

THE CRACK: VOID of EXPRESSION

Every culture has its own peculiarities; however, the hidden layer that binds these diverse cultures is the reciprocal taste of Arts with all its diversity and difference. Art is a universal language that could be understood by all cultures. **Art is a mutual language of Humanity.**

CONCEPT, THE BUILDING'S MESSAGE

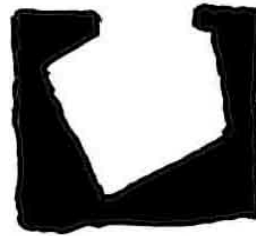
Art is the main motivator for creating social awareness through visual perception and cultivating taste. Despite the fact that the Lebanese citizens suffered a lot from wars and tumultuous political and social circumstances, Art was always pure and living in their hearts distinguishing the Lebanese Personality. The House of Arts and Culture introduces is the **volume of awareness** sending a message of freedom and hope to the Globe.

▪ The volume of awareness

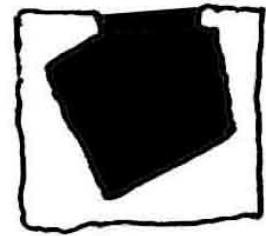
The idea of the volume of Awareness is a universal idea that crosses cultural differences and mainly addresses humanity. The Volume of Awareness within the formal mass represents the Awareness and hope in the Lebanese society, with its deeply rooted artistic nature, **Cracking** the obstacles that faced the Lebanese society for long times. The volume of awareness could be introduced in terms of positive space (Solid) and negative space (Void).

The positive space (Solid) expresses the formal tendency of the project as the Icon of Arts and Culture in Beirut and the gate for National and International Cultural Events.

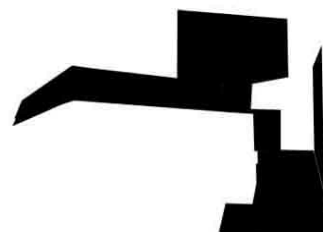
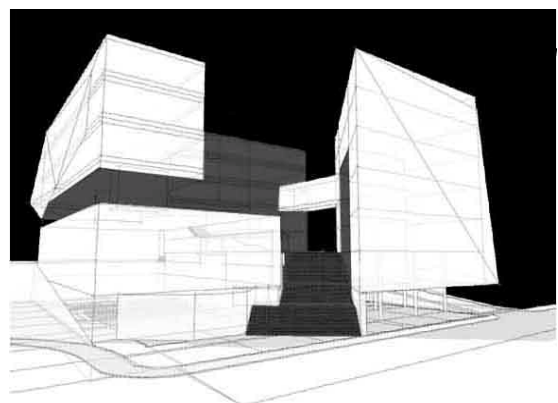
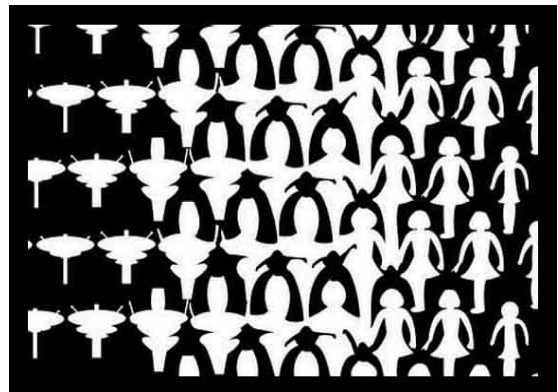
The negative space (Void) expresses the



