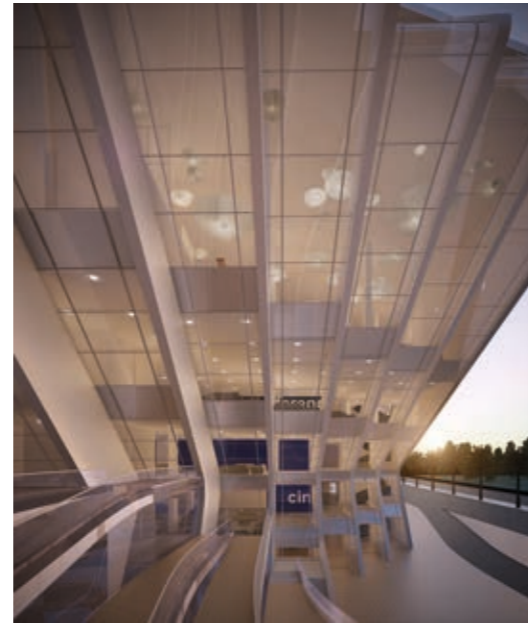


Basra Cultural Palace

Location: Basra, Iraq
Year: 2014
Status: Competition
Program: Cultural center

The new headquarters of the Basra Governorate occupy an extension of 20,868m². Aside office and administration areas, the design also contemplates a multifunctional program, as the Governorate wants to host different cultural events and festivals taking place in the Iraqi city. Therefore, other spaces like exhibitions areas, conference and cinema halls, a theatre, broadcasting department and large areas with greenery have been included in the proposed design. The brief for the competition also asked for a concept which reflected the heritage and culture of the city, so this is the main design narrative followed in the interior.



Ramps



Exterior & interior view



Library



Exterior main facade

Given the extension of the building, one key issue was to fill the massive spaces with natural light. This is achieved through the diagonal-shaped openings in the facade, which resemble dots in Arabic Calligraphy, and allow plenty of light to enter the space. This is mimicked by the light-toned wood handrails which are designed with a similar zig-zag to those of the openings. This calligraphic reference is an allusion to the position the city enjoyed as a great centre of learning and theology at the beginning of its history.

As the program includes the organization of several events, the interior design bears in mind the inclusion of the latest in sound and lighting technology for the festivals and exhibitions taking place in the building. It also conforms to contemporary architectural codes of design, efficiency, sustainability, safety and security.