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"DESIGN DETAIL IS A COMMITTED FORUM THAT INSPIRES DESIGNERS, ARCHITECTS AND STRATEGIC PARTNERS TO NURTURE OUR HERITAGE AND CULTURE TOWARDS A SUSTAINABLE INDIA"



Cover Photo:
747 Wing House

Courtesy:
Studio of Environmental
Architecture

Playing it with Prudence



© DW5 BERNARD KHOURY - Photo by Jon Stard



W

Text : Ar. Nikitha K Paul

ith 'war architecture', as it has been labeled, Ar. Bernard Khoury has set up an expressive way of designing beautiful buildings that are memory inducing and optimistic. Being a city with a turbulent past and with an unfading physical memory of war, Beirut is now in a state of continuous metamorphosis. Mysticism surrounds anything we read about this place, seemingly aggressive and yet fascinating, although in a dark sense. The aesthetic perception of war and destruction has introduced meaningful buildings in the urban fabric of this gradual resurrection. Bernard Khoury's unconventional interventions in such a context have incorporated the right balance of sensitivity

and detachment with respect to its history. A common trait of his designs is the strong presence of features that make buildings look heavily guarded and muscular.

B018

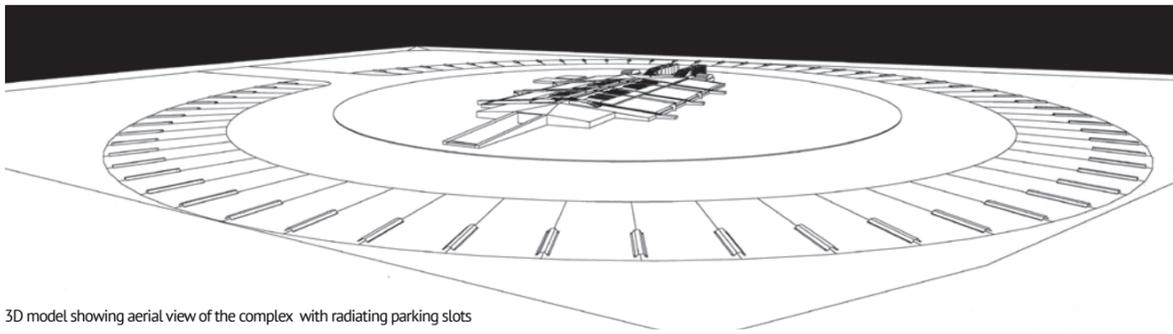
Enigmatic, as the aerial view projects, the B018 is a scene that comes alive when the sun goes down. The robust structure, exuding characteristics similar to the impenetrable hideouts of science fiction superheroes, becomes conceivable when viewed at a wider angle. This nightclub is located in a deserted neighborhood near the port of Beirut, an area infamous for its gruesome history. It used to be a place of quarantine for the arriving crews. By 1975, it had become the asylum for around 20,000 Palestinian, Kurdish



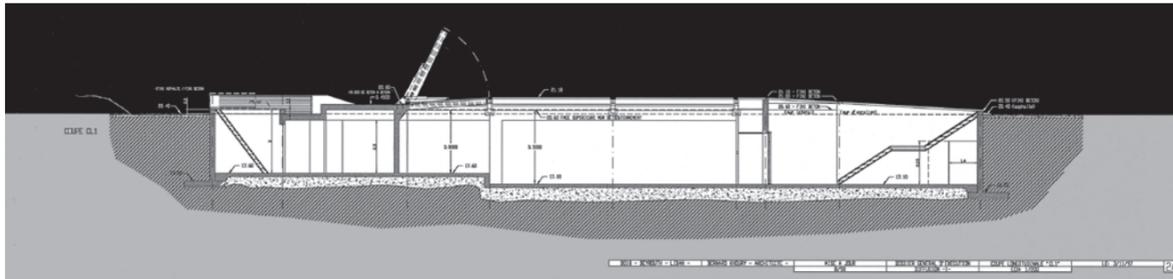
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ABOVE AND SPREAD PAGE
Exterior views

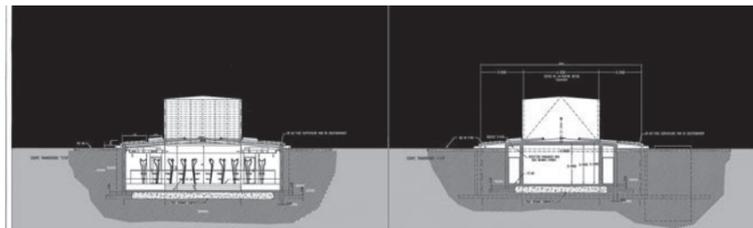
OPPOSITE PAGE BOTTOM
Entrance stairway
to the club



