

Microcosm –The House of Arts and Culture, The Lebanese-Omani Center, is a parallel model, at all levels of description and organization --metaphoric and physical-- of Beirut, Its geographic condition, the necessity for free expression in the Arts, History, and the myriad forces for greatness and creativity that spiral in solidarity to renew the city over and over again.

This multi-layered real and metaphysical condensation –Microcosm- of the wider macrocosm of culture is at the crux of the design for the House and Center.

Thus, the House and Center is a recognizable, challenging, energetic, tangible representation of cultural growth, resolution and focus.

Urban Context

In response to the larger urban context and the numerous surrounding ongoing and future projects, the structure of the House and Center strives to be independent of a zero-lot-line solution, prevalent in the surrounding constructed landscape. So the building is pulled away from the lot's curbs and is accessible via a pedestrian, grade level plaza with emphasis on a free-formed sculptural approach towards a truly free-standing body and vessel for the Arts.

Spatial Organization

Its plaza level provides a landscaped territory for gathering beside, between and in the shaded areas between the faceted structural components of the structure. The focal point and resting, base structural column for the upper promontory, which looks out over the square, provides access to a multi-level vertical, hollow Hall and Atrium, which spirals and engages the various shared functions of the building program. The Hall rises out from two levels below grade linking all of the functions vertically at the North side of the structure.

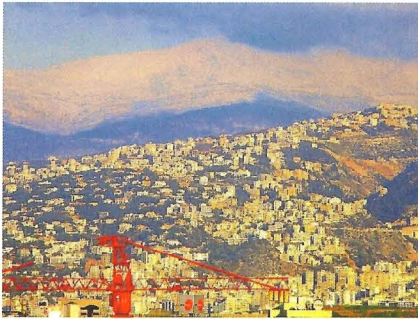
Surrounding the free-forms, which house the major programmatic functions, is a circulation and foyer area. At the South end of the Building, is a full-height (32M to the Buildable limit line) Block which provides ancillary service areas, more thorough access and a street-level point of entry for the Theatrical house; the stage datum being the same as the truck loading bay datum. Rooftop access is provided there for outdoor events and a “manacle” or eye to the South. Its wall simultaneously beckoning visitors and insulating the internal sound-sensitive areas to the major elevated transportation roadway

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The Cinema and Cinemateque is at the lower level so that natural lighting can be maximized at the upper story functions. The parking is divided between two lower levels.

Technical Building Solution

The structure is a quite literally a living model of the city. The South Block, a vertical plane representing the sky, the domed and sculpted major functions, including the upper sky-lit gallery, as the mountainous backdrop, the circulation areas at the West, North and East as the low-lying city center and finally the surrounding low canopy which acts as the plane of the sea around the peninsula. The parallel and likeness is seen from the square and from the open sides of the site.



The materials are simple:

Concrete, stucco exterior skin, ceramic cladding units, translucent, and clear glass, slatted steel and ceramic screens. The sky-lit portions face north and North-west.

Mechanical systems will supplement operable partitions on all sides and vertical exhaust configurations for breeze induction and natural cooling as much as is possible.

Table of spaces Attached