

# Hala Wardé to Design New Beirut Museum of Art in Lebanon

BY LISA CONTAG | OCTOBER 20, 2016



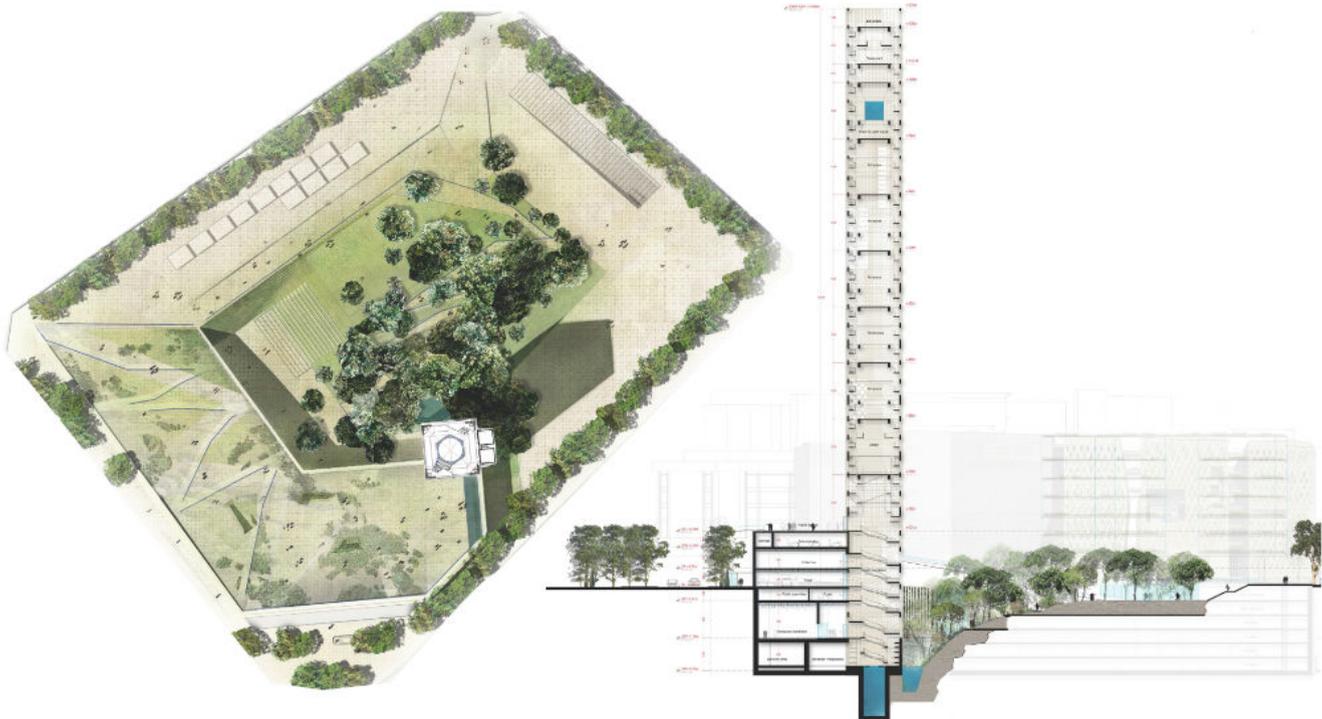
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Rendering of HW Architecture's winning design for the new BeMA: Beirut Museum of Art  
(Courtesy of BeMA: Beirut Museum of Art)

Lebanese-French architect Hala Wardé and her firm HW architecture have been selected to build the new BeMA: Beirut Museum of Art, one of the most ambitious museum projects in Lebanon in decades. Scheduled to open in 2020, BeMA is intended to serve as “a multidisciplinary hub of art and design dedicated to showcasing modern and contemporary Lebanese culture” in the heart of Beirut. The museum will be located on a highly symbolical site that marked the dividing lines in the Lebanese Civil War, thus transforming it into a “site of unification.”

Wardé, herself a Beirut native and long-time collaborator of French architect Jean Nouvel as well as head of the Louvre Abu Dhabi project, won in a competition of 13 shortlisted projects with a design organized around a central campanile tower of almost 400 feet in height, embodying the institution’s

function as a “cultural beacon,” while also housing workshops and spaces for performances and artists residences. Grouped alongside the structure will be a public garden and landscaped promenade for site-specific installations, plus an amphitheater for performing arts.

In its citation, the jury, headed by Pritzker Prize Chairman Peter Palumbo, explained that Wardé’s contribution design was chosen for “the way it creates a succession of varied landscapes and spaces where art and society can come together. The connections between garden, amphitheater, exhibition spaces and roof garden have been well considered and offer a continuous visitor experience that lends itself to both exhibiting art and engaging with the community.” Other jury members included architects George Arbid, Farès el-Dahdah, Rodolphe El-Khoury, Rem Koolhaas, and Richard Rogers; artist Lamia Joreige; Serpentine Gallery directors Hans Ulrich Obrist and Julia Peyton-Jones; and Henrietta Nammour, president of APEAL (Association for the Promotion and Exhibition of the Arts in Lebanon), the non-profit organization behind the project. The late Iraqi-British architect Zaha Hadid, who had been active on the jury until her untimely passing in 2015, is listed as an honorary member of the jury.

*See more renderings of HW Architecture’s winning design for the new BeMA: Beirut Museum of Art in the slideshow.*



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