

## 1. Description of the project

The Design team aims to create a Work of Art as a final result. This Work of Art will not only touch People's hearts but also leave a Legacy for not only the local people but also the world through generations.

We believe that: Work of Art = Original idea + Breakthrough

Original idea: is formed by every aspects related to the projects: Design brief, local culture, history, colors, patterns, food, music, art,... which have been analysed and researched carefully in order to integrate with the Design.

Breakthrough: We started by researching the site - urban context, local architecture, construction methods and materials, colors, and especially about Puppetry Arts. We realized that the Experimental Puppetry Arts Center would become a prominent project not only representing the puppetry art of Stara Zagora but also of Bulgaria, and even wider, Europe. Moreover, its excellent location on a major city axis – Gurko Street, at a convenient intersection, and visually appealing. Given its significance, the new Center needs to not only accommodate puppetry art activities but also have groundbreaking architectural design to make a lasting impression and reflect the distinctive spirit of puppetry art.

## 2. Concept:

### a. Breakthrough in Form: Jumping Theatre – get inspiration from puppetry movement.

Jumping Theatre is an innovative architectural concept that draws inspiration from the graceful and captivating movements of puppetry. Combining the elements of theater and architectural design, this avant-garde structure promises to create a unique and immersive experience for both performers and audience members alike.

The form of the Jumping Theatre is a sight to behold. Designed with fluidity and elegance in mind, the building's form mimics the graceful leaps and jumps of a puppet in motion. Its sleek, curved lines and dynamic shapes give the impression of a structure that is constantly in flux, capturing the essence of the art form it draws inspiration from.

The visitors are greeted by a spacious and open foyer area that serves as a hub of creativity and excitement. The design of the puppetry centre takes cues from puppetry techniques, incorporating elements such as strings, pulleys, and mechanisms into the space. These elements are not only visually stunning but also serve functional purposes, allowing for dynamic set changes and transformative stage configurations.

### b. Flow of experience: Puppetry arts repertoire.

The experiential journey of the architectural project inspired by Puppetry arts repertoire is a captivating fusion of puppetry performances. The audience is not only immersed in the art of puppetry in the main performance space but throughout the entire art center. From the

Entrance, Yard - an open-air summer stage, Experimental performances, the Main performance hall, façade performances, to Park performances, the journey aims to engulf the audience in the enchanting world of puppetry through experiential puppetry activities, catering to both non-professional and professional participants. This approach allows the art of puppetry to reach a broader audience, engaging and captivating a diverse range of individuals.

### c. Landscape: Puppetry Park

The design team proposes the landscape design of the new Puppetry Arts Center, envisioning it as a charming puppetry art park. Within this park, green spaces will serve dual purposes as performance areas for both practicing artists and non-professional performers. It will provide an opportunity for puppetry enthusiasts to engage in hands-on puppet manipulation and performances. The park will also feature scattered gallery spaces, seamlessly integrated with the natural surroundings, providing visitors with educational and inspiring exhibitions. Tranquil pathways will guide visitors through the park, allowing them to appreciate the beauty of nature and catch glimpses of the captivating world of puppetry. This puppetry art park will offer a delightful fusion of art and nature, creating an immersive experience for visitors.

### 3. Plot & program:

Accessibility: The project has two access directions, the main access from Gurko Street (1) and the secondary access from Tzar Ivan Assen Street (2).

- (1) It includes public access for the audience and visitors to the center, and limited access for actors and staff.
- (2) It provides public access for participants attending puppetry classes and workshops, and limited access for trucks.

According to design brief, The Centre shall be divided into 5 functional areas:

A. Entrance Zone B. Main Hall C. Offstage D. Yard E. Warehouse

The arrangement of these functional spaces needs to meet the requirements of FUNCTIONALITY and USABILITY:

#### A. Entrance Zone:

The Entrance area is strategically located adjacent to the main street of Stara Zagora, facilitating easy access for visitors. This area will serve as the primary point of entry and distribution center, connecting the different areas within the building. Additionally, it will function as the foyer to the Main Hall (B), creating a welcoming space for guests and setting the stage for the main performances.

The Entrance area is designed across two levels:

On Level 01, we have the primary spaces including Entrance (A1), Welcome Desk and Box-Office (A2), and Cloakroom (A4), which are the first spaces encountered upon entering the center.

A portion of the Cafeteria (A6) opens into the yard (D), utilizing the outdoor space for audience seating while the indoor area transforms into a stage. The Cafeteria & Bar is integrated into the pathway leading to the auditoriums and can also function independently.

On Level 02, the Entrance zone is utilized flexibly. It serves as a waiting area for the audience before experiencing performances in the Main Hall. This zone also functions as a performance space when the main hall is not in use, hosting chamber performances, training courses, workshops, presentations, events, debates, exhibitions, and, in certain cases, it can be opened up to the main hall by means of a movable partition system, thereby enhancing the capacity of the Main Hall.

#### B. Main Hall:

The entrance to the Main Hall of the Puppetry center is through the Entrance Zone and the stepping Yard, creating a sense of grandeur reminiscent of the pathway to a theater auditorium, enhancing its solemnity.

