

Housing the Art: A Platform for Spectacle and Events:

The proposal is thought of as an element that is injected in an urban context to generate new encounters.

The chosen site presents several opportunities for the project to assume its position, create new links and transform the city into a spectacle of light, projection and spontaneous events that not only highlight the cultural significance in the Lebanese society but more importantly the “cultural” everyday life of the citizens.

The building is conceived to present neutral open spaces, the platforms, that allow a multitude of events to occur and that account for the changing habits of people. A sort of Utzonian space (in reference to the platform of the Sydney Opera House) that overcomes time, scale and the nature of activities. It will not only sustain the proposed program, but even more creates a venue for the citizen to celebrate their city, for the artists to show their masterpieces and for the Cultural manifestations to feel at home.

While the external organization of volumes and spaces is a direct response to the mass/void relationship within the proposed immediate context, the interior of the building revolves around a maximum functional efficiency without compromising the spatial experience.

The proposal consists of three major elements:

- The Platforms
- The Stair
- The “Flying Pyramid”

The Platforms:

Two platforms are proposed:

The ground floor one opens up to the park to the north allowing a flow of people to infiltrate the site. The neutral aspect of it allows for a multitude of events to occur without any changes in its basic configuration.

The upper platform will overlook the Ring Road to the South and the rest of the city to the North. It presents an opportunity to be incorporated with the exhibition spaces if needed.

Otherwise it will house small events or being used in conjunction with the ground platform and the stairs.

The Stairs: (The Beholder’s Stairs)

The title suggests a passive dimension. But it is far from it. It is the place where Beholder will get in contact with the artist whose workshops are housed under the steps. The perforations and the openings in the stairs are open invitations to explore and to a certain degree “insinuate” the program inside: workshops, lobbies or simply toilets.

It allows a continuous flow of people, through the main lobby, between the Ring Road Ghalghoul Street.

The “Flying Pyramid”:

Actual it is a portion of a pyramid with no head. This is the volume that will house the “spectacular”, the theatres and exhibitions.

The skin of the volume is made out of metallic mesh with Arabesque Pattern: a reflection to the intrinsic cultural connection of the Lebanese artistic manifestation with the historic routs of the region. The Southern side of the volume will be marked by a vertical garden which will grow on the mesh while the other sides will be transformed, eventually, to screens of projects.

The northern side of the pyramid is a big screen that will broadcast information and messages to the city of Beirut.

The interior configuration is based on a vertical separation to create hierarchy in the program. While allowing separate events to take place, the whole program can be transformed to house a single event if needed: for instance the theatres are designed in a way that allows both audiences, from the large and small performance halls, to share the same spectacle.

The Proposal is a celebration of a city in transformation. It adheres to its transient state and capitalizes on it to create a space of spectacle and events while maintaining a harmony with its base structure: Beirut