3D model showing aerial view of the complex with radiating parking slots



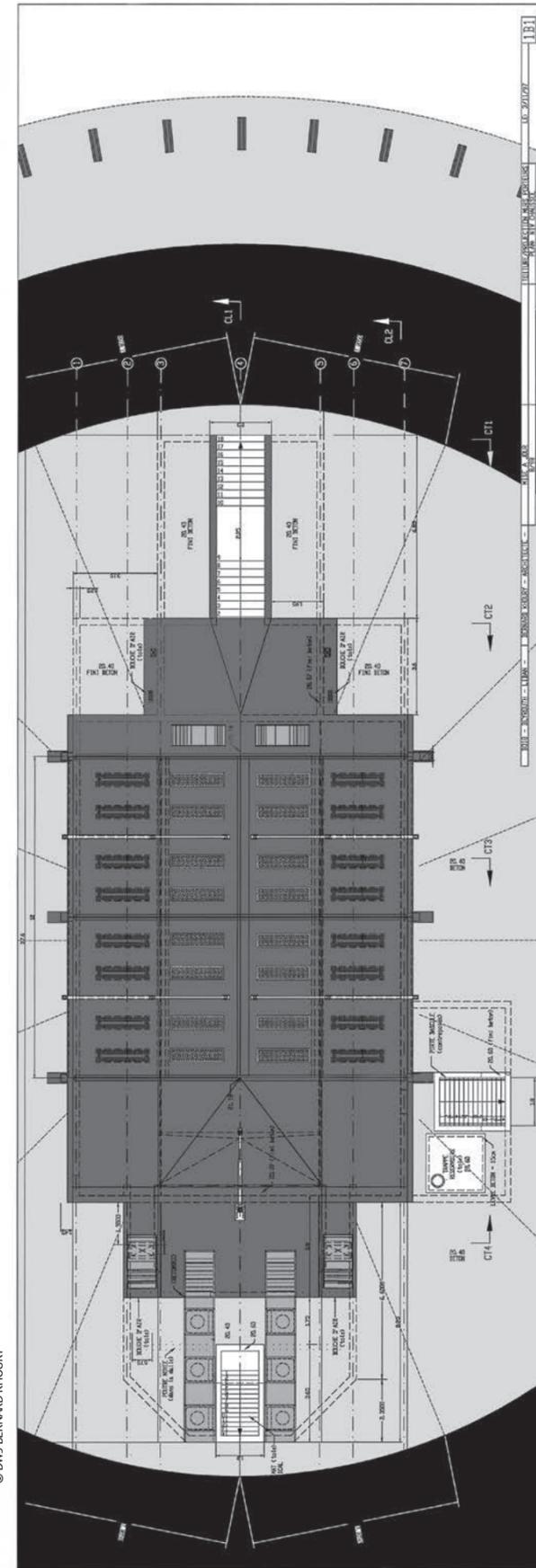
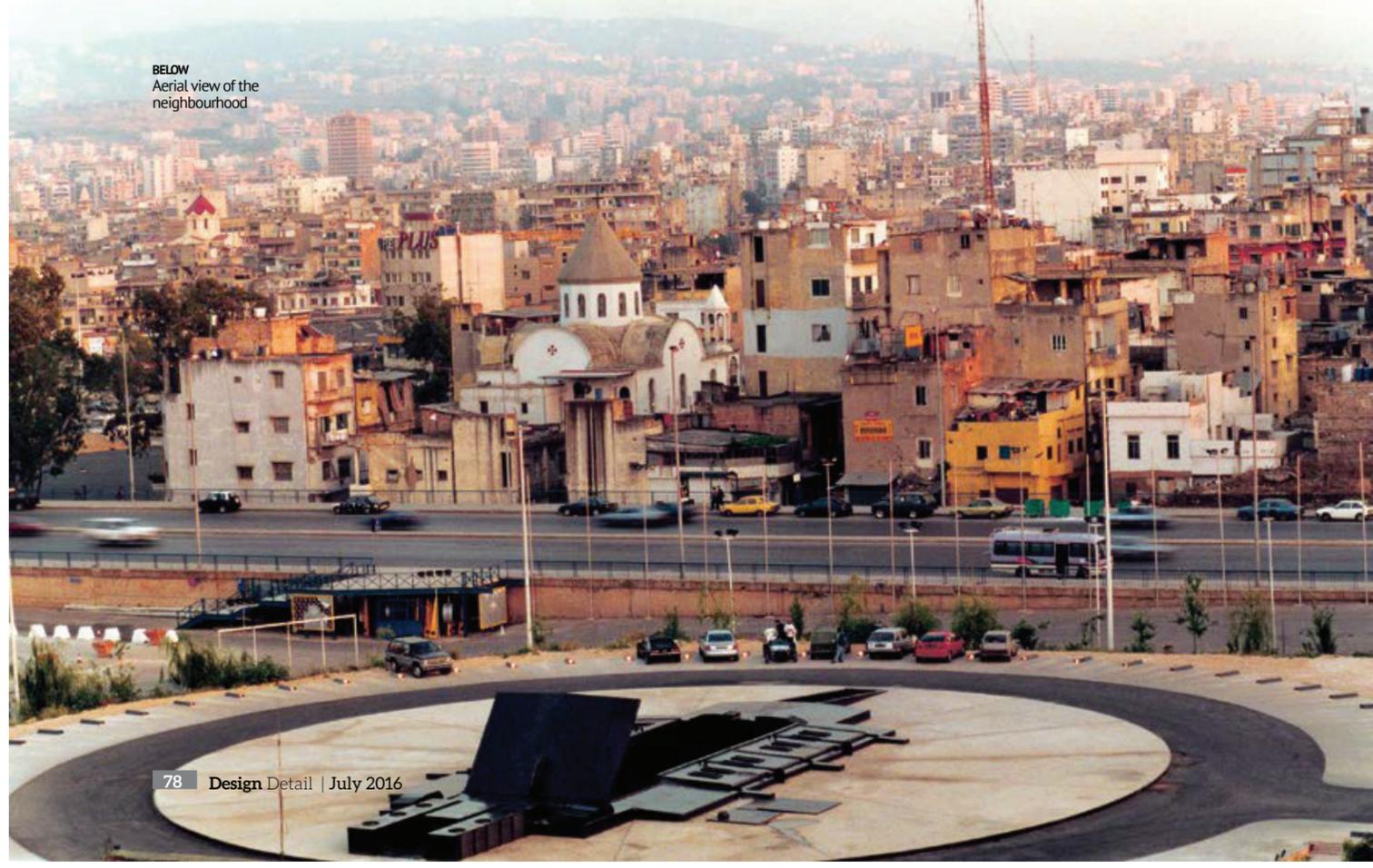
LONGITUDINAL SECTION



