

The House of Art and Culture – Introduction Text – Identification code: 1309SP

The project for the House of Art and Culture was developed based on the concepts of the program. A place of creation, expansion and cultural renewal a project directed toward the new times of Beirut that contemplates the city, which can be considered at the same time local and universal.

The House of Art and Culture is a place that has intrinsic relations with the city, the overall (MASTERPLAN) plan is in such a way that enhances to the maximum the natural light in the collective rooms and protect it in the restricted rooms. A project with many facades and openings, that adjusts with the city and with the multi-functional building program.

In the southwest facade, there are big openings with brise-soleil that allows a good use of natural light without excessively heat. Then, ambients like workshops rooms, administrative offices, library, and exposition rooms are contemplated with the ideal illumination and ventilation that is adequate to the welfare.

In the south facade, there is a big area with “blind walls” \* (with no openings), because of the intense sun incidence during the hottest periods of the day. In this face of the building works the functions that need a bigger acoustic and thermic isolation. To contrast this characteristic, the project shows its circulation with a big “glass wall”, where is possible to see the vertical circulation through the escalators.

Being thus, the House of culture and art glimpse the city and the city glimpses the project in a unique visual exchange.

As well as the south facade, the southwestern facade has a big area of “blind walls” and a brise-soleil on the openings, again the functions are chosen to aid the places that need a rigid control of illumination and acoustics.

The north facade looks to the new side of Beirut, where the city is being developed and where are located the mainly projects. This face contains a big free opening that allows a huge visual contact between city and building, relating art with the public and private.

The site plan of the building shows this concept of the strict relation with the city.

On the north side, the buildings open themselves and the different levels of the lot invite the public to contemplate the new side of Beirut, and the openings shows to the city some kinds of cultural activities that are happening in all floors.

On the south side, the project allows its circulation to a transparency state, showing its internal life, opposing the movement of the avenue, resulting in a great visual relation.

Constructively the project uses the ideal materials that exert the best structural functions with great esthetic qualities. The floor above the lobby uses light metallic structure with enough stability and endurance to take the flow of people and its own weight.

On the underground floors the structural solution is made with concrete, which resists better to earth's compression and support the floors weight.

The relation between the floors above and beyond the ground is one of the most important conceptual characteristics of the project. It's based on the program that requests the reunion of multi functions in one single place, achieving high quality cultural exchange. To make this, it was projected through the levels an interesting relation between ground floor and underground making it confusing a lot of moments, taking the user to discover sensations in each step of the perception and connection of the functions and places.

On the ground floor it's possible to visualize the different levels on the lot that works like free urban expression spaces, where art made by artists inside and outside the house can be exposed. In the same time this ambient, works as the connection between the floors, the underground and free outdoor multifunctional spaces.

In this same place, there is a big empty place that gives visual access to the large auditorium halls in the underground or the vertical visual field that can achieve 30 meters high, allowing a person in the large performance hall floor (+19, 08) be able to see the movement on the exposition hall, connecting spaces and different forms of cultural expressions.

This open place synthesizes three big concepts of the project: apparent circulation, combination and connection of different functions in a same place and a relation with the city.

From bottom to top, the project starts at the level -35, 02, with the users parking floor. In it and in all parking floors, there is a vertical line of technical rooms, with the service

entrance and two lines of elevators. One central line that works in the whole building composed for two panoramic social elevators (on both sides) and one central service elevator restricted to the staff of the house. The other line of elevators, located on the north goes to the free urban exposition area.

It is four parking floors and one more just for delivery, technical rooms and maintenance. In this way, it is possible to project an isolated and imperceptible service entrance to the users of the House of Art and Culture.

The dressing rooms have an exclusive and isolated access, and are located exactly where the prosceniums of the large performance hall and the small multimedia performance hall finish, making this flow restricted and correctly isolated.

The large performance hall and the Small multimedia performance hall starts at the level -10.84, and to access them, it is necessary to use the vertical line of the elevators, and cross the one located in the exposition hall, a place that connects halls, mezzanine, cinema, that has walls for art expositions and a big opening in its covering that is the ground floor, what makes possible a visual exchange of day and night.

The cinema is located in a level above the small exposition hall, and has an access trough the mezzanine, that has a small gift shop with products related to the performance halls. The cinema exit, gives access to the free urban exposition area, highlighting again the connection between the different functions, as an important point of the project.

Going up one more floor, the free urban exposition levels appear. The reception, information booth, ticket office, public bathrooms, small snack bar and security room are located on the ground floor. Where the double height of a room gives a bigger scale sensation and the mezzanines gives a movement to the public and private spaces which agglutinate with the city, so the user can't perceive if he is inside or out of the building. From the ground floor, near the line of elevators, a vertical line of bathrooms, what makes of it a place of easy access and identification to the users of the building.

The mezzanine above the ground floor, is reserved to the administration, a restricted and privileged place, where is possible to stay near, although isolate of the movement of the building.

The first floor is reserved to the workshops and training rooms, the windows with brises-soleil on the southwest and southeast facades, allows a natural illumination, while the "blind walls", keeps the special rooms isolated. The classrooms have an inclination to a better comfort and relate with the meeting rooms, which emerge of the underground and connects with the superior floors. In the centre of the bigger floor was foreseen a light lower pave with natural illumination for the dance and art workshops, integrating the areas of artistic expression to other workshops, however isolating them trough a perimeter circulation.

In the second floor is located the documentation centre and the national cinemateque. For its program, the cinemateque has more blind walls, the library as the ground floor has double height and a mezzanine, giving the sensation of huge scale, taking the best of natural illumination and doing contact with the city trough a north big opening.

On the library mezzanine is located the management offices. This location was chosen because the need of silent environments of this two programs: library and management. On the other hand, in the other side of this floor is located the small exposition hall, that consolidate in a space that can be used for diverse functions beyond a static exposition room. This part of the floor has a big opening that contemplates the north side of the lot square.

Above the small exposition hall, there are shops and boutique floor. This environment is strategically located between the small and the large exposition hall, what attracts people to consume of products, culture and art.

The large exposition hall is a free floor, with big openings on the southeast and north, keeping the relation with the city and the use of natural illumination once again.

The restaurant is located on the last floor, that is intentionally isolated, with the objective of being a calm and comfort place, where is possible to see a panoramic view of the landscape of the city, beyond the view of the large exposition hall for a different angle while enjoying a meal.

The House of Art and Culture project, does not have front or back, above and below, it is a project that as a tree, grows in such a way for low, as for top, it develops in an integrated way, functional, connected, providing experience exchanges. A local project that is at the same time universal, free and culture generator. An art searchlight, result of the culture and the city. A house to incubate, encourage and hold contemporary cultural manifestations and to contemplate the new generation of Lebanese art.