

Dar Bayrut is designed to be a place of public participation and education open and accessible to all. The center's open spaces, glass skins and permeable architecture reaches out to the city and engages in constant dialogue with its surrounding urban environment. It attempts to erase the boundaries between pedestrians and artists, spectators and actors, by welcoming all visitors to take part in a meandering promenade where the viewer can be seen and the performer can become a spectator. The several glass skins, planted terraces, suspended platforms and view corridors created around the theatre allow the exhibition of some of the actors' activities furthermore re-enforcing the dialogue between the visitors and artists and demonstrating the process of artistic production.

From the North and East sides, the center is completely permeable to its surrounding. It allows pedestrians from the garden across the street, the nearby commercial neighborhood and Etoile area to wander along its large open plaza and network of stairs, platforms and terraces, shop at the boutique or have a café at the restaurant's terrace. From the west side, the public parking entrance makes the project a first stop on the downtown journey of commuters coming from other neighborhoods of Beirut or from the suburbs and faraway towns. From the South, it acknowledges the ring road barrier; and therefore it addresses the Bashoura neighborhood on a visual level, as a beacon of artistic production. The roof top terrace, auditorium and the large acoustic glass window at the experimental theatre (that could be open or closed depending on the performance and the director's wish) makes use of the city as a stage backdrop. It also exposes the visitors and performing artists to the residential urban fabric of Bashoura and those passing through the ring road in their vehicles expanding the horizon of theatre in Beirut. The gardens and terraces located along this southern façade soften the hard edge of the highway and help disperse the noise away from the performing spaces.

The center is arranged around a masonry volume that houses the large performance hall. It is elevated 8.2 meters above the street to create the vast ground level outdoor performing space. The masonry volume is surrounded on its four sides with atria that allow for interior vistas. The atria also provide light and ventilation for the public spaces. The East and West atria are glass volumes that house the major circulation linking all public spaces of the program to the ground floor plaza and the roof top terrace and auditorium. The north atrium is open to the sky and separates the masonry volume from a suspended glass volume where studios, classrooms and dance workshops take place. The south atrium has interior gardens and bridges that link the changing rooms, administrative offices and service areas to the rest of the center.

A green band, located approximately twelve meters above street level is constructed of multiple layers of native vegetation, compacted soil and air gap adjacent to a solid concrete wall. It provides acoustic

separation and helps disperse the street noise away from the experimental theatre, documentation center and large performance hall behind. It also shades these spaces from sunlight and helps regulate the temperature of the outside wall. Furthermore it creates unique suspended gardens, meditation and viewing platforms overlooking the surrounding urban fabric.

The building is crowned with an exhibition space flooded with diffused natural light that infiltrates the space through large reflective drums connected to solar tracking skylights that ensure a constant amount of daylight throughout the day. The double roof allows air to circulate between the two slabs preventing excessive heat gain in the summer. The north facade of the exhibition opens to the city views.

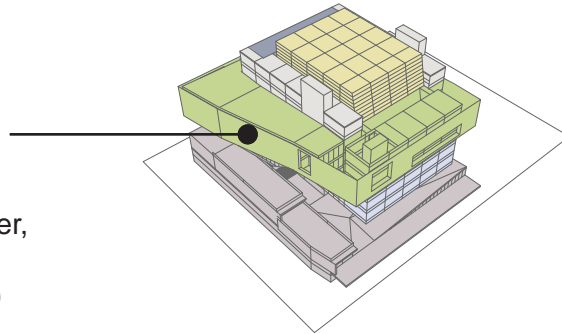
The scale and proportions of the ground floor plaza differ from the smaller scale of streets, arcades and alleyways of the older urban fabric of the city and therefore becomes an umbrella for all citizens and artists as well as an incubator for multi-disciplinary art. The general public is widely welcomed at the street level with a vast shaded plaza which is designed as an extension of Beirut's urban fabric. Taking advantage of the favorable climatic conditions, the main lobby's north glass fully retracts to allow for a total penetration of the surroundings. The pedestrian is hence encouraged to stroll and wander throughout the open space watching experimental or street performers while simultaneously becoming an actor/artist within the overall production of this public space. The shop, cafe and elevated terrace, located on the eastern side of the plaza furthermore contribute to the street animation and the plaza's urban life. During this journey, the public becomes a continuous spectator to the dance artists/students rehearsing or training in the dance and arts studios exhibited inside the glass volume above the plaza.

