

## **House of Art and Culture: Strata House**

### **Urban and Architectural Objectives of the Project.**

The urban strategy proposed in this project focuses on introducing a strong entity into the surrounding community that will impose an invitation to be explored. That the proposed building structure can be seen from various key points, including the Avenue du General Fouad Chehab, was taken into consideration in creating a volume that could be perceived both as a contemporary and artistic icon, yet not over assuming. Following this strategy, the main three objectives of this project are to create a spatial design that: 1) reflects on the cultural history of Lebanon and projects its future direction; 2) facilitates the interactions between the general public and the different artistic communities of Lebanon (national and international); and 3) promotes educational development.

In reference to the 1<sup>st</sup> objective, the building's layered look is a contemporary representation of the history of Lebanon. The use of wood is symbolic of Lebanon's national emblem, the Lebanese Cedar Tree. Like Lebanon's history and the history of growth found in a cross section of a Cedar tree, the building is made up of strata of varying widths. The differences in the width represent eras or periods of history and growth alike.

### **Functional and Spatial Organization of the Project.**

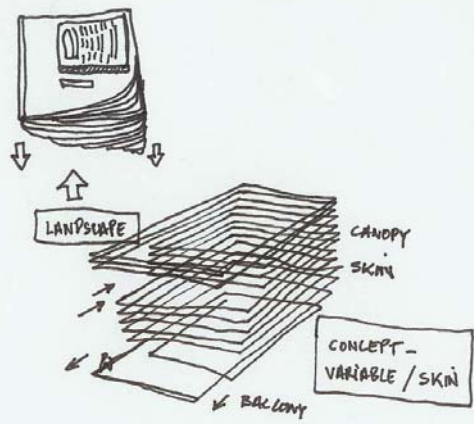
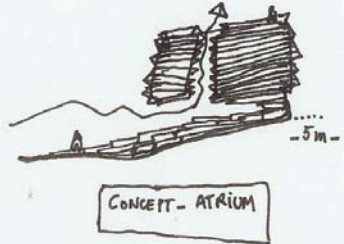
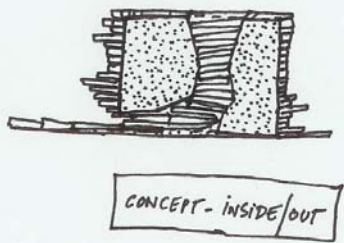
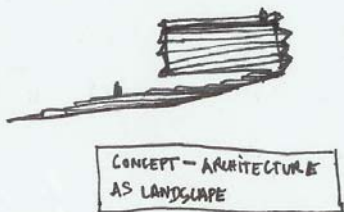
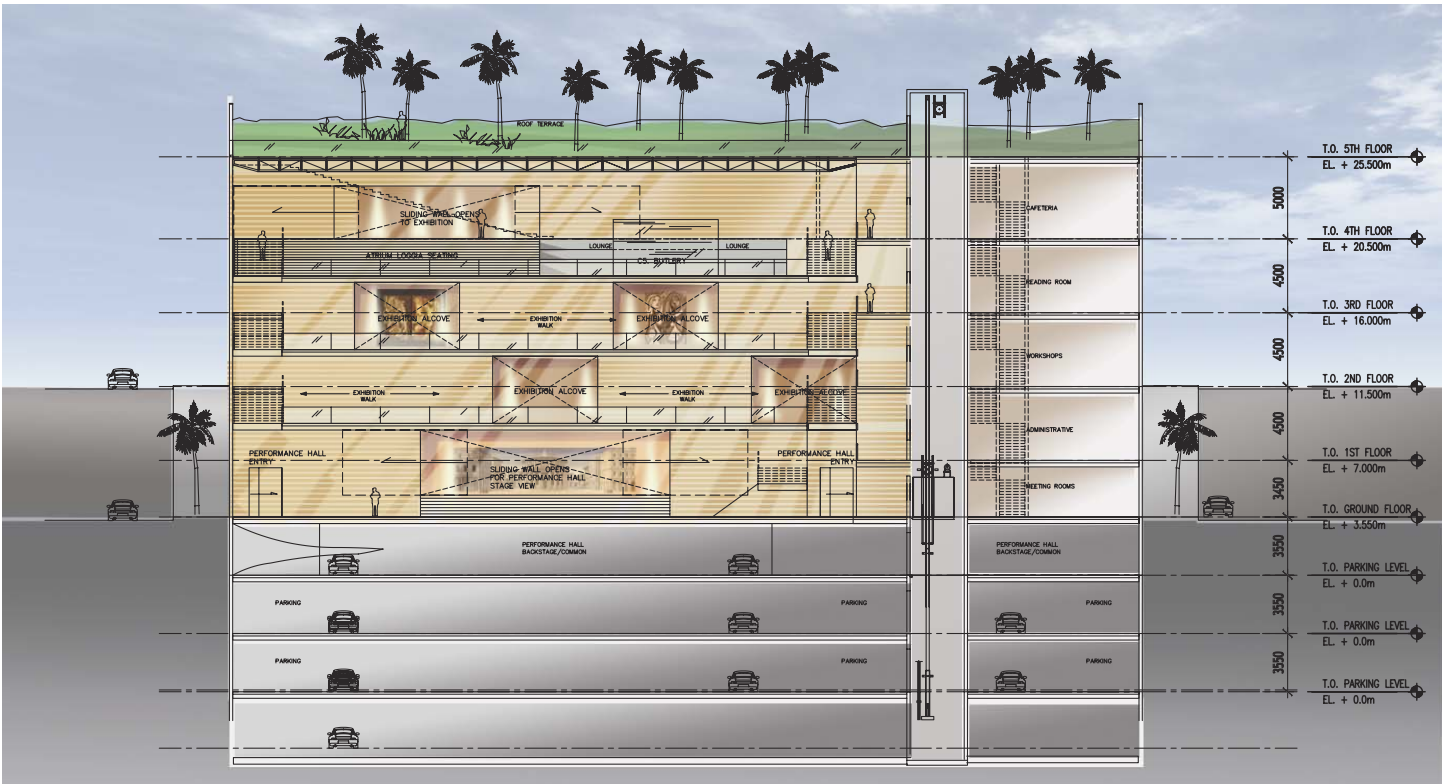
As expressed in the 2<sup>nd</sup> objective, the proposed House of Art and Culture will function as a machine that produces interaction between people (general public and artist alike) and space. Like a machine, the house is made up of moving parts, the central piece being the main performance hall. The walls and seats of the performance hall can be rearranged to create either an Italian style theater or a larger convention hall as the walls can be retracted (as in a sliding door) to connect the performance hall with the main lobby area.

