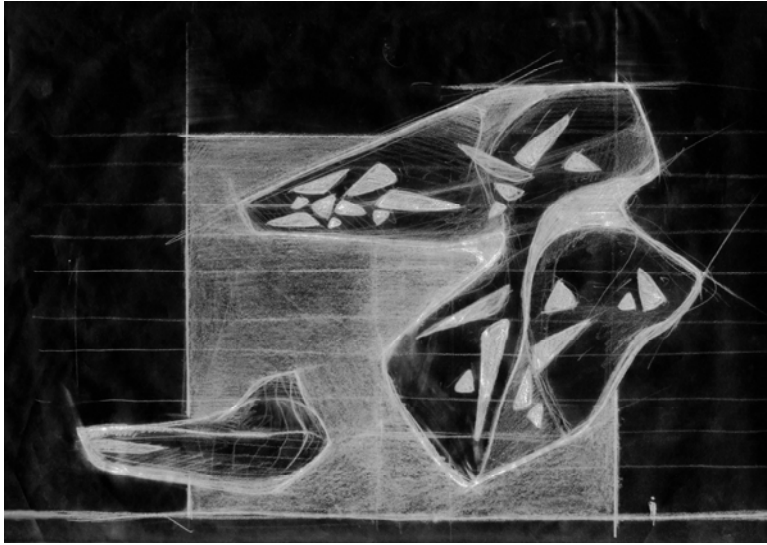


"The Artist is a receptacle for emotions that come from all over the place; from the sky, from the earth, from a scrap of paper, from a passing shape, from a spider's web..." Pablo Picasso

→ URBAN CONNECTOR | COLLISION POINT

- Architecture that does not interact with its surroundings and does not act as a foil for the existing features around it only does half the job. The basic principle behind the 'House of Arts & Culture' is provided by its site's exceptional urban setting.
- The 'House of Arts & Culture' aspires to be Beirut's cultural icon, a focal point restoring new balances, between its center and pericentral districts, intercepting new polarities able to transfer to this outer cross point of 'Solidere' the role of transition and 'trait d'union'; thus it appears as a stitching strip of reconciliation between the new rising 'Center' and the old agonizing 'Bachoura' region.
- Situated alongside the 'Ring' highway, at the edge of a destroyed and perishable 'Bachoura', living temple of historical features and art, the 'HAC' is strongly connected to the urban fabric. Hence, it creates a new attraction, which distinctive and symbolic character is well received. It's an architectural act of regeneration of the whole area; a revitalization leading to a greater impact in the upcoming evolution process of Beirut; the cradle of a contemporary 'renaissance'... An appropriate interface in the cityscape formalizing harmony and tension, continuity and reflection; a real catalyst between past, present and future.
- The 'HAC' functions as a Monospace that caters to an innovative urban experience.



→ **GRID + AXES = FLUX**

We define two major urban key-axes:

1. Axis North - South (central / pericentral), arrays in a stiff linear grid, linking the site to the orthogonal facades of 'Solidere's buildings, anchoring it to the background.
 2. Axis East - West ('Ashrafieh' / 'Ring'), draining movement and streaming flows.
- The two axes contract like tendons to the limit of a tension induced towards the lead. From the intersection of the two axes and the rigid pattern, fluid organisms emerge and acquire flexibility, establishing a new urban morphology with cavities and crossings. These generated complexities develop into a vital scheme that expands and spreads onto the surface of the plot, stretching itself to the limits of Beirut city.

"The more the background recedes, the more distinct the figures have to be. For, in view of the implosion of the old order, it is these figures which make a city. Their interrelations create force fields of great tensions, and in doing so create space. This process is infinitely more complex than the ordained decision to lay down a plan and then fill it up, step by step, with architecture. Space is no longer pre-ordained. It comes into being as a result of the force fields which figures create together, forming the basis of a vigorous urbanity. We believe that a vigorous urban architectural experience results when the qualities of space are linked, creating a rhythm of dynamism and concentration."



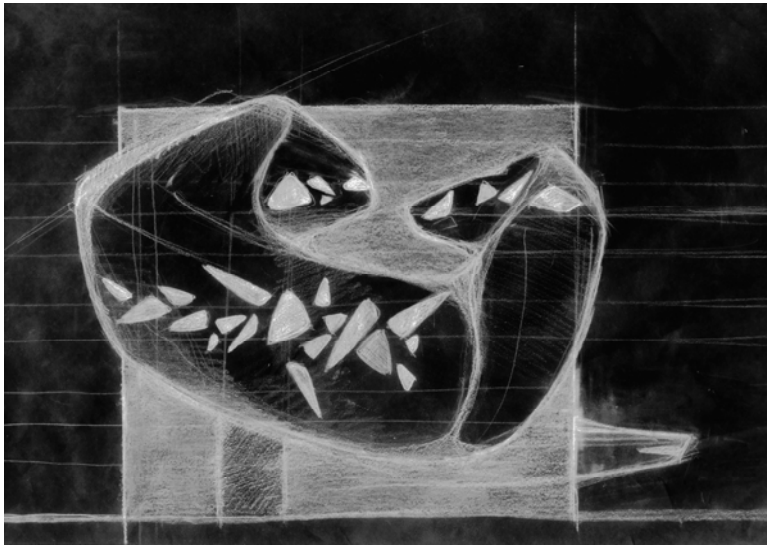
→ **HOLLOW CORE | HYBRID SPACE**

Art and Culture flows out of the 'HAC' and the city flows through it.

Hence it becomes a shared hybrid space where people meet and unexpected events occur.

The 'HAC' is designed on the lines of an 'evolving spatial diagram' rising from:

- **A Cartesian Grid**, towards Emergent Volumes - dematerialization. The physical mass is organized in a functional tight grid. This lattice begins by drawing a lower volume that constitutes a firm stand to the edifice. It's an inanimate base enclosing all the 'HAC' services utilities and parking.
- **A Platform, a Core** - an open system enabling synergy and free exchange between the public, artists, students and educators. The entire ground plane forms a flexible, fluid and transparent turn-table, conceived as a wide extensive public surface: a landscape of activities. Acknowledging its urban context as fact, it enfolds a forum, the starting point of the whole movement; a crater-like depression generates the explosion of forms, releasing weightless volumes of events, liberating floating bodies, propagating dynamic flows. A threaded public spiral ramp and suspended escalators connect the upper levels in a vertiginous levitating 'promenade'. The tubular structure is punctual, holding together the exploded volumes and fixing them in elevation. This fixation represents the crucial moment where fact meets expression... the 'Monumental Moment'.



→ CREATIVE EMERGENCE | ...

- **Emergent Bodies** wrap the main public functions within their alveolar skin (movie theatre, performance and conference halls, exhibition space, documentation center and workshops). Those elevated massive concrete conglomerates merge with an ephemeral envelope of glass, diffusing energy, re-exploring Beirut city through the 'interstices' in between. Innovation grows within interspaces. Primitive fossils of knowledge, roaming spirits, mystical reminiscences, furtive silhouettes, striking images of a hidden memory, they exist in complementary contrasts leaving the cut fully exposed, balancing between confrontation and contradiction, mass and lightness, roughness and softness, essence and volatile evanescence. At night, glowing bodies offer attractive inner scenery, drawing visitors into their entrails.

Beirut's 'House of Arts & Culture' appears as a mysterious eruption of magma, a regenerating source of creation, breathing life, carrying a promising Lebanese artistic dawn...

"Without culture, and the relative freedom it implies, society, even when perfect, is nothing but a jungle. This is why any authentic creation is a gift to the future." Albert Camus