From the street level, the public promenade extends to several platforms scattered throughout the building, transporting the public from the street level all the way up to the roof, providing a series of viewing levels, performance and relaxation spaces such as the roof top terrace, suspended gardens and outdoor auditorium. It is from these several platforms that the required programmatic spaces are accessed. These are located in such a way that their security, privacy, climatic control, and acoustic requirements would not be compromised by the public flow throughout the building. The "threshold" has been decentralized and transposed from the main entrance lobby --where it conventionally lays-- to each of the programmatic required spaces such as the movie theatre, cinemateque, performance hall, workshops, offices etc.. This allows not only the general public to flow throughout the building but also facilitates better controlled environments that cater for the different special and programmatic needs. It also permits natural ventilation to flow, possibly all year long, in the various interconnected public spaces.

The architecture expression and space layout have been designed with careful consideration to the climatic and urban environment. These factors transform the public spaces and circulation areas into a series of stages or auditoria interconnected from the street level to the roof top. The building becomes an extension of the city street level where visitors could perform daily activities of different sizes and scope, where spectators and performers could be one, where pedestrians can gather, watch and participate in street performances, or watch a dance class or arts studio. Dar Bayrut's architecture design will make it an active space for artistic production and dissemination to promote free creativity on a national, Middle Eastern and international level, propelling on the international scene the role of Beirut as a major center for the arts.

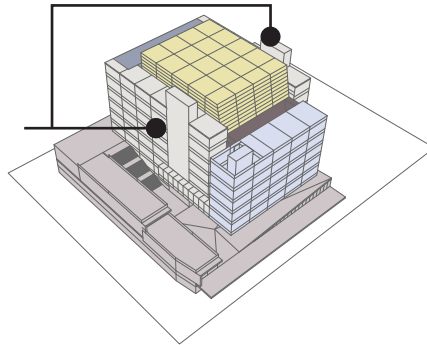
GREEN BAND  
w/ Green Roof

(Black Box Theater,  
A/V Service and  
Add'l Workshops)

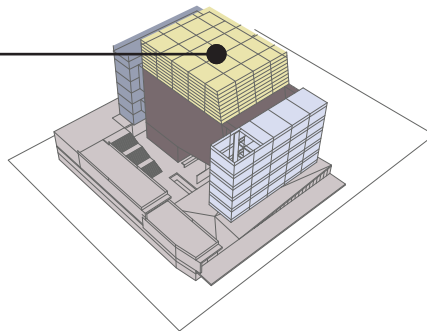


CIRCULATION ENVELOPE

(Theater foyers, elevators  
corridors)



EXHIBITION HALL  
(crown)  
with Double Roof

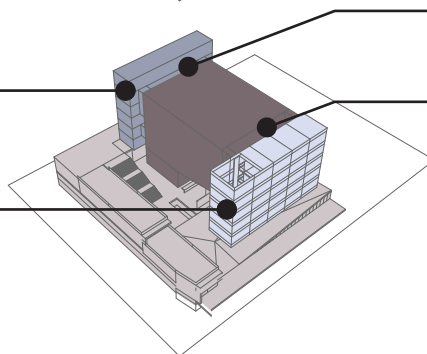


THEATER SUPPORT  
& ADMINISTRATION  
(south)

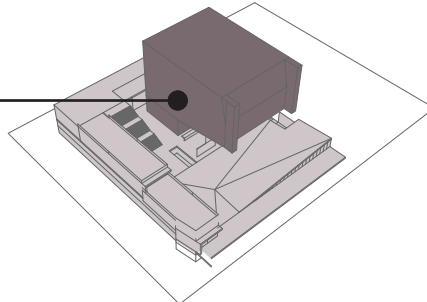
WORKSHOPS  
(north)

THEATER ATRIUM  
(Daylight and Sightings)

WORKSHOPS ATRIUM  
(Daylight, Ventilation  
Sightings)



GRAND THEATER  
w/ multi-form stage



PARKING