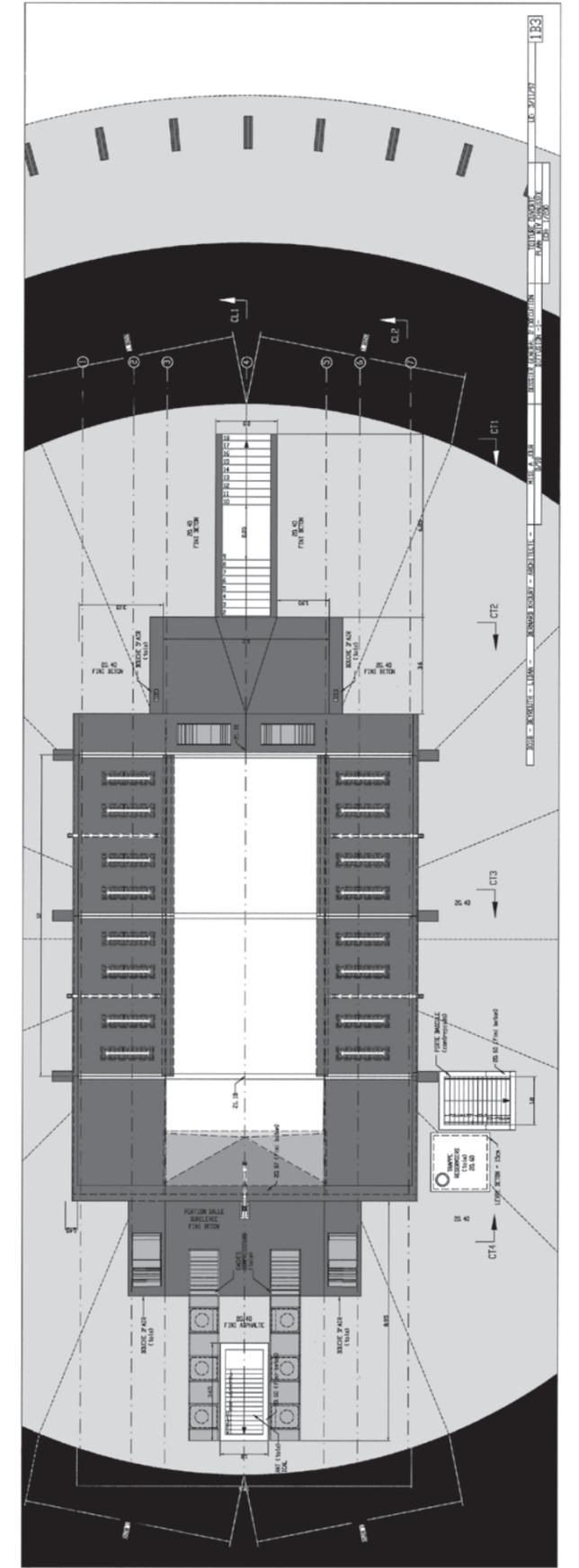
LATERAL SECTIONS

and South Lebanese refugees. The Karantina massacre of 1976 ravaged the area. This attack, launched by radical military factions was a result of deterioration of authority of the Lebanese government. The aftermath of the trauma is discernible up to present day from the glaringly scarce urban fabric on the side which was the place of the massacre, and the densely populated neighborhoods located across the highway bordering the zone on the other. The scars of war apparently have not worn away in course of time but have 'evolved'.

BELOW
Aerial view of the
neighbourhood



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GROUND FLOOR PLANS (ROOF OPEN AND CLOSED)



ABOVE
Party hall

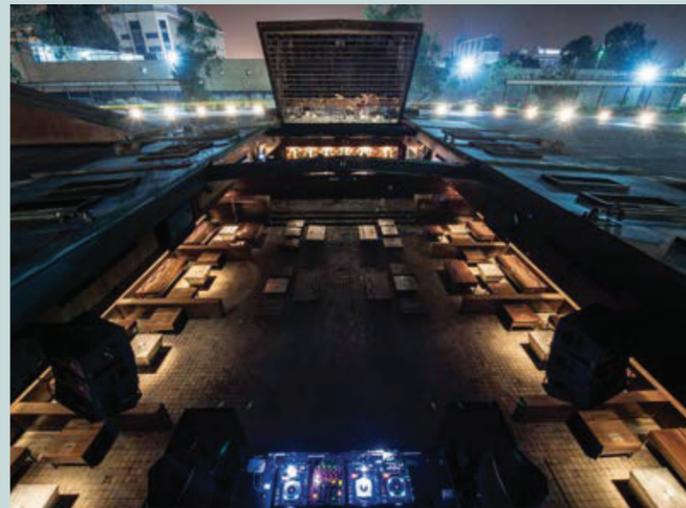
BELOW
Interior view
at night

The B018 was initially a club started by Naji Gebran in the 1980s at make-shift locations to provide relief from the horrors of war in the form of 'music therapy'. By 1998, this club had become quite popular and was brimming with activity and Bernard Khoury was hired to design a new home for it. This project reacts to the historical context of its location and the controversial air that entails the presence of an entertainment zone on such a site. In spite of its function primarily being based on non-involvement with the past, the overriding theme of its design was to evoke the scenario of war and its consequences; pressed into the ground, like a communal grave, with seating and tables reflecting the character of coffins.

Being hypogeal, its exposure has been cut off from the backdrop and context where it



