

VISION

SITUATION AND ARCHITECTURAL CONCEPT:

A CULTURAL CENTRE IS OPEN TO THE OUTSIDE, BUT THE FUNCTIONS REQUIRE DEEPENING AND TURNING INWARDS. THIS DUALITY WAS THE BASIS FOR THE DESIGN OF THE BUILDING AND IS REINFORCED BY ITS UNIQUE LOCATION: AN UNDEVELOPED ISLAND IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NILE, SURROUNDED BY URBAN FABRIC.

THE BUILDING IS BUILT FROM THE ENVIRONMENT, GROWING OUT OF IT, AND OPENING TOWARDS THE CITY. THE OPENING IS BOTH HORIZONTAL AND VERTICAL. THE HORIZONTAL INNER COURTYARD IS THE TIP OF THE ISLAND, THE LONGITUDINAL AXIS OF THE NILE AND OPENS TOWARDS THE CITY. THE TOWER, LIKE AN OBELISK, MARKS OUT THE SPACE THAT THE BUILDING OCCUPIES. FOR GUESTS ARRIVING BY BOAT, IT ACTS AS A LIGHTHOUSE. THE BUILDING BLENDS IN WITH ITS SURROUNDINGS BUT DOES NOT WANT TO DISAPPEAR.

THE 4 MAIN FUNCTIONS ARE COMBINED INTO A U-SHAPED MASS. THE FUNCTIONS ARE ORGANISED IN SEPARATE UNITS BUT CONNECTED BY A SPACIOUS INDOOR/OUTDOOR SPACE. THIS SPACE NOT ONLY CONNECTS BUT ALSO PROVIDES A PROTECTED, SHADED, VENTILATED SPACE AROUND THE FUNCTIONAL UNITS. IN TERMS OF HEIGHT, THE THEATRE HAS THE BIGGEST HEIGHT WITH THE RIGGING-LOFT AND THE LIBRARY THE LOWEST. THESE UNITS ARE CONNECTED BY A STEADILY RISING ROOF PLANE. WE HAVE CREATED A MASS THAT RISES FROM THE SANDS OF THE ISLAND, FROM THE WATERS OF THE NILE IF YOU LIKE: FIRM, ELEGANT, YET NOT AUSTERE. IT USES ELEMENTS AND FORMS OF CONTEMPORARY ARCHITECTURE YET EVOKES BOTH ANCIENT AND ARABIC ARCHITECTURE.

