



ERESTA HOUSE

Akoura, Lebanon

In the breathtaking landscape of Akoura and Nahr Ibrahim, the Eresta House emerges from paradoxical limitations. Despite the dreamy scenery, Eresta House's immediate surroundings consist of ad-hoc buildings which highly limit the house's exposure to attractive viewpoints. The Lebanese architecture firm, platau, thus had to develop a design which mitigates these limitations.

"Built on the remnants of an ancestral home that was attached by a party wall to a neighboring building, the client asked us to rethink the shared party wall condition in line with a new autonomous architecture, the need for privacy and at the same time exposure to the views", Co-Founder and Lead Architect at platau, Sandra Frem, says. Arranged as a V-shaped structure, Eresta House is positioned towards Nahr Ibrahim with the front open towards the valley and the other side embedded in the landscape. While the owners are home, the house is completely transparent to the outdoors, but during absence, wood louvers can be retracted to conceal the building for maximum security. The arrangement also redirects the focus away from the adjacent context towards the scenic sight-lines with living spaces floating into the front garden. "The aim was to create spaces for living that are attuned to the natural elements around the site and to create moods and atmospheres generated by various shades and sun exposures, and which can inspire different modes of occupation by the users", Sandra continues.





Behind the fully glazed front façade, a minimalist home unfolds. “The entrance and main staircase are situated at the hinge of the V-shaped volume, topped by a skylight that act as a wind chimney and triggers cross ventilation through the house”, Sandra explains. The materiality – guided by concrete – refers to the rocky environment with wooden floors and warmer interior elements to break the cold nuances. From the living areas on the lower level, the staircase leads to “an upper level of bedrooms that are open to the front and can extend to a rear courtyard, with an outlook to the cliffs above the site.” Yet, the most enticing views are experienced from the roof of the house, where the design culminates with a panoramic deck overlooking the valley with a 360° view.

Whether it is the concrete shell of double-layer walls, the site enclosure built from the extracted stones during excavation works, or the unconventional V-shape with protective wooden louvers, Eresta House defines different relationships with the site at each level. It is a contemporary home rooted in the context yet proposing a new and improved design narrative.

Architecture by **platau**

Photography by **Wissam Chaaya**