Closed roof at night



View showing roof completely open

RIGHT
The roof opening
up revealing the
activity inside

BELOW
View showing
the club in full
swing



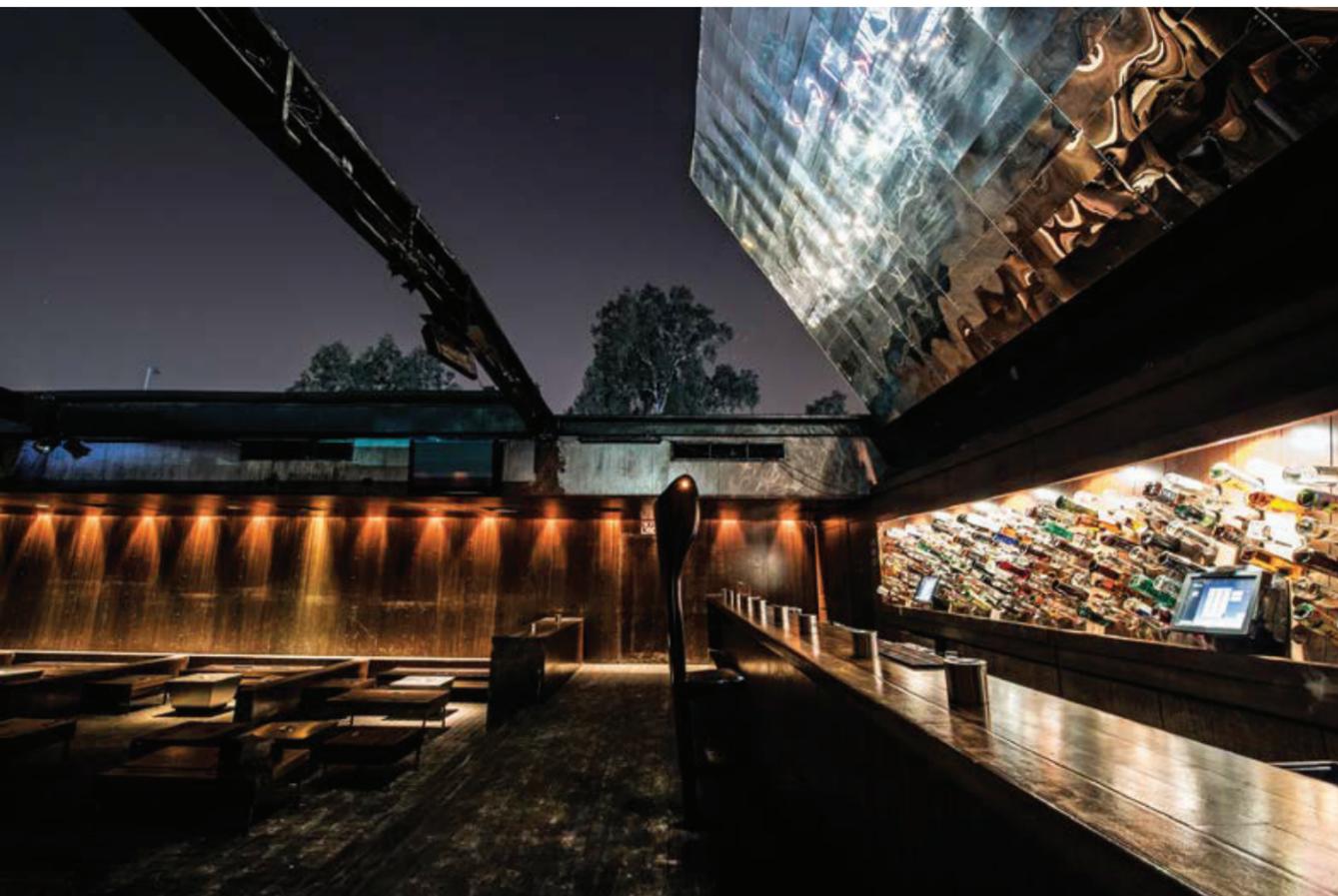
© DW5 BERNARD KHOURY - Photos by Ieva Saudargaite

would have stood incongruous and rather audacious otherwise, given the history of the site. The continuous void of this deserted neighborhood has thus been maintained. The structure is pressed into the ground, sequestered within a thin circular concrete disk. This subterranean set up remains invisible until the dead of night when the specially designed roof structure constructed in heavy metal retracts hydraulically, revealing starry skies above. Mirrored plates that open up outward on one end serve as a screen reflecting the activity inside the club. The dynamic form, which speaks for itself proves impressive enough to compensate for its obscurity being the pivotal

feature. The concentric entities; the concrete disk, the tarmac ring and the parking spots radiating from the centre, frame it in a cohesive carousel-like formation with a constant flow of visitors' cars animating the circular driveway.

