

In 2023 BeMA will open Beirut Museum of Art in Lebanon. The project and the story of the protagonists

by **Ilaria Bulgarelli** - 29 December 2018

It will have a porous exterior surface with 70 balconies and vertical paths the new modern and contemporary Lebanese art museum of Beirut. To tell us about the mission and the concept of the BeMA are the designers and founding members of the museum



Day Rendering, BeMA: Beirut Museum of Art, designed by WORKac

With an area of 12,000 square meters, the BeMa will open in 2023 : **Beirut Museum of Art** . The new museum will be located in the heart of Beirut, on what was the demarcation line during the civil war, and will house works of modern and contemporary Lebanese art. " *The incredible vibration, resilience and creativity of Beirut have always inspired me personally as an architect* ", he told *Artribune* the Lebanese architect **Amale Andraos** , along with co-founder **Dan Wood** of the study **WORKac** , who will make the museum. " *Life always seems to grow again, despite everything. I wanted our project to contribute to this energy by bringing life and art together, as part of the city* ". The BeMa will in fact be an "open museum" to the city.

THE MISSION OF THE MUSEUM

The direction of the museum is led by the **Association for the Promotion and Exhibition of the Arts in Lebanon (APEAL)**. " *The Beirut Museum of Art is designed to showcase and celebrate Lebanese modern and contemporary art, as well as the work created by artists in the Lebanese diaspora and throughout the Middle East,* " explains **Henrietta Nammour** and **Sandra Abou Nader**, both founding members of BeMA and respectively president and vice president of APEAL. " *However, the museum is not simply a static institution with a collection: it has a social, civic mission. Even before opening our doors, BeMA commits to collaborate with local artistic institutions to support contemporary art and involve the community throughout Lebanon through artist residencies, exhibitions, an educational program for schools, restoration of works and to start long-term partnerships with neighboring partners and museums. Thanks to public spaces, and those dedicated to performances and events, the building designed by WORKac will help us to realize our mission and reach a new public* " .



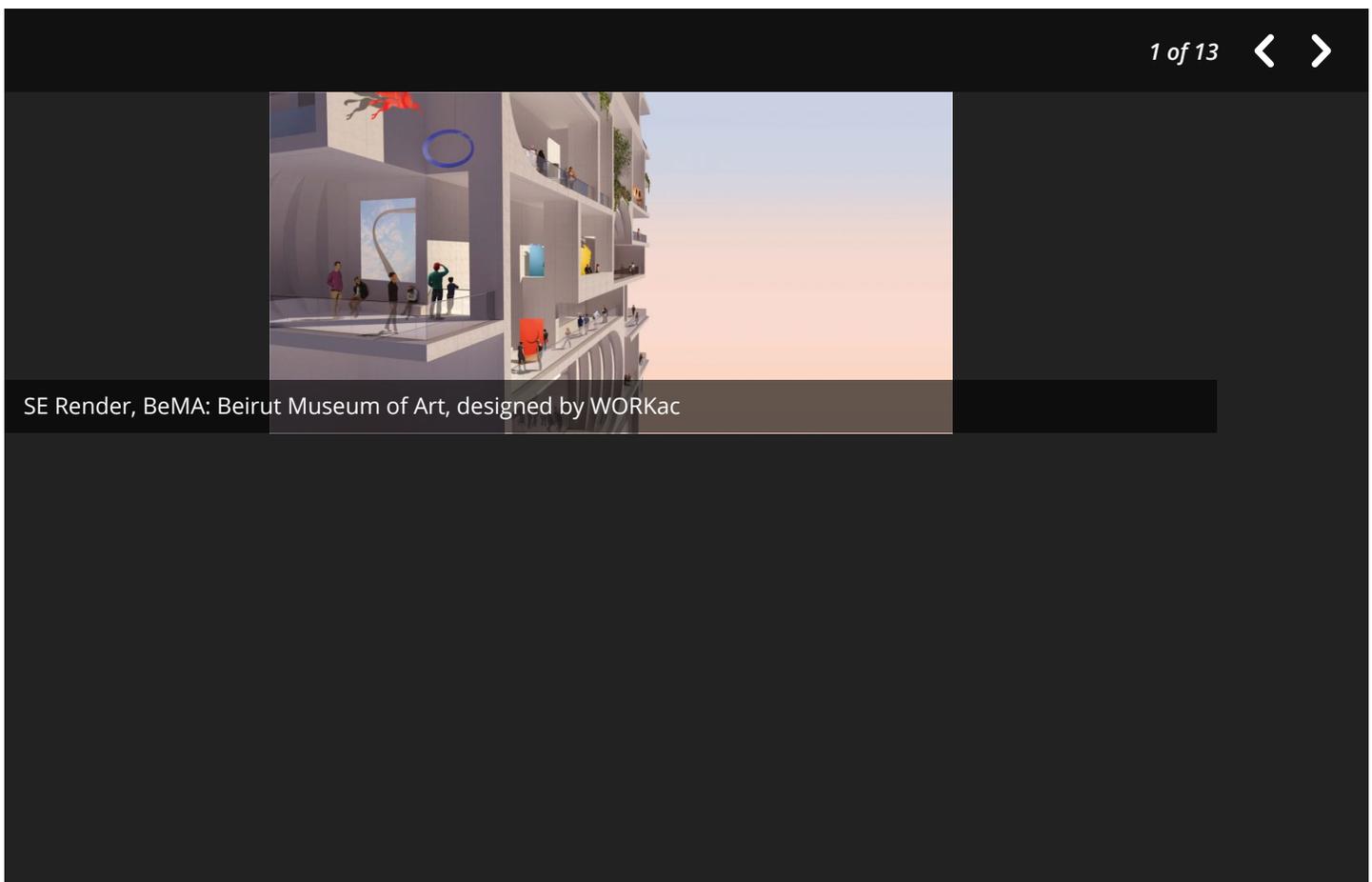
NE Render, BeMA: Beirut Museum of Art, designed by WORKac

THE ARCHITECTURAL PROJECT

" *In designing an 'open museum' we were inspired by the BeMA mission, which is to promote dialogue and accessibility* " , explain **Amale Andraos** and **Dan Wood** , " *whose thickened shell creates the opportunity to meet art in ways new, and to make the vertical surfaces of the building a series of external environments that are an integral part of the public space of the campus and the city* " . The project includes public spaces to host educational programs and events, but also terraces, a library, a theater, a cafeteria, a bookshop, and on the roof a restaurant with a

panoramic view of the city. The fulcrum of the project is the external envelope of the building, its facades, which with its 70 balconies, vertical paths and windows, allows the permeability of an "open museum". The terraces become hybrid places of internal-external space where it is possible to organize performances, events and meetings, through which art becomes part of the city. An element to be emphasized is also the design of the façades: a whole series of recesses and protrusions, curves and straight lines, which appear to be the three-dimensional transposition of the *House of Stairs* of Escher. The museum also provides 2,700 square meters of exhibition space, which accounts for 30% of the total interior area of the building. The BeMa will open its doors in 2023, meanwhile we show you the renderings of the project and its distribution schemes.

- *Ilaria Bulgarelli*



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