

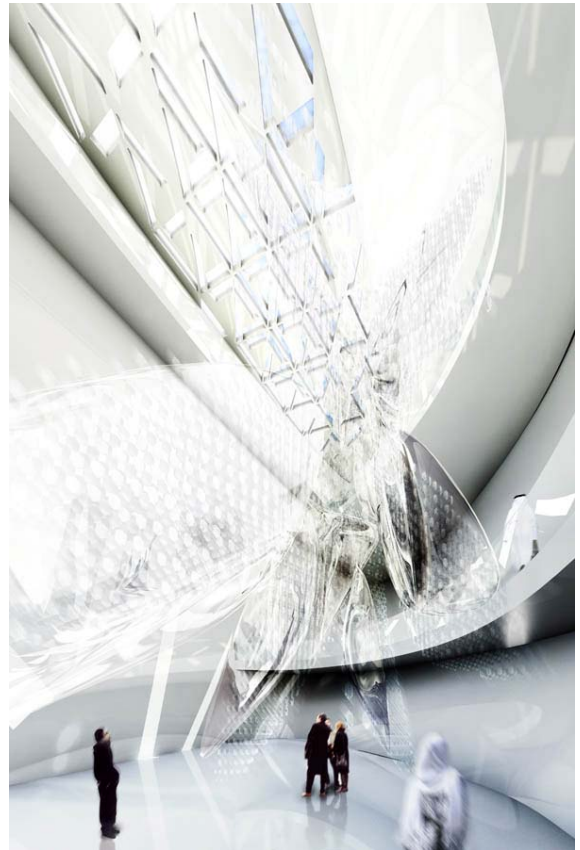
Museum of Contemporary Art Bahrain by Zaha Hadid Architects

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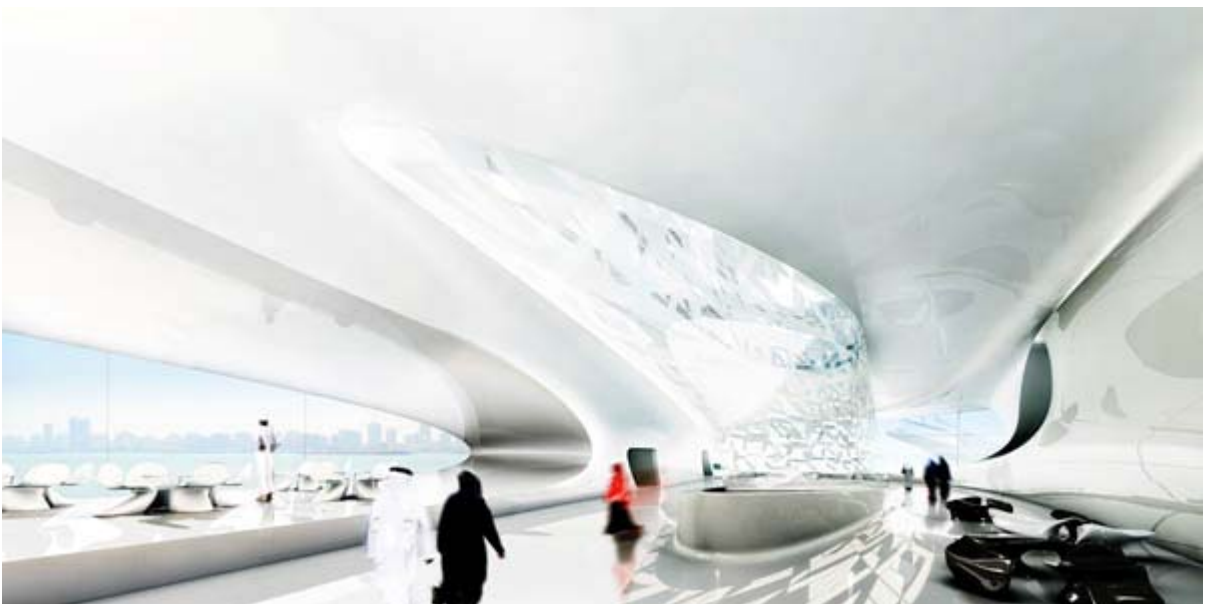
Design Strategy

The enigmatic volume emerges from a narrow coastal land stripe at the Gulf of Bahrain. Describing a gentle curve while gradually rising from the ground a volume is formed that bends slightly and reaches over the water towards Manama. The building appears mystically floating above a coastal landscape. Public fields flow around the sculptural mass of the museum, underlining its presence with curvy- linear lines echoing the contours of the volume. The overall dynamism and fluidity of the elongated form support the emphasis on movement through and around the museum.

