

B E I R U T

The difficult construction terrain defines the structure in vertical tiers, while the storey-by-storey displacement supports the skilful sculptural impression.

Culture and art looks in on itself – and not out at the surroundings! – Inner courtyards, repelling heat and noise, are created. Introverted, art presents itself in its inward-looking examination with the maximum possible spatial neutrality.

The frosted glass shell provides shade and offers glimpses of the interior; Morée type surfaces enhance the impression of tension between inside and outside.

The white structure reinforces the transcendence, creates an air of mystery around what's inside – generates calm in the city, where emotions run high. The only break in the shell is around the theatre auditorium – the façades of the foyer enclosing the function room are based on fractal structures inspired by nature. The EDP program formulated for this project uses raster fields of varying sizes to interpret a fluid in motion.

The fractal apertures created by these oscillations overlay the viewing apertures – change the building's expression continually.

The elements of the façade consist of semi-transparent moulded plastic components placed in front of glass panels. External solar protection provided by micro lamellae is inserted between shell and cladding at points of the façade exposed to the sun.

The focus here is on the interspace – foyers open up to the exterior and prompt visitors to enter. A spatial sculpture that can be walked on provides access to the public foyer areas.

It appears important to separate supply, artist and visitor flows. The main supply unit is created at exhibition room level, overlooking Avenue Du General Fouad Chehab.

Visitors enter the building landscape from the newly created succession of plazas developed from the city centre.

A minimalist frame is created around viewing points in the form of windows overlooking the city.

Maximum flexibility on the storeys means that room functions can be ever-changing, thus enabling varied exhibitions.

The newly created gardens improve the microclimate, provide shade and minimize necessary air conditioning expenditure.

Controlled air supply from subterranean air wells is used to provide thermal cooling