SOLID
the Icon of ART,
Addresses
the GLOBE



VOID
Addresses
local Lebanese



The VOID

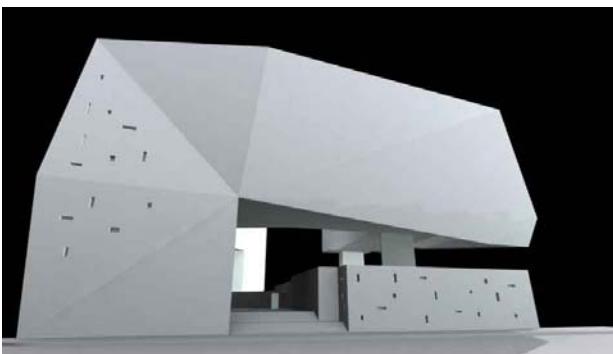


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CONCEPT INTERPRETATION

The building is formed as a main mass penetrated by a spatial Crack. The **Crack** constitutes a *designed void* with an informal program that combines different live activities endowing the building with a sense of life and motion. While the architectural mass encompasses the formal program; the performance hall, mini hall, etc, the **Crack** as the main spine of the project, branches into the free spaces of artistic expression; the art Walls, the Open Theater, the Gathering Point, the Outdoor Exhibition, and the Free Expression Area constituting the informal program. These activities are the main target of the building making it dynamic and enveloping its mass with life and activity. ***The building becomes a simple piece of sculpture containing formal arts and painted with live performance .***

Seeing the live activities of the free expression spaces from outside creates a distinct visual image for the building that is different from the ordinary expected image of Art and Culture Centers. This creates intimacy towards the building from the ordinary person and mainly as an art place for youth. Moreover, it introduces an iconic building for Beirut as its House of Arts and Culture with an international architectural language addressing the world.



Scenarios, Expression

The building introduces different scenarios focusing on two aspects of art:

The motivational arts that are combined on the closed spaces mainly the performance hall, mini hall, exhibitions, workshops, and etc.

The unmotivational arts represented by the Crack with its free expression spaces that are intended for the use of festivals, exhibitions and spontaneous art produced by non professional artists.

The Building is designed through three access points wherein every approach has its own peculiarities:

The Formal Entrance; showing the main event of the project "*the performance hall*" as the icon seen from the Ring Road and B.C.D. In addition, it is connected to the main spine; "*the Crack*". This façade shows monumentality in scale and the iconic mass of the performance hall. This entrances is designed to embrace the ceremonial entry scenario; *the red carpet scenario*.

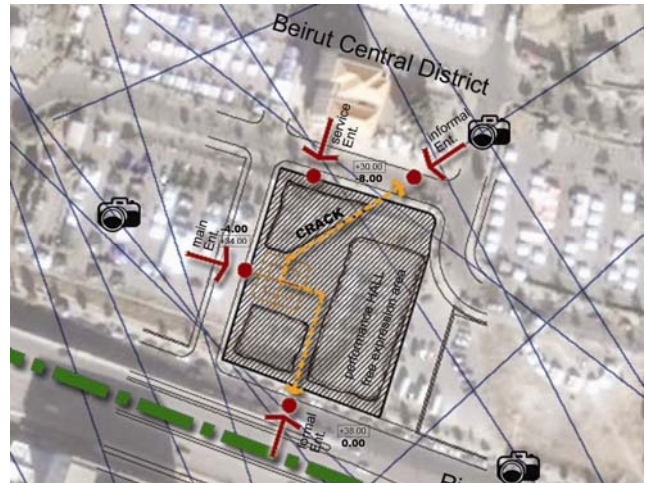
The Main Entrance, with the car drop-off, accesses directly to the reception area defining the main entrance.

The Informal entrance; is the access of the public. Facing Beirut Central District and, Martyrs Square, the informal access addresses the local Lebanese laymen. It represents the entrance of the *Crack* which combines the experience of non-formal activities that is open for everyone not excluded for cultural elite. This approach is mainly designed for the youth.

