

PRO MON TORIO

MANATEQ HQ

DOHA, STATE OF QATAR

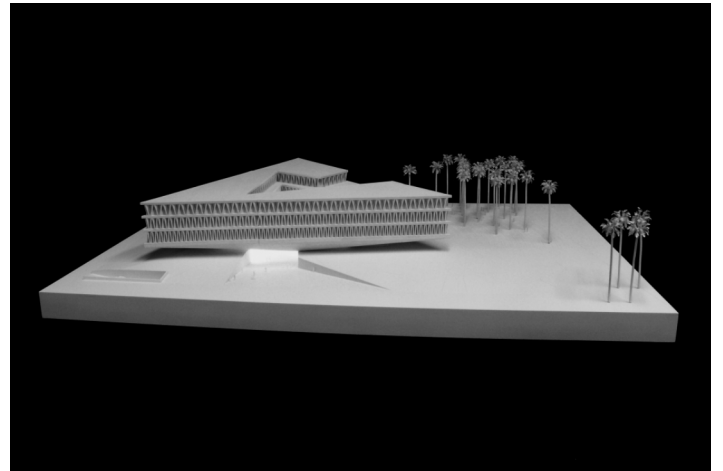
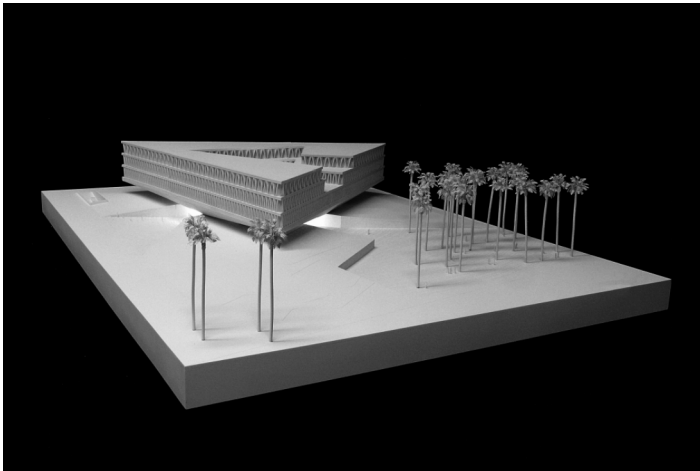
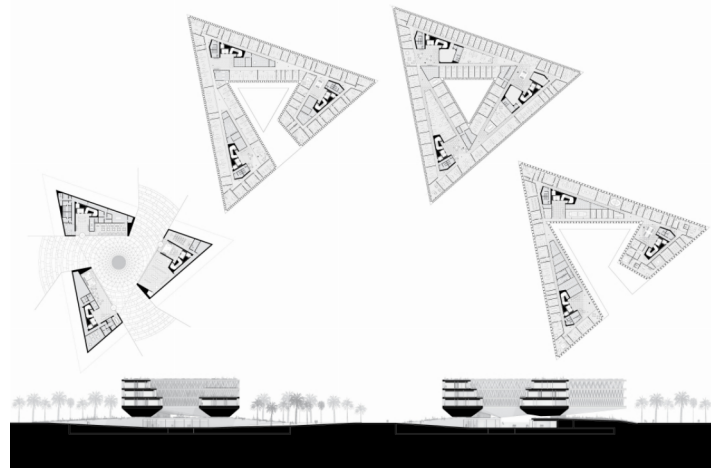
2014

Manateq is the management company of the state-owned QEZ-1 (Qatar Economic Zone 1). Located on the waterfront of Doha's periphery, adjacent to Hamad International Airport, the site covers an area of 400 ha named Ras Bufontas and organised as a tax-free office-and-logistics park, targeting tech companies, lightweight industry, assembly operations, aviation support industries, air cargo depots and other high-value services. The HQ building —with its management offices, planning and licensing, archive, showroom and sales centre— aims to be a showcase and set the standards for design and sustainability at QEZ-1.

The height limitation imposed by proximity to the airport inevitably leads to a horizontal building. The design premise starts from a rather abstract polyhedral shape and gradually evolves into the evocative metaphor of a sandstone crystal carved by wind and water — a building that resonates with the site, absorbing and integrating the physical and cultural elements of its surrounding landscape. This mineral shape provides an urban monumentality but equally a sense of cohesion to the building. The triangular shape is also freely associated with feelings of harmony, balance and unity, which is of the utmost importance in a working environment. A courtyard is carved out of the middle, allowing a double-loaded layout with a shaded inner façade.

In terms of urban experience, and avoiding the common vastness and inhospitableness of endless public space, the arrival experience starts with the dramatic presence of the long-spanned triangular volume seemingly resting on a minimum of structural elements. Slowly descending by a ramp, visitors gradually lose sight of the sea on the horizon once having entered the shaded courtyard, which provides circulation links to different entrances. This courtyard is fully accessible from any side, and seaborne breezes waft across it freely, further enhancing the inner microclimate. The lobby piers vertically connect the public with the office areas above. These office floors rest above a technical area that unloads and transfers the building's weight over the three monumental piers, freeing the plaza below from structural elements.

The outer envelope of the building reveals a deep sill filled with brise-soleil fins that block excessive admission of sunlight to the curtain wall behind while still offering myriad unobstructed views. Tectonically, the building has been conceived in terms of this 'mineral' metaphor, so it is only natural that its main materials resonate with the same spirit. The prime architectural material correspondingly consists of coloured concrete, with the slabs and undercroft of the courtyard cast *in-situ*, and the façade louvers as precast elements. Its soft and sandy beige colour is technically ideal in terms of maintenance and cleaning, and, moreover, is evocative of the desert into which it aims to blend.



Location: Ras Bufontas (QEZ-1), Doha, State of Qatar

Client: Manateq (Astad Holding)

Scope of services: Architecture, interior design and landscape architecture

Project brief: Office headquarters, archive, showroom and sales office

Gross floor area: 13,760 sq. m

Construction cost: QAR 12,800.00 per sq. m (estimated)

Project status: 2014 (shortlisted competition, 2nd prize)

Rendering: 4+Arquitectos

Model: Norigem

Photography: Promontorio (model)