

public

National Theatre, Budapest





The National Theatre of Budapest, built in 1875, was demolished in the early 1960's to make way for the construction of a new underground system. Then in 1997, the city of Budapest organised an international design competition for a new theatre on a site in the heart of the city. The brief included a main stage and auditorium with 650 seats, a studio theatre with 200 seats, support and administration facilities and underground parking for 120 vehicles. One of the project's objectives was to revitalize the park on the west side of the new theatre, by attracting more visitors. Prominent element of the design is an organic element, clad in natural stone, which appears to be floating in a glass cube. The glazed facade is covered with external ceramic louvers the reflections of which in daylight create layered patterns on the floating feature inside. At night the effect on the transparent facade is more dramatic, as the internal lighting alters the appearance of the building completely with the louvers casting shadows on the adjacent buildings. The new National Theatre will play an important role in the rejuvenated Hungarian cultural life after the, at the time recent, establishment of a democratic republic. The landmark design by Erick van Egeraat underlines this role by making reference to the rich Hungarian cultural heritage without using the icons of the previous forty years of Communism. To this end, the side of the design that faces the adjacent park is printed with images of famous Hungarian actors, directors and playwrights.

client

Ministry of Culture and Education, Budapest

project

country: Hungary
 city: Budapest
 category: public
 status: competition, 2nd prize
 gross floor area: ca. 27000 m²
 design: 1997

designed by

erick van egeraat