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is more than a reality check.”*

– Bernard Khoury, principal architect



N.B.K. RESIDENCE

Beirut, Lebanon

The N.B.K. Residence, also referred to as Plot #2251, is located on the former demarcation line that separated east and west Beirut during the 1975-1990 conflict, and the area is special because it houses a large range of Beirut's institutional and religious buildings. The low rise nature of the institutional properties provides very generous setbacks on all orientations around Plot #2251, and we have talked about this with the architect behind the project, Bernard Khoury.

"Upon visiting the site for the first time, prior to designing this project, I struck a deal with the developer giving me the air rights on the last 8 meters of the 50 meter height development. As I had to respond to strict setback regulations, the building's envelop retracted giving way to a 12 meter span at the 9th floor. This paved the way for a scheme that would be independent from the structure below", Bernard says. In other words, the N.B.K. Residence should be considered as an independent triplex structure placed on top of the building. "The plan of the dwelling is organized around one main oversized window that is 12 meters in width and 6 meters in height. This window is oriented towards the south with a very generous view corridor that celebrates the extremely chaotic and violent urban fabric visible in the background. This is not a typically Mediterranean posture which would have consisted of turning your back to the city to contemplate the sea. Instead, it is a very contextual, very sour and very carnal relationship to the city", Bernard explains and continues: "Waking up in the morning and being exposed to this view is more than a reality check. I see it as a deep and voluntary immersion in my beloved city. All vital functions of the apartment are directly connected to this main space that is shaped around this oversized frame."

On the rooftop, there is a panoramic terrace providing a 360 degree view over the southern suburbs of Beirut, the Chouf mountains and other areas of Mount Lebanon. "The terrace is lit by two oversized arms at the tip of which high power halogen projectors are installed. From far away, the lighting installation looks like canons", Bernard says. Lastly, Bernard highlights the importance of local talent: "I have had the chance to be assisted by very talented artisans without whom the execution of this project would never have been possible. I look at the N.B.K Residence as a vitrine of what is still possible to execute if one makes the right alliances with the local talents. This is an act of resistance to the construction industry and the standards it imposes on architecture on a global level", Bernard concludes.

Architecture by **Bernard Khoury / DW5**

Photography by **Ieva Saudargaite** and **Bernard Khoury**