

The American University of Beirut
Faculty of Engineering and Architecture
Department of Architecture and Design

The Graduate Programs in Urban Planning and Policy & Urban Design
Presents City Debates 2012

**Re-Conceptualizing Boundaries:
Urban Design in the Arab World**

May 3-4, 2012
Architecture Lecture Hall (ALH)

> About City Debates

Since its inception in 2002, City Debates has grown into a landmark conference awaited for by an audience of more than one hundred professionals, academics, and students from AUB and the wider community. Every year it receives substantial media coverage in local papers. It has been the venue for prominent and leading scholars and professionals in the urban field to share and discuss their ideas.

Last year, City Debates 2011 provided a panoramic view of “contemporary urbanism in the Arab World” encompassing both urban planning and policy and urban design. The focus of City Debates 2012 is on urban design as discourse, as discipline, as research, and as praxis: How are the changing paradigms of urban design in the wake of the new millennium impacting the making and shaping of cities in the Arab World?

By addressing this broad question, the purpose of City Debates 2012 is to inform, investigate, and mainly to reflect on a discipline that is acquiring its autonomy from ancillary fields both professionally and academically, while shaping itself to meet the rapidly changing and highly diversified needs of the region.

CONCEPT NOTE

The title of City Debates 2012 embodies two problematic and promising concepts: “urban design” and the “Arab World.” The first designates, “a [young] discipline that has been unable to develop any substantial theory on its own” (Cuthbert, 2003, viii); and the second an elusive term, geographically, politically, and ethnically. Despite these qualifications, urban design is a lively and strong emerging discipline profoundly anchored in professional practice, real world projects, and future visions. On the other hand, the “Arab World” despite its geographical ambiguity, is an emblematic term profoundly engrained in common parlance, academic discourse, and media diffusion, that generally brings images of a region rampant with constructed and elusive national identities, overwhelming wealth and poverty, religious mix; and most recently the “Arab uprisings,” a bottom-up revolution shaking the foundations of centralist decision-making. Hence, the Arab World is a prime territory for questioning urban design as a discipline in flux, due to its abundance of *sites of memory*, *sites of worship*, *sites of conflict*, *sites of contestation*, and *sites of globalization*. Such diversity invites a multiplicity of opportunities for, and practice in shaping, upgrading, and rebuilding urban form and civic space while subjecting global paradigms to regional and local realities.

City Debates 2012 is also about urban designers “on the margins”, and how they narrate

their cities, how they engage with their discipline, and how they negotiate their distance “away from” and “in reference to” global disciplinary trends. As such, the term “margins” implies three complementary connotations: on the global level, it invites speculation on how contemporary urban design is being impacted by the new conceptualizations of center-periphery originating from the *post-colonial discourse*; on the regional level, it is a speculation on the *specificity of urban design thinking and practice* within a particular geographical context, here the Arab World; and finally on the local level it is an attestation to a *major shift in urban design focus* from city centers to their “margins” with unchecked suburban growth, left over spaces, and informal development.

> **Framing the Debate**

The discourse about urban design in the Arab World may take two distinct paths; either a geographically-based discourse comparing sites and cities along the same lines of inquiry; or an issue-based discourse designed around paradigms and perspectives pertaining to theory and praxis. City Debates 2012, will emphasize the latter approach, and will focus on four aspects of urban design thinking: the *regional*, the *holistic*, the *operational*, and the *visionary*. Such constructs intersect with sites and practices and bring forward urban design issues of ideology and context.

Section 1. The Regional: Re-Conceptualizing the Boundaries between Local and Global

This track investigates how “design networks” have been instrumental in propagating and generating an autonomous discourse on “the margins” by increasing the fluidity of the exchange of ideas and concepts and by creating an open, dynamic, and reactive regional dialogue. Here, urban design is conceived of as a catalyst for change, as a channel for importing and domesticating models, creating regional paradigms, and interrogating mutual perceptions between international and local practitioners. This interface between the local and the global has operational mechanisms that encompass awards, competitions, consultations, conferences, web sites, publications, and joint design studios. *Two questions emerge:* How are such design networks promoting replication, collage, hybridization, and innovation? And is there an emerging “geography of design exchange” with its regional centers and peripheries, its own instruments of regionalization and an autonomous discourse(s)?