Forming a welcoming and inviting gesture, the main volume lifts up towards the main entrance in the north. The cantilevering volume forms a canopy and generates an open but shaded public zone at grade. This spatial configuration provides a natural separation of the gallery spaces from the more public, event and entertainment related parts of the museum. The lifted volume contains the three main programmatic units which are articulated as capsules within the compact overall envelope.



These internal volumes are expressed through folds and protrusions in the modulation of the envelope, creating multiple ways of reading the building as a whole that is constituted by its integral parts. Embedded in the general building concept of the museum are qualities deriving from the traditional Islamic architecture found in close context to the site at the original houses of Al Muharraq. While the building unfolds a wealth of varied spatial sequences that supports the different aspects of a museum, it relates to the sophisticated traditional ways to control the strong daylight by use of geometric patterns and ornamentation.



Hybrid Museum Concept

Starting with the arrangement and integration of the gallery spaces, the spatial concept of the museum works from the inside out. The scheme follows a hybrid concept, that is based on a detailed research on traditional and contemporary museum precedents on the one hand, and the awareness, that a truly neutral space that only serves the exposed artefacts, is impossible to achieve, on the other hand. The aim of this hybrid museum concept is to suit the brief of a building designed to house travelling exhibitions by providing galleries with distinct characters to enhance the visitor's art experience as well as the artists creating and exhibiting their work. The shape and organization of the building allows for a continuous path through a series of day lit galleries and zones of diverse spatial qualities. The character of each space is defined and generated by the geometry and the proportion of the room itself, as well as by its relation to the direct context.



Exhibition capsules providing self-contained spaces are imbedded in the envelope of the building. The interstitial space between these capsules and the outer skin itself becomes an exhibition space of continuously varying spatial qualities. Visual and physical connections to the non-exhibition zones of the museum and to the exterior with its scenic coastal landscape guarantee an exciting and stimulating art experience in every area of this museum.

Locations & Surroundings

The design seeks to create a visually arresting landmark that belongs inextricably to both the specific site and the overall urban situation. The Museum is located in a border condition between the dense and vibrant traditional urban context of Al Muharraq and the calm open view of the ocean and its sandy beach.



At the same time, the project is located in between the two faces of the Bahraini culture, with its tradition and historical background on the one side, and the rapidly growing, contemporary city on the other. Located on land that has been reclaimed from the sea, the museum's position allows for visual relations to Manama, as the site is facing the modern high-rises of Bahrain's new capital across the water.

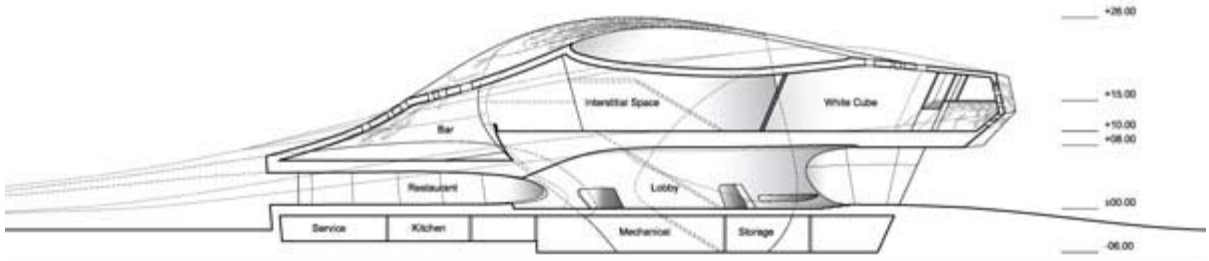


In a position of transit, where the two faces of the Bahraini culture communicate with each other, the project aims to combine traditional Arabic architectural elements with contemporary and experimental spatial sensations to enhance the dialogue with the art of our time. As an ever-changing event space the Museum strives to become a gateway for the art and culture of Bahrain, strongly rooted in history and optimistically looking into the future.

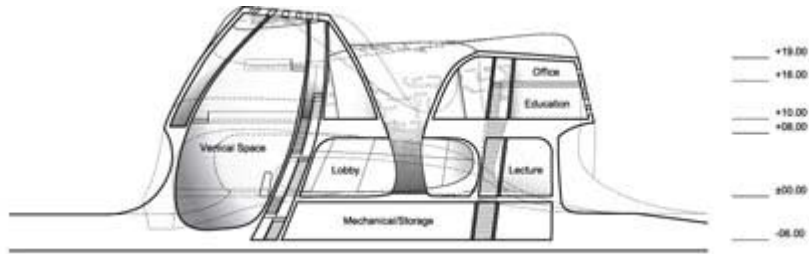


Museum of Contemporary Art [Al Muharraq, Kingdom of Bahrain]

PROGRAMME: Exhibition space for permanent and temporary collections, performance space, auditorium, education facilities, studios (artist in residence), offices, café, restaurant & retail.



SECTION B



SECTION A

