city center. East of the building we have placed an area for arrival and departure by car. From this traffic point there is cul de sac and the entry to the public garage. To the west of the building is planned a one way street for service traffic – loading bay and staff entry.





Architectural expression. Has its starting point in the frozen moment. The building blocks laying inside the frozen ice block – that is our metaphor. The power of nature has formed this block- the forms do not originate from any specific civilization, the forms are inspired by nature. The building stand is stark contrast to the surrounding environment – the building has and it's' own unique expression which is essential for such an important building as the House of Art and Culture. This unique architectural expression will create a powerful landmark in the city of Beirut. We are striving for a white translucency in the facades – see the picture of the ice block. The volume consists of large angulated surfaces at a super scale, and where each surface is divided at a mini scale by a finer pattern. On the facades large media screens are applied, communication with the surroundings is a vital part of the House of Art and Culture.

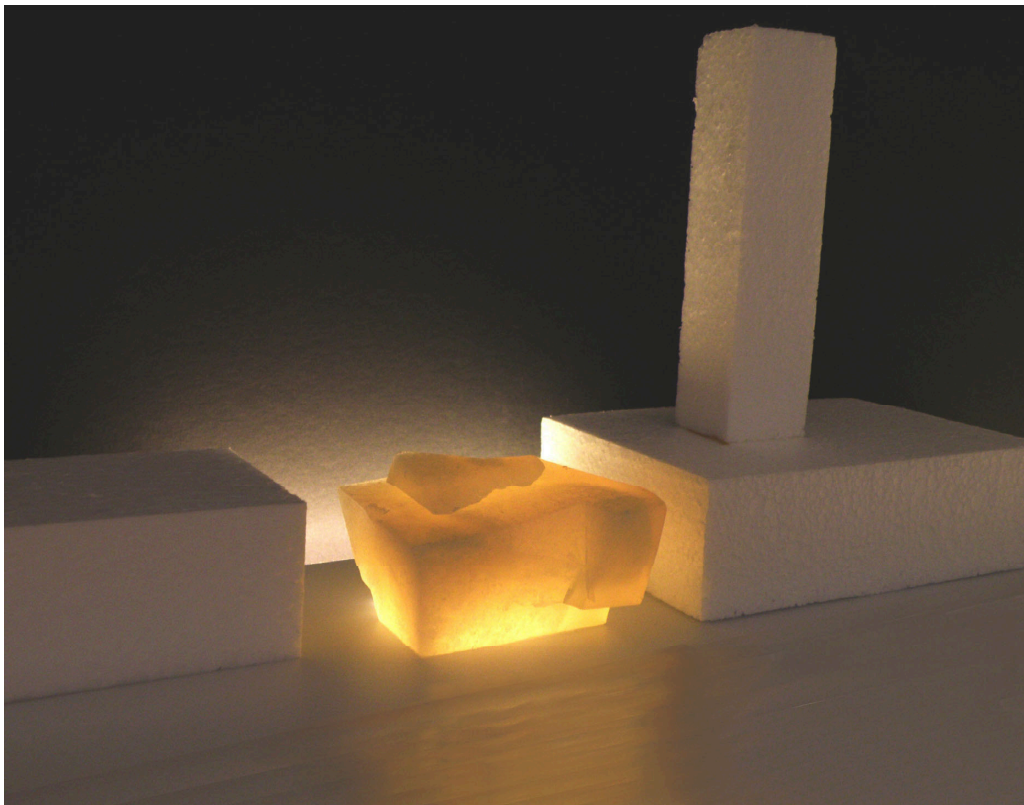
The buildings interior When you enter you are greeted by the foyer which extends several levels upward. The balconies can be related to the hanging gardens of Babylon. Stairs, escalators and elevators transport the visitors through the building. The interior can be compared to a machine. The light penetrates downward between the building blocks - the atmosphere changes continuously as the sun wanders across the sky.



The foyer leads to the information and ticket sales area, one level down adjacent to the entry is the bookshop and other retail activities. At the entry level, in the north western corner is the restaurant including an outdoor area for the serving of food and beverages in the shade of the existing trees. This area also has an entry point directly from the street. The central part of the building the large performance and conference hall is located. These functions rise up through the building several stories and are the heart of the building. Around these central features the ancillary functions are placed.

The workshops line up along the ring road facade along with other functions that do not need natural lighting; here the large media screen is incorporated into the facade. The large volume of traffic outside is an important receiver for information. Loading and unloading is placed beside the service road in the west, the administrative services are also located here.

The exhibition area and library are placed the highest point, above the large conference hall. Here you can also find the ventilation services area. The building has three basement levels providing approximately 300 parking spaces, storerooms and technical service areas. The facades are white in color the random stripe patterns at the mini scale continue into the building.



We aim to create an architectural language springing from the “frozen moment” that seamlessly flows into the interiors for an exciting cultural and architectural experience.

Conclusion

Beirut is the doorway to the Orient and to the West. In our proposal for –The House of Art and Culture – There is a meeting between an architecture inspired by nature and the Middle eastern metropolis of Beirut.