

EXPERIMENTAL PUPPETRY ARTS CENTRE STARA ZAGORA INTERNATIONAL ARCHITECTURAL COMPETITION

- lively artistic hub where the spatial values and technical capabilities liberate and enhance creativity and imagination
- experimental arts = experimental building; challenging the rules, both from the urban point of view as well as from the point of view of the 'standard' performance space definition
- intervention that is comprehensive in scope and disruptive in meaning; integration of old and new + creation of a system of interconnected/ flexible spaces
- playful geometric appearance of the new hall, to make the building stand out
- 'cross-contamination' of materials between old and new

On an extremely tight site, where allowing for breathing space around the compound might seem the obvious choice, our approach was to extend the footprint to the boundaries and create a central open space that becomes the heart of the upgraded puppetry arts centre.

Internal courtyard values:

- heart of the institution/ access to all the main spaces
- intimacy
- flexibility: the new hall + foyer open towards this space via movable panels
- acoustic control in case of open air events

Adopting the existing theatre setback emphasizes the effort to integrate the two buildings, as well as the key interventions in the existing theatre:

- light refurbishment of the existing building exteriors
- reconfigured existing access
- reconstruction of the existing wing (joined wings for both performance spaces)
- rethinking the courtyard and basement escape routes
- foyer connection

The main body of the extension is conceived as a plinth aligned to the existing theatre massing, above which stands a setback volume hosting the hall and offstage spaces. A clear separation of uses is proposed: public areas towards the main street + service entrance & loading/ unloading from the secondary street.

The new structure is based on a mixture of reinforced concrete walls and columns with steel trusses/ beams. On appearance and materiality the aim is to integrate old and new by unifying the materials palette and by 'cross-contamination' of key elements.

Building density (elevation +0.00) - 750 m²

Total built-up area - 1.335 m²

Total landscaping area within the boundaries of the plot and building - 716 m²

Estimated cost - 5.252.000 BGN