The Main Hall (B1) has the potential to expand into the foyer area by utilizing retractable sound-proof panels. It has dimensions of 22 x 12 meters and is designed in accordance with the requirements specified in the Design Brief.

The Main Hall has a dedicated access point for performers and is directly connected to the Wings (B2), allowing for seamless transitions during performances. Additionally, there is a storage area directly connected to the Main Hall (B3), facilitating convenient storage of props and equipment. This storage facility also has a separate entrance from either of the streets, enabling the delivery of large sets. Moreover, this storage facility is connected to the large warehouse (E), providing ample space for storage and maintenance of production materials.

#### C. Offstage

The offstage spaces include Dressing rooms (C1) and Offstage restrooms for the actors (C2), which are connected to the Wings (B2) and have separate access from the front entrance of the building.

The Rehearsal space (C3) is located on Level 01 and connects to the Main Hall (B1) through vertical traffic axes. It also has an additional access point from the outside, specifically designed for acting schools catering to children. This space is also connected to the storage areas (B3) and (E).

The Administration area is situated on Level 03, above the Entrance Zone. This space is connected to the technical and offstage areas of the Main Hall, facilitating seamless coordination and communication.

The Residential block (C5) is discreetly arranged on the highest level of the new center, ensuring privacy for the living quarters of the actors. The design team proposes the inclusion of balconies with good views for the residing artists, as they believe that comfortable accommodation meeting hotel standards will inspire the artists in their artistic

pursuits. The Residential block is connected to the Rehearsal space and the dressing rooms through vertical traffic axes, with access through the stage entrance.

#### D. Yard

The yard is a crucial component of the overall functionality of the new puppetry center. It is integrated and connected to the exterior of the Entrance Zone (A), serving as an extension of the entrance area and enhancing its functionality for envisioned activities. The Yard is strategically positioned at the intersection of Gurko Street and Tzar Ivan Assen Street, and its impressive open space, enclosed with glass, captivates views from the intersection.

Moreover, the outdoor area serves as an extension of the Main Hall, functioning as a stage and an integral part of the Cafeteria & Bar. In certain instances, the Stepping Yard acts as a courtyard, serving as a welcoming space and providing seating for the Cafeteria, or it can transform into an Outdoor Amphitheater for open-air performances. Any activities taking place in the Entrance Zone naturally flow into the yard's extension, creating a seamless continuation of events.

#### E. Warehouse

The large warehouse (E) is located in the basement, directly connected to Warehouse (B3) and the Main Performance Hall (B1) through a vertical transportation axis. Sets, materials, and costumes for long-term storage can be easily transported from the loading bay to the warehouse via the vertical transportation axis.

The functional spaces have sufficient area to carry out the following activities: Shows for children, Shows for adults, Touring Bulgarian and international shows, International creative labs for experimental theatre, Workshops for children – outdoors and indoors, Courses – theatre, dance, music, visual art, Film screenings, Rehearsal space, Dance halls, contemporary art, Cafeteria & Bar catering, Exhibition area – gallery, Spaces to let out for external events, forums, symposia, festivals etc, Education and training events, outdoor performance spaces. These spaces have been designed and allocated adequate area to accommodate each specific activity.

#### 4. Sustainability and Efficiency:

The new puppet arts center with its appealing features can become an attractive destination and draw many people to the region. This, in turn, will contribute to boosting the local economy and increasing the value of neighboring establishments.

Furthermore, the public landscaping spaces also attract nearby residents, particularly children who can easily access and experience puppet arts and interact with one another. This helps foster a more sustainable and vibrant community.

#### 5. Materials, colors and patterns:

The new puppet arts center utilizes primary materials such as concrete, glass, metal frames, and timber facade.

The distinctive pattern of the puppet window on the façade of the old puppet theater is echoed in the design of the new puppet arts center's cladding. Shadows of these patterns are cast on the walls of the Main Hall, creating a corridor of shadow puppet patterns along the visitor's experiential flow. The use of these patterns serves as a connection to the unique and fascinating elements that have become familiar to those associated with the theater, the audience, and the local residents in the area.

#### 6. Exterior and Environmentally Adequate:

The proposed exterior design of the building aligns with the grid-based urban planning of Stara Zagora city, ensuring compatibility and harmony with the surrounding landscape. The architectural form of the structure takes inspiration from the art of puppetry, incorporating visually captivating rhythms.

By adhering to the city's grid layout, the design seamlessly integrates with the existing urban fabric, maintaining the visual coherence of the surrounding environment. The artistic elements and dynamic visual rhythms derived from puppetry are incorporated into the building's shape, creating an engaging and visually appealing façade.

Overall, the proposed exterior design successfully interacts with the existing building and the surrounding urban environment, respecting the local context while introducing artistic elements inspired by puppetry.

The maximum height is in accordance with admissible height (cornice elevation 18 m, peak elevation 22.5 m).

- Building density (elevation+0.00): 36.15 %
- Total built-up area : 3,669 m<sup>2</sup>
- Total landscaping area within the boundaries of the plot and building : 909 m<sup>2</sup>
- Estimated cost of implementation of the project: 4,402,800 – 5,503,500 EUR