FACT FILE

PROJECT NAME	: B018
LOCATION	: BEIRUT, LEBANON
ARCHITECT	: BERNARD KHOURY
PROJECT TYPE	: ENTERTAINMENT
STATUS	: BUILT 1998



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ABOVE
View of the bar counter

RIGHT
Interiors during the day



© DWS BERNARD KHOURY - Photos by Anne Francoise Pellissier

A shady ambience sets in with the descent to the party area through a staircase with black surfaces adding on to the narrow and claustrophobic feel. Transitioning through this gloomy passage becomes impactful with the strong presence that opens up underground within a rigid shell with nothing but vastness upward. Concrete paved flooring, sober wall finishes and a dusky color palette add to the resilient feel that it tries to evoke. Sofas in the form of wooden cases with collapsible backs double up as surfaces for staging performances. A striking element that stands out in this minimalist setting are the rather sinister looking bar stools lined along the bar counter. Tall and curiously shaped, this design resembles the shadow of a caped villain. Not only do these chairs create a bold statement but also they invoke a sense of mystery, obscuring the person seated.

Lighting, music and the infinite ceiling bring alive the otherwise six-feet-under ambience of the space.

At the first flush of morning the metal plates retract once again to cover the roof. With its nocturnal life coming to an end, the B018 stretches its limbs and withdraws, retreating back into the ground and letting the day take over.



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ABOVE
Rotating platform which provides vehicular access to individual units

BELOW
Plot #4371 and the neighbourhood



PLOT # 4371

The first development of its kind in Lebanon, Plot # 4371 aims at providing working/living lofts. The urban regeneration and gentrification has attracted programs such as the "Beirut Art Centre", among others adding to a creative scene which is slowly unfolding in Beirut. Numerous unused industrial structures are also being redeveloped into residential apartments. The site is located at the intersection of major road networks of the city and in close proximity with the Damascus highway. Also in the vicinity are the NBT railway station and the National Museum district. In spite of having a strong character of its own, this unfinished concrete structure blends into the industrial neighborhood which is apparently in a state of constant development.



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ABOVE
The heterogeneous landscape of a city which is under fast paced development

RIGHT
View from the abutting street

BELOW
Accentuating the facade are randomly placed light vertical slats

OPPOSITE PAGE
The rotating circular platform which provides vehicular access to each floor (construction stage)

The western edge of the site is fringed with undeveloped government property. This renders unobstructed views across the Palace of Justice complex at the south and the Sioufi hills at the north west side. The building is positioned at the centre of a relatively large site.

FACT FILE

PROJECT	: PLOT # 4371
LOCATION	: BEIRUT, LEBANON
ARCHITECT	: BERNARD KHOURY
BUILT AREA	: 4,662 Sq. m
PROJECT TYPE	: RESIDENTIAL
STATUS	: BUILT 2015



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Literally as well as figuratively, the design revolves around a basic circulation core and its layout. Standing massive and elemental is an octagonal void around which the loft units are placed at every level. Circular slabs forming each floor are centered on this void. The void doubles up as the expansive atrium as well as the circulation column for a rotating platform in order to provide vehicular access to each apartment. This is connected to a freight elevator for carrying large-scale items like artwork, musical instruments and collector cars.

The glazed cylinder-like façade allows for extremely well lit and expansive spaces with clear floor heights ranging from 4.5 to 5.5 meters. Furthermore, double height spaces bring about an imposing spatial quality. The building has 7 stories with the topmost floors tapering slightly upward. Layouts of the individual lofts are



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TOP
Apartment units include a space for housing collector cars and other huge items

ABOVE
Full height glazing supplementing magnificent lighting

governed by the geometry of the central core with walls radiating from the octagon. There are a total of 29 units of which there are 24 different layouts ranging from 110 sq m duplex to 435 sq m panoramic lofts. The ground floor and basement serves the purposes of vehicle parking and additional storage for the apartments.

The key is to become a part of the neighborhood, not only by being unique but also by blending in with the flow. This edifice seems to be imparting both these qualities, however contrasting it may sound. Alluding an air of austerity with the formal grey attire, it stands, bold and bereft of the desire to show off.



BERNARD KHOURY



Ieva Saudargaitė

Bernard Khoury is a Lebanese architect. He lived in and out of Lebanon during the Civil war. He received his Bachelor in Fine Arts in 1990 and Bachelor of Architecture in 1991 from Rhode Island School of Design and his Masters in Architectural Studies from Harvard University in 1993. Khoury began his professional career in post-war Beirut. His first built project was the B018 which was completed in 1998. He has built a reputation for being able to produce critical interventions in problematic zones. Some of his recent works include the Seashore (Lebanon), Bank of Beirut (Biyada, Lebanon) and N.B.K residence (Beirut, Lebanon).

Khoury has taught at the American University of Beirut, École Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne and l'Ecole Speciale d'Architecture in Paris. He is co-founder of the Arab Center for Architecture.