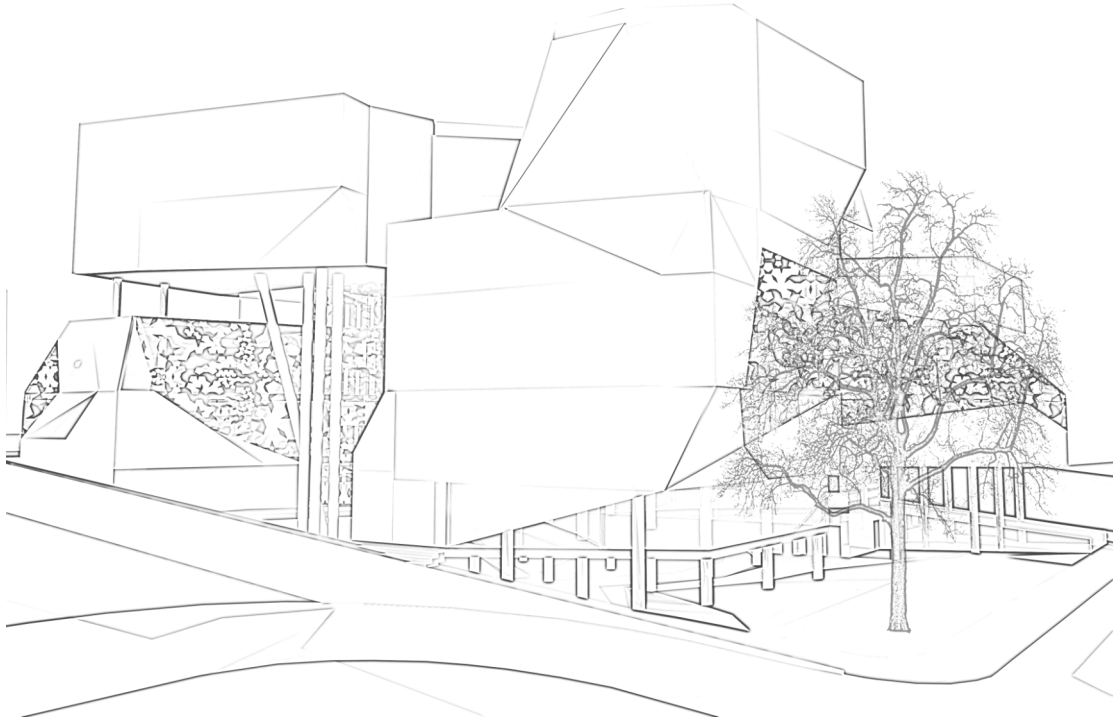


## THE HOUSE OF ARTS & CULTURE THE LEBANESS OMANI CENTRE



### **1. the concept**

- The architectural proposition of the house of arts and culture was seen and studied as a **self event organisation**. The fact that this centre is the first to be built in the history of Beirut creates a **unique experience by its existence**.
- The conceptual settings are inspired from the cultural features of the capital and the traces that are released in the everyday life. Different politico-economical periods and cultural influences created a complex image of the city, in which the urban grid in relation to the built environment has a **strong interaction between order and disorder-symmetry and asymmetry**. Therefore the building that is proposed adapts such characteristics, allowing the mixing of different volumes and surfaces in its building envelope, different movements and visibility in the spatial system as well as different events and activities in its everyday programme.

- Main inspiration for the synthesis of the house of arts and culture of Lebanon was **the concept of evolution**. Evolution by preserving the past (history, culture, tradition) represents the present (everyday life, social communication) and generates the future (socio-cultural expansion). The first aim was therefore to **plan a 'seed' into the plot**, an urban public square, in order for the generation system to be born out of it. The system evolution is first represented by the building frame creating different levels. It grows gradually reaching the upper levels reminding the tree growth. Its trunk would start from our urban public square and would continue to the voids in the upper floors; building levels would be its branches and finally the building envelope would represent the tree's foliage. . We believe that according to the tree **metaphor**, the house of arts and culture can be seen through the **myth of cedar**.

## **2. the building envelope**

- Self event organisation was translated to a **cocoon volumetric model**. The **idea of folding** indicates a strong enclosed unit that highlights the inside common public activity in addition to the individual one. Such idea reinforces the eastern habits.

-**Volume homogeneity** is generated through different shapes that come from the same origins, the ground. The public square in the heart of the site creates a strong activity core that transfers the urban context into the building. The **facades' signification** is reinforced through the **mix between open and closed surfaces**. The common language between opaque and transparency is an **Eastern generative pattern** that is adapted in between creating a double geometrical non-continued façade.

## **3. urban context**

-The building is **integrated along the four elevations**. The most openings are orientated to the north, preserving the microclimate as well as the natural lighting and ventilation. East and west elevations locate the two main entrances through an **urban walk** to the public square in the ground level.

-**landscaping and greenery** are well defined in the ground level as well as on the top roof of the performance hall. The basic theme is to identify **urban movements through and upon the city**; the contradiction of being inside and outside.

-**Views** from both the inside and outside of the building complex were studied to **create a dual perspective**. Uses such as the library and the exhibition open their views to the old city centre, creating a **visual link** between **art and knowledge** to the **tradition and culture**. On the other hand, the performance hall and the workshops are facing the new development (south), mentioning the new cultural expansion of the city.

#### **4. the spatial system**

- Circulation creates **interior movements** with **urban mobility**. The circulation cores are placed in convex spaces, all over the building, in order to accommodate employees and visitors in the same flexible way. Passages can be used by people not only to move from one place to the other but also to be in contact with other socio-spatial events. Therefore every passage has an interior /exterior or both functions in order to have direct contact with nature (light, plants, sky).

-House of arts and culture design, was treated as an **everyday activity organisation rather than a museum**. The spatial syntax of it, allows a mobile internal/external trip that comes across different spaces, views and uses. More specific, the levels' layouts can be characterised as '**flow bands**' that are elongated across different spaces and activities.

-The urban public square on the ground level of the plot comprises significant point of our synthesis. Therefore the spatial complex creates **different angular relations** regarding the internal visibility towards the urban public square. In addition the internal '**hole**' that exists in every floor creates a visual link between them.

#### **5. building programme**

-The building's programme is organised according to Beirut social and urban futures. As already mentioned, the strongest relations are those between order and disorder as well as symmetry and asymmetry. In addition **building's programme** is designed to be **flexible** enough to **separate** as well to **mix up its uses** thus giving freedom for inaction .

-The idea is to house an **every day activity** rather than a pre-organised event. Therefore was decided to place the performance and conference halls on the top levels in order to be unifying with the rest activities.

-The large performance and conference hall was conceived as **big modular spaces** that can adept to **different stage configurations**. It is designed to transform the back stage solid wall (in the south) into a big opening looking the new development area of Beirut.

#### **6. future developments**

- The building is elongated 32 meters upon the ground, leaving space for **future expansion**. It is proposed to design an observatory on top of the building, bringing the urban grid into it. The specific proposition highlights the **aspect** and the **ability** of the building to **evolve in time**.
- Designing the house of art and culture of Beirut, building complex was treated as **a relation between relations**. Therefore we seen it as an **unfinished process**.