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The Crack: *the Informal approach*

The *Crack* is the heart of the project. It is the main spine passing through the project connecting the informal and formal entrances. Along the *Crack* visitors and also cross-passengers experience a non-formal Art space. The side *walls* and *flooring* of the crack are an open Art museum with sculptures and paintings of Lebanese artists. Also the walls carry screens showing trailers from the art performances taking place in the House of Arts and Culture. Through this crossing trip along the **Crack** different open activities are designed for the interaction between users and the building like the open theater, the free expression area, outdoor exhibition, and the main gathering node. Actually, the mass is intentionally meant to be penetrated by the cross-passengers to make artistic **subliminal messages** while passing. This creates a relation between the building and the society particularly the youth. The informal spaces connect the different parts of the building and create an intimate place of Arts for layman. Architecturally, these designed voids add extra space to the building that magnifies operation of the House of Arts and Culture and provide it an intimate relation with its users. The project is always transforming with life, people and activity from inside and outside. The *Crack* forms the void of expression; the designed live void and a space for everyone to experience arts.

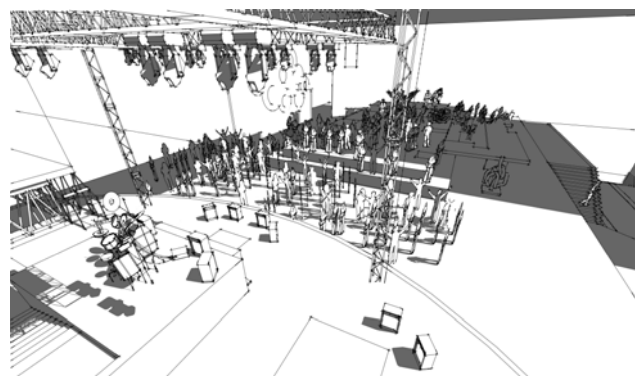


The Open Theater:

The open theater is first activity on the crack. It is situated in the alcove surrounded by the informal galleries and workshops.

The Free Expression Area:

Above the main performance hall, the Free Expression Area is situated making a live façade for the project. It is always active showing that art is not only for cultural Elite or solely in large closed halls.



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The Main Gathering Point:

Above the main Entrance and the reception hall the Main Gathering point is located. It is a part of the crack leading to the spine, reception area, and the free expression area. The main gathering point is the heart of the Crack. Also it is another place for outdoor standing concerts.

The Reception Area

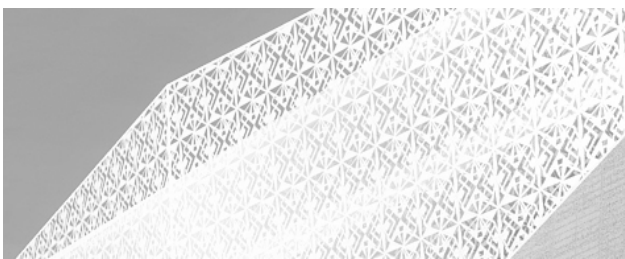
The reception Area is the gathering point of the formal program that connects different areas; performance hall, mini hall, exhibition, and etc.

The Main Performance Hall:

The Main Performance Hall is an iconic mass seen from the ring road and Beirut central district as an international message from the House of culture.

ARCHITECTURAL LANGUAGE

- The mass is a pure form with a sense of monumentality cracked with a void filled with life and finally enveloped with a fractal interactive skin transformed and redefined according to activity.



- The project approaches an international architectural language flavored with walls of Lebanese different arts, paintings, sculpture, and calligraphy.

- Different walls of the building are dedicated to special kinds of arts; the Painting wall, Calligraphy wall, Crafts wall, Music wall, Cinema wall, Dancing wall, Sculpture wall and the like.

- The pure form identifies an architectural sculpture cracked by an active live spine expressing the volume of awareness and expression.

- The external walls of the performance hall are clad with local natural stone giving a glimpse of old traditional Beirut Architecture.

SUMMARY

The House is a place that represents the Lebanese Art and Culture. The building represents the light of hope and awareness that resided inside the Lebanese society penetrating all social and political circumstances. Despite the bad days that faced Lebanon, arts stayed in the conscience of Lebanese citizens. The building maximizes the significance of informal Arts as an essential quality of Lebanese Society addressing the Globe with their formal and informal arts.

