

7813 RX

Credo

This project should unite but not homogenize; it should interconnect, but not flatten. At the image of Beirut, this project is a constellation of differences, in material, shape and form. It offers a vertical stacking of differences articulated around direct vertical circulation through the main core located on the north east side of the site and a continuous meandering public circulation that includes escalators, staircases and ramp, all the way to the observatory sphere on the roof.

The stacking creates a vertical sequence of programs moving from:

An **Archaeological** Basement: With its grotto like-lobby, the Large Hall enclosed in a stone prism and internally clad in a glowing corrugated polycarbonate skin.

To

An **Experimental** platform Ground Level (level 0), the large hall prism slightly protruding above the ground to create a radical performance platform open to any artist, and any public.

To

A **Connective** upper ground floor level (level +8m), with its reception, shops and cafeteria.

To

An **Infrastructural** administration built into a concrete truss that also includes meeting rooms and technical areas.

To

An **Objet Trouvé**-like exhibition level, shiny, abstract and opaque. Its internal planning allowing for a multitude of configurations.

To

A **Suspended** ground floor that simulates the alleys and spaces of the city, with its staircases, suspended piazzas and gardens. Revolving around those public spaces are the workshops, cinema, and cinematheque. The spaces look internally towards a suspended courtyard and externally towards Bashoura, the Central district, Monot and

Zoqaq el Blat. The cinema screen opens up its transparent façade towards the city while the escalators peep at the Bashoura cemetery beyond the highway.

To

The **Peaceful** reading spaces of the library, immersed into the elevated garden.

To

The **Symbolic** sphere of knowledge, at the same time spiritual and secular. The sphere disrupts the expected building height of the area (and thus remains an optional suggestion) in order to create an observatory like structure, that echoes the domes of our churches and mosques, the openness to the cosmic dimension through the observation of the stars in the night or the bathing in the warmth of the sun in the day.

Ultimately, from basement to ground floor, this project tells the story of a growth, the growth of an individual artist, from historical findings to experiments, to transcendence, and the story of a hopefully evolving culture that seeks to pay to art and creativity the tribute it dearly awaits.

Dar Bayrut: Momentum of growth.

Manifesto

This house of art and culture is a unique opportunity for Beirut to recover its edge on the artistic scene. This culture, once very alive, has become either the privilege of the few or a mere marginal phenomenon. We say: let us recover this artistic scene through the creation of a radical public space accessible to all.

A graffiti artist like Shant for example, has decided to express his art on the streets of Beirut finding no other place to exhibit his talent. We say let him keep his way of expression; let us embrace his talent and help him realize his full potential.

A pianist like Marc Ernest has been fighting his way up to offer a quality music that reflects the complexity of the Lebanese social mesh. Many young talented people have put together surprising bands (like Mashrou3 Leila and many others) portraying their society like it was never done before; but haven't invested their potential to the extreme because there is no one to support them.

We can mention so many other actors, artists, musicians that have turned their backs to the Lebanese authorities, went underground and started to create their own art.

Miraculous is what is being done, let us project it into a momentum of growth and flood Beirut with light, sounds in renewed creation.

It is always easy to be nostalgic and go back into history and try to reconstruct the past; whereas, today a new Fairuz will shine and it will not be Fairuz. A new Rahbani will be born and it will not be a Rahbani. The architecture of the house, responds to what is happening now, understanding the Lebanese art today, from Haifa to Shant, a blend will happen and a new glow will light up.

Let us speak with their language to bring them to us.

They have chosen rebellion, let us break the law: but this time not out of anger, but to create more public and green space through the building.

Let us give them a shining moment on the roof, so they can see what they are capable of, and so that we can see them.

Let us amuse them with a circulation that would portray Beirut's streets. Surprises would strike a pedestrian in the same way it would happen in Gemmayzeh, Zqaq el Blat, Bachoura, Foch or Monot.

Let us reinforce their footsteps, so we would stand together and wipe away the fear of a downfall.

There will be no separation; coexistence instead.

There will be no struggle; progression instead.

We know that Lebanese society has an infinite potential, let us just start the momentum of growth.

THE GROUND FLOOR

Conceived like a barely uncovered archaeological object, the lower ground level is an open platform that can house experimental plays, fashion shows, public talks, walk-in movie screenings or ad hoc informal events that are encouraged to spontaneously happen.

This ground floor is the symbol of the return of the public dimension to urban Beirut in a radical gesture of openness and informality.

To allow the possibility of more controlled events, the platform can be totally enclosed by a system of sliding panels that cinematically create a black box on top of the stone surface.

On the west side of the building, a service wall absorbs structure, technical areas and stage tower. In order to maximize the pedestrian dimension of the ground level, the car access is limited on the west impasse.

Escalators connect to the lower basement level (large performance hall and lobby) and to the upper ground floor thus creating the beginning of a public trajectory that will eventually lead the user all the way to the urban observatory on the roof.