Section II. The Hybrid: Blurring Boundaries between Design Disciplines

The interlocking disciplines of architecture, urban design, and physical planning are being challenged in their ways of thinking about and shaping city space by new patterns of physical urbanization and growing environmental concerns. Emerging disciplines such as ecological landscape design and landscape urbanism are providing alternative means for conceptualization that stress ecology over morphology; network surface over urban form; and the confluence of architecture, landscape, city, and infrastructure. These dynamic and integrated visions are emphasizing the *holistic* and the *interdisciplinary*, while widening the scope of design investigation. Concurrently, attempts at grounding urban design theory in the social sciences are leading to a new understanding of urban space, locating it at the intersection of social theory, human geography, and cultural studies. To what extent has urban design in the region kept pace with these changing paradigms, and how far does contemporary urban design theory account for regional specificities?

Section III. The Operational: Bridging Boundaries between Research and Practice

As a profession-oriented discipline, urban design defines itself through *operational research* and *reflective practice*. With the waning of modernism, design research retracted from the universal to focus on to the regional and the local; and expanded its scope from the

morphological to the ecological, communal, and speculative. Practice itself acquired an evaluative edge with the increasing accountability of the designer to the community and the market and the mounting public expectations with regard to sustainability and participation. How is urban design “on the margins” responding to these global challenges? How is recent design-based research reflective of paradigmatic shifts in urban design thinking? And is there an active engagement between urban design research and professional practice?

Section IV. The Visionary: Crossing Boundaries between the Utopian and the Real

Urban design as project has always been a mediator between idealized pasts and idealizing futures and a channel for importing and domesticating modernity. For the past two decades, the image of the Middle Eastern city has wavered in the public and professional imaginary between two extremes: the global hub and the postwar city, the first exemplified by Dubai and the second by Beirut. Between the two, a vast extent of intermediate landscapes from suburban informal settlements, to metropolitan new towns and expanding holy cities exist. What are the underlying dialectics that connect and differentiate these diversified landscapes? Are the margins still a colonial testing ground for the ideals of the center or just a market for overused and discarded ideas and concepts? How are the dreams of globalization being subjected to an emerging “new political consciousness” and to the immediacy of the here and now?

> Speakers and Discussants Biographies (*following the order of the program*)

Nezar AlSayyad is an architect, planner and urban historian. He is Professor of Architecture, Planning and Urban Design and Chair of the Center for Middle Eastern Studies Program University of California, Berkeley. He is also the Co-Founder and current President of the International Association for the Study of Traditional Environments (IASTE); and the editor of its journal Traditional Dwellings and Settlements Review (TDSR). As a scholar, AlSayyad has authored and edited several books on housing, identity, tradition, urbanism, urban design, urban history, urban informality, tourism and virtuality. Among his numerous books are *Cities and Caliphs*, *Consuming Tradition*, *Hybrid Urbanism*, *The End of Tradition*, *Urban Informality*, *Cinematic Urbanism*, and *The Fundamentalist City*. He is a lucid thinker as evidenced by his most recent book *Cairo: Histories of a City* published by Harvard University Press. Among his numerous grants are those received from the U.S. Department of Education, NEA Design Arts Program, the Getty, and the Graham Foundation. Professionally AlSayyad is still active as both an architect and planner in the United States and internationally. He is Principal of XXA-Office of Xross-Xultural Architecture with projects in Egypt, Saudi Arabia and California. His most recent project is a collaboration with BGAP, the Berkeley Group of Architecture and Planning (BgAP), to design a new sustainable high tech community in India. His awards include the Beit AlQuran Medal from Bahrain, the Pioneer American Society Book Award, and the American Institute of Architects Education Honors, and more recently the Distinguished Teaching Award, the highest honor that UC Berkeley bestows on its faculty.

