

# DARBAYRUT THE HOUSE OF ARTS AND CULTURES

*Beyrouth, Lebanon*

Date: 2009-2010

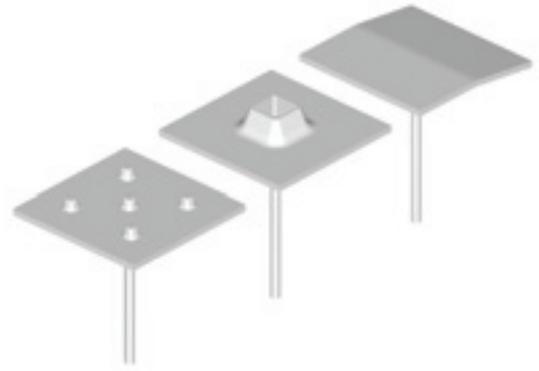
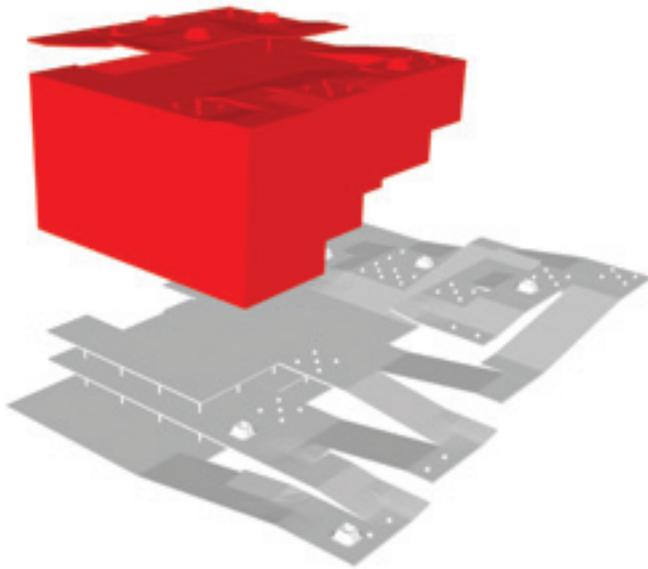
Type: Cultural

Client: Ministry of Culture, Lebanon

Area: 18,500 m<sup>2</sup>

Status: competition





Artistic creativity has always been an important component of life in Beirut. A buoyant city sitting on the Eastern shores of the Mediterranean, Beirut is at the same time an Arab city and a European one. In this sense, it is similar to many other Mediterranean harbours that have served as links between countries and cultures. But Beirut has been more and it remains so. It is the gate to the Orient and to the West. For the European, it is the easy Orient and for the Oriental, it is the easy West. It offers a space of transition and, in this space, it offers freedom of thought and an intellectual arena that has shaped the thinking of the Near and Middle-East

This House of Arts and Culture comes at the right time to boost the already very active creativity that is taking place in Beirut since the end of the period of violence that rocked Lebanon between 1975 and 1990. All of a sudden, all the small individual efforts to keep alive theatres, poetry, music, painting and sculpture during these difficult times, have projected Lebanese artists and performers in the World arena where more and more of them is gaining an international reputation. If the Lebanese publishing industry has kept its key role in the Arab World, it is now the Lebanese artists that are gaining a key role in the World.

The context of the proposed site is complex :

- a difference of 8m between the ring road and the ghalghoul street
- a disparate environment, next to the highway, adjoining Riad el Solh square and the unbuilt parcels.

The concept is based on two major guidelines :

- an urban base connecting the different levels and smoothing the pedestrian flux, thus absorbing the visitors in the center.

-A volume appears above this space and frame views on the city, acting as a landmark on the scale of the city. The treatment is inspired by the traditional moucharabiyeh, composed of wooden laser perforated panels filtering the light.

