

## House of Arts and Culture

Beirut, city of cultures.

Beirut, an Arab capital

Beirut, the meeting of the Occident with the Middle East [rated by the NYTimes as the #1 touristic destination for 2009].

The concept of our project arises from the above cultures; Two different societies that form the culture of Lebanon and both to be clearly expressed in Architecture

**Introverted... Extroverted... Light... Traditional... High Tech... Spontaneous... Privacy...**

The above are some Architectural terms that reflect the differences in the Occidental and Middle Eastern society, our aim was to combine those contradictory terms into **one** Architectural concept in which each culture will keep its identity while forming **one** building that can reflect both.

The program in itself was used as a tool to intensify the architectural concept. The private, calm functions surround the 2 major functions of the program which are the Entrance Hall and the large performance hall. The entrance hall, centralized in the scheme and on the street level shall be the free expression space amongst visitors, exchanging ideas, knowledge...

This lead to an introverted pedestal 21.5m high above which are placed the more interactive functions:

The exhibition space with an outdoor extension, the workshops and on the top floor is the restaurant with a roof terrace extension, all of the latter are functions that interact with the surrounding city and that require natural lighting, hence the double skin for both the exhibition and the workshops where the external skin is a curtain wall and the internal skin shall be the filtering barrier that will allow the necessary amount of light to enter depending on the type of exhibition or workshop, this double skin shall be illuminated during the night in order to make the glass volume glow into a Light House of Culture.

The influence of the various civilizations throughout history on the Lebanese culture generated the stacking of spaces which lead to a layered pedestal reflecting the spontaneous architecture in a very simple square scheme, thick walls, traditional material, diffused lighting... serving as a base for a completely transparent high tech free form envelop.

The dialogue between the two different volumes led to an equilibrium, which is Beirut.