

## The Egg, Beirut

### Full Design Narrative

The overall task of this studio was to preserve "The Egg" building in Beirut, Lebanon.

"The Egg" in Beirut is an unfinished brutalist cinema structure at the center of downtown Beirut near Martyr's Square. Work began in the 1960s as part of the Beirut City Center project, but construction was interrupted by the Lebanese Civil War. Since then it has remained a concrete shell, scarred by bullet holes, damaged and largely unused.

My first assignment was to study an animal or organism with defense mechanisms. I observed the Texas Horned Lizard who's defense mechanisms include a hard, horned and spiky armor, camouflage, body inflation and deflation, and blood-squirting eyes from pressure build up in their ocular sinuses. After researching the animal's protective attributes, I was then tasked to generate a representative 3D model portraying these specific characteristics which would then be included into the final design of the site.

My second assignment consisted of researching historical, political, and economical climates of Lebanon and creating site analyses based on the information I had learned. The first diagram depicts Beirut's government negligence, consisting of the "Beirut Blast" in 2020; the 2019 "anti-government" revolution being the result of economic collapse, political corruption, sectarian power-sharing, and failure of basic public services; Beirut's traffic congestion; and Beirut's trash crisis. The second diagram portrays the Greenline dividing east and west Beirut and outlines their differences. The third diagram displays several commercial buildings in Beirut designed by the same architect who designed "The Egg." The fourth diagram describes the surrounding site of "The Egg" and its neighbors. The final and largest site diagram illustrates peace-fighting organizations in Beirut.

I was then required to find a way to preserve "The Egg" building and create a community space like it had once been.

The city of Beirut and more specifically, "The Egg" building, bears the marks of its perilous and layered history of political unrest. The idea of this project and overall design is to preserve the history and characteristics of "The Egg" building, keeping the original cinema concept while also adding strategies of bringing the community together, including a cafe, office spaces and a conference room, community engagement spaces, etc.

"The Egg" building is directly located on what was once the Greenline of Beirut during the civil war. The Greenline holds symbolic significance for many people of Beirut, representing the city's traumatic past and its ongoing journey toward reconciliation and healing. Efforts to preserve its memory and promote dialogue about the civil war's legacy play a crucial role in fostering understanding and unity among Lebanon's diverse communities. A roof type structure wrapped with greenery made from lightweight Glass-Fiber Reinforced Panels to harmonize with "The Egg's" existing concrete shell is incorporated into "The Egg" structure symbolizing Beirut's Greenline and its fight for peace and unity among Lebanon.

Incorporating a green roof type structure onto Beirut's Egg enhances its sustainability and environmental performance including improved insulation and heat regulation during hot summer months and providing habitats for wildlife. It also adds a distinctive aesthetic element that celebrates the harmony between built form and nature. Underneath this green roof structure is an exterior community gathering space for visitors of "The Egg" to socialize, relax, eat, etc.

A community conference room incorporated into the office building next to the exterior community engagement space plays a vital role in nurturing a vibrant and inclusive community culture by providing a space for conversation, diversity, empowerment, learning, creativity,

social connection, and cultural preservation. Peace organizations of Beirut may come together in this conference room to discuss ways of protecting civilians, defusing crises, and reducing violence, while also empowering the people's voices, creating positive change and collective action, enriching the lives of residents and strengthening the fabric of the community.

Lastly, this design not only provides for a theater, cafe, outdoor engagement space, a conference/office rooms, the added scaffolding structure to "The Egg" and green roof, made from durable, corrosion and rust resistant galvanized steel, also provides a space for Friday Markets in Beirut to be held on the ground floor allowing for a dynamic environment for vendors and visitors alike to engage in commerce, discovery, and community interaction.