The main circulation that connects all the program elements unfolds within the atrium space. The circulatory movement is created through a series of stairs that connect continuously from the building's main entrance and finish at a green roof terrace where their function continues to evolve as they are then utilized as seats for relaxing, sipping a coffee, gazing upon Mount Lebanon, the sea, and surrounding panorama. The only

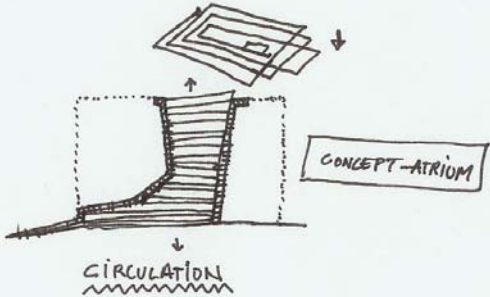
interruptions along the path of the stairs are intellectual rather than structural as niches of exhibition space are found embedded throughout the featured wall, sometimes folding into the wall and at other times falling through - as in opening into a chamber. These niches can be utilized to exhibit feature artists, video art installations, workshops, and/or small performances. Thus, the journey from level 1 to level 5 becomes an educational experience, one of the main objectives of this project.

### **Technical and Building Solutions.**

The primary structure will be made of concrete, technique broadly used in the area. The Envelope will be used as a screen or protective element from the sun radiations either as a wood screen or as a rain screen system involving terra-cotta or ceramic elements. The open atrium creates a connection between the inside and outside environment, as well as enhancing the structure's energy-saving capacity by making the most use of natural lighting. The structure's use of a light colored wood and concrete and terra-cotta as an envelope assist in reflecting the Sun's rays and maintaining the interior cool. The green roof terrace also protects the structure from receiving direct sun light; the trees and grass in the terrace provide a cool shelter for visitors and the building structure alike.



CIRCULATION  
CENTRAL ATRIUM / STAIRS  
CONNECTING MAIN ELEMENTS



- MUSEUM SKIN
- ⇒ PROTECTION, CONNECTIONS
  - DIFFERENTIATE FACE / UNDERFACE
  - INTEGRATED SYSTEM