

Project Description - House of arts & culture in Beirut

Sensible approach to Beirut

We could definitely say that a beautiful city of Lebanon, Beirut might have a lot of story to tell us as much as its annual ring in terms of her experiences by one of time's revenges. Beirut has certainly has her potentiality by means of her continuous cultural enthusiasm and passion even during those hard times that has reigned throughout last century. As Beirut is the political and economic capital of Republic of Lebanon, the power that has been embedded through its growth and development couldn't ignore its status in Arabic world.

The strongest advantage of the city, that it has gained from all the conflicts, would be its ability to synthesize different cultures. As the Christianity and Islam co-exist in this land, that would be enough to explain a lenient gesture to accept all the changes and that changes are now occurring.

Sometimes the mixture of culture might influence the conflict but also that would cause the opportunity to adapt the needed changes to survive. The downtown of the city is already a main project of reconciliation to this conflict. And also as a leading cultural and literature source of Arabic world, the city now demands a regeneration of whole society.

However, there should be a deep consideration in this matter of architectural approach because the urban planning in Beirut could be also a very sensitive term to be deal as of its social and political relation between architecture and society.

Perception of the site

To encounter the site of project, it is quite surprising to be left in middle of junction; the peripheral roads, called *Ring* which makes a total and radical rupture between the districts. And those districts are apparently visible and recognizable in aspects of density, quality, and historical backgrounds. This ring is the runway to lead a flow into the new center of the city and by that mean, its role in Beirut is quite brief and definitive. In other way, in architectural point of view, this ring represents a rupture of flow of people, a continuity of relief and landscape, a communication within the habitants and more the rupture of urban context.

Perhaps it could bring the explicit solution to the change and the pass, but ironically, the intention of adaptation to the change and synthesizing seems to embed two confronting faces. Two different districts are also confronting face to face as their façades are been reviewing by the drivers in the ring. In consequence, there exists a interruption of discontinuity which has to be past over to imagine a brand new district. The existence of this risen highway produces an urban rupture between the center and the east district and this deforming landscape are blocking the districts to be integrated as a city. Like Paris shares the similar situation with its disadvantage of the peripheral route.

Design concept

The principal of this project is to be able to combine the different scales of the site to create the coexisting conditions, from territorial dimension to the architecture. Creating a multifunctional space and facility with diver activities and programs, in this site could bring the other elements into the program as to serve and to be served.

This intention is to harmonize the function given to each element. Those elements might be unstable, disaccord to each other, and even confronting, causing a serious crack and a rupture in urban structure as well as in a context. And even more, the difference of the level which emphasizes the impression of wall that represents the façade of city center. This site function as an aperture in façade where it can show and share the diver changes of the city center.

The main concept of this project would be described in two aspects.

First, a system functioning in the project.

Second, project as a point of rehabilitating the district.

This project is demanded to produce a space for cultural and artistic production and for the exchange of interaction between the users, especially the youths. The main proposition is to ***contribute a social communication, cultural expansion and to promote creativity.***

So the project is imposed to be a place for the production and multi disciplinary spaces but also this centre should be capable to play a role of providing a rest; recharging the exhausted energy for the users.

The centre consists of multiple facilities, such as library, theaters, cinema, and restaurants and a space for the exposition. These facilities are to be positioned in the mass to ensure and satisfy their functions because of its situation of neighboring the ring. That's because the upper mass where the theater is placed is wrapped by double façade. The shielded ceiling of open space produces the organic space but also it's to ensure the function of theater.

In usage of the level difference, the facilities could be placed in the ground level. Using this 8m difference, placing a public space by opening the view towards the center could provoke also a simple disposition of mass according to the function and global division of circulation

system. And that conception naturally led to connect the two different level of the site.

This intention of opening the middle of the whole mass was easy by using the level difference but the important point is that this opening is to create a space that will hopefully works as the ***transition point, the communication point and the loose point.***

First of all, this function as the transition point, is to organize within the different activities in this institutional centre. Between the circulations of two mass, this space stays as itself to synthesize the diver activities, to transit smoothly, and to connect fluently within the functional system such as education, production, and communication.

Second point is the communication point that intends to connect in terms of view and interfacing. By relating the two levels, the project could be the space to absorb people, way of life, and the culture of different district, religion and race. In this space, these diversities interact and finally reach to an homogeneity.

Third, the loose point is to create a space for the users themselves. Not to provide a strict space to impose their activities, but to animate and to interact to produce a typical, temporary and momentary events. By opening a traversing sensation, the integration of diversified acts, views and perceptions will naturally represents the history, the aspects and the vision of each individuals especially Lebanese.

This House of art and culture would be meaningful in way of expressing the culture and diversities of Lebanese. Narrowly, the interrupted districts will reconcile, widely, the Lebanon people and youths will earn the importance of cultural function of Beirut in Arabic world.

In this city of multi experiences, progressive, and cordial gesture, there seems to be still a many chances to express its wealth and potential.