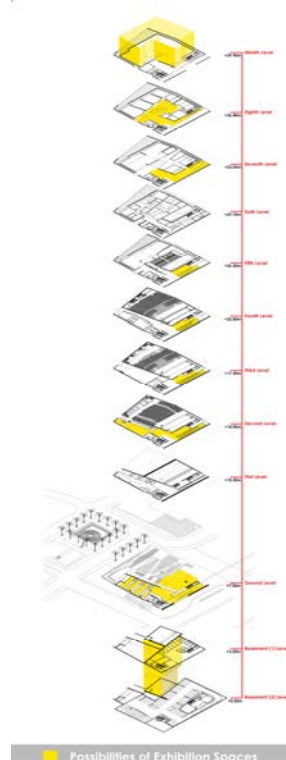
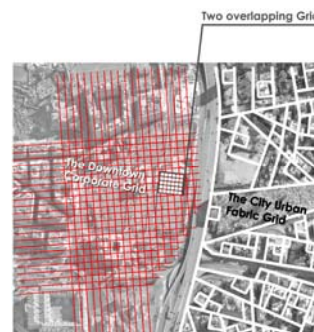
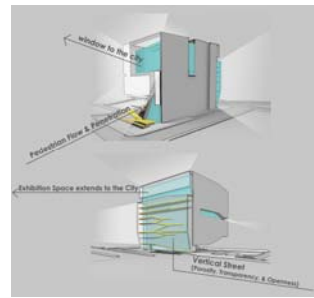


The House of Arts and Culture in Beirut

Introduction: Image & Composition

Similar to its City, Beirut, the Project (House of Art and Culture) represents a Porous & Permeable Sculpture that emerges from the Ground and Extends into the City. The Project, with its porous character and independent spirit represents a metaphor for the City Beirut (The Porous City), which had been for ages a hub and a refuge for creative critical thinking, Arab intelligentsia, and alternative artistic expression in the Arab World since the early decades of the 20th century, famous for its publishing houses, café culture, free press, transit harbor, literature production, alternative art and music, audiovisual production, political freedom and active public sphere.

The Project, with its porous and permeable indoor and outdoor spaces together with its multiple extensions into the City represent also a metaphor for Beirut's progressive transformations from the *Nahda* period of the 19th and early 20th centuries, to the City's entering of *Modernity* and the subsequent manifestations on *Beiruti* architecture and urban spaces of the City. One particular example is the innovative typology of the Central Hallway Dwelling (3 Arched House), another more recent example is Beirut's version of Modernity culminated in a progressive public sphere represented in its Hamra District with its Modernity buildings and public life extending into the sidewalk and the interstitial spaces between buildings.



A Cultural Awakening – The Nahda

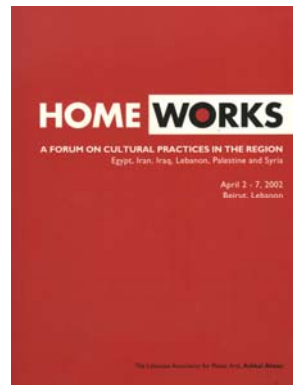
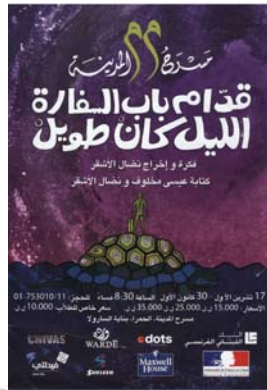


Contribution to the Intellectual and Cultural Scene of Beirut

The House of Art and Culture will play a central role in helping Beirut reclaim its cutting edge and critical position as a Hub/Incubator of culture, counter culture, and resistance in the Region. The Project reflects a very dynamic/democratic architecture (cultural refuge for all) that reflects Beirut's diverse cultural ambiance and ensures participation by different strata of society, a form of empowerment to the diverse users.

The design is very avant-garde in its image and character, it carries a contemporary stamp. The House of Art and Culture is also very inclusive in terms of both users and functions. Users range from the youth to different age groups and from the culturally elite to the inner city youth and marginalized citizens of the City. The Project represents an independent and alternative space for artistic expression with no boundaries.

Furthermore, the Project is inclusive of all forms of self expression including, but not limited to, performance arts, music, fine arts, political cartoons, film, architecture, digital and audiovisual arts, and experimental art.