Howayda Al-Harithy is a Professor of Architecture and the Chair of the Department of Architecture and Design at the American University of Beirut. She was a visiting professor at the Department of Fine Arts at Harvard University in 1994, at the Department of Architecture at MIT in 1993 and in 2000 and at the Center for Contemporary Arab Studies at Georgetown University in 2005-06. Al-Harithy received her bachelor degree in architecture from the Oregon School of Design in 1985, masters in architecture from MIT in 1987, PhD in art history from Harvard University in 1992. Her research in Islamic art and architecture focuses on the Mamluk period. The research engages theoretical models of interpretation, particularly post-structuralist models, as analytic tools of the production of architectural and urban space in medieval cities. She published a monograph in the *Bibliotheca Islamica* series entitled *The Waqf Document of Sultan Hasan ibn Muhammad ibn Qalawun*. She is also published in international journals such as Oxford's Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, Muqarnas, Mamluk Studies Review, and the Harvard Middle Eastern and Islamic Review. More recent research focuses on urban heritage with special emphasis on the theoretical debate on heritage construction and consumption related to identity building and post war reconstruction projects as applied to the contemporary practice in the Arab World. The research is published in leading journals such as IJMES and TDSR. She is the editor of and contributor to a recently published book entitled *Lessons in Post-War Reconstruction: Case Studies from Lebanon in the Aftermath of the 2006 War* (Routledge, 2010).

Robert Saliba is an associate professor at the American University of Beirut (AUB), in the Department of Architecture and Design. He has conducted extensive research on Beirut's historic formation and postwar reconstruction, and published three reference monographs: *Beyrouth Architectures: Aux Sources de la Modernité* (Parenthèses, 2009), *Beirut City Center Recovery: the Foch-Allenby and Etoile Conservation Area* (Steidl, 2004), and *Beirut 1920-1940: Domestic Architecture between Tradition and Modernity* (The Order of Engineers and Architects, 1998). He has also authored book chapters with Leiden, the Agha Khan Awards, URBAMA, and journal articles with Urban Design International. His area of specialization is colonial architecture and urbanism with a special emphasis on the Late Ottoman and French

Mandate periods in Lebanon and Syria. He is currently researching the paradigmatic changes in urban design education and practice in the region with a focus on postwar Lebanon. He coordinated the graduate program in Urban Planning and Policy and Urban Design at AUB between 2008 and 2011 and was a visiting professor in urban design at the Department of Architecture, Technical University of Damstadt, Germany, in the spring of 2011. As a Chevening scholar at Oxford Brookes University, he conducted postgraduate research on coastal management in the Mediterranean region. He has served as a land use consultant with the World Bank and UN-Habitat on the state of the environment in Lebanon and previously worked as an urban design consultant and a city planning associate at the Community Redevelopment Agency in Los Angeles, California.

Angus Gavin MA, MAUD, RIBA is Director of Urban Development for SOLIDERE and Solidere International (SI). Solidere is the private development corporation established by the Lebanese government in 1994 and tasked with the renewal of central Beirut. SI was formed by Solidere in 2007 to carry out projects outside Beirut City Center and within a target region of the Middle East and Mediterranean Basin. To date these include medium to large scale urban, city center and tourism projects and individual real estate developments in Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Egypt, Algeria, Monaco, Turkey, Montenegro and Lebanon. Before joining SOLIDERE in 1994 Mr. Gavin was consultant to Dar Al-Handasah and leader of the planning team that prepared the Master Plan for reconstruction of Beirut's 191Ha city center. He has practiced as an architect and urban planner elsewhere in the Middle East and in the UK, USA, Turkey, Greece, and Nigeria; and has taught at the