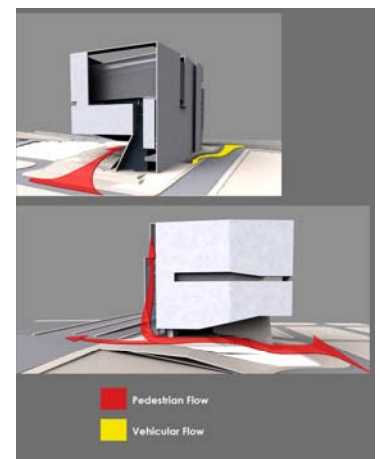
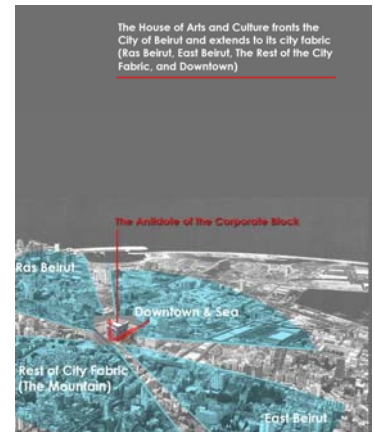
The Project's Urban Positioning

The *House of Art and Culture* in Beirut is a *University of the Street* that opens up and extends to the City in multiple ways and at different levels offering various points of penetration for the *flâneur* and the inquisitive urban dweller in an attempt to re-capture again the urban sense of the downtown. The image of the *House of Art and Culture* Represents the antidote of the corporate block and works as an intermediate reality that links the corporate block with the rest of the City fabric. Flowing and interpenetrating spaces rearranged and oriented based on 2 overlapping grids horizontally and vertically, thus encouraging an architectural promenade. The Project, with its multi-layered openness and *Vertical Street* offers a breathing space and a different anecdote to the dense and corporate buildings planned around the site.

The Project presents an unconventional definition of public space by reinventing the relationship between inside and outside, and public and private and in addition to its independent spirit being a cultural hub and incubator for artistic expression and interaction; the Project contributes to the production of public space, and thus instigator of an active public sphere in the City. Furthermore, the Project could serve as a central public space and as a platform for reconciliation and national dialogue. With the fast growing pedestrian culture, there is a need for such public spaces along side others such as the Sea-Side Cornice in *Ain El Mreissah*, or *Hamra* in *Ras Beirut*, or the *Marina* in *Dbayeh*. The *House for Art and Culture* fills a void and could foster the creation of public space within the downtown area.

Memory and Typology: an interplay between the "locale" and the "global"

Memory: The *House* Metaphor: The Project, with its porous and permeable indoor and outdoor spaces together with its multiple extensions into the City represent also a metaphor for Beirut's innovative typology of the Central Hallway Dwelling (3 Arched House) with its dialectical relation between interior and exterior, private and communal life, and the skin and body where the living space of the house reappears on the street, its ability



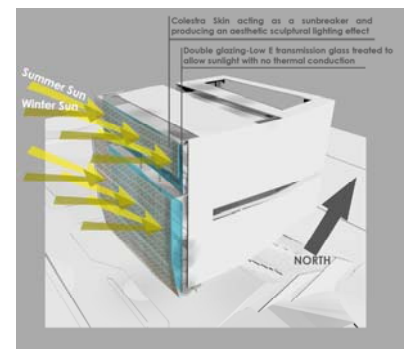
to transform and adapt to change, and its multiple extensions to the outside through its urban connections.

Typology: The Project represents a hybrid type between a democratic cultural space as *machine á expose* where it serves as a transparent showcase and incubator of cultural production; and the cultural space as an urban question signifying a new addition to the City that leads to more civic engagement (that is not restricted to high culture but encourages participation of working class and inner city ghettos).



Environmental Considerations

A holistic approach to environmental management was adopted in the Project in terms of the provision of public outdoor green spaces (plaza that penetrates the indoor spaces and fronts the City, a *Vertical Street* that wraps around the building in addition to indoor "breathing areas" in the form of roof gardens and terraces overlooking the City). Furthermore, the design of *the House* works to insert greenery and light into the depths of this sculptural cube, where in addition a shading system emerges from the multi-layered skin (concrete) and the flow of space leads and creates cracks that are translated into a porous skin (*colestra* concrete blocks).



The design thrived to not to use expensive materials in terms of facades cladding, and concentrated instead on delivering high-quality in design and technical innovations. The type of concrete used is fly-ash concrete, a sustainable green material). Furthermore, spaces (e.g., theater, *cinemateque*) were zoned in a certain manor where they create controlled environments in terms of heating and cooling loads. The glass used in the building is double glazed with low E transmission glass on southern facades and northern light entering the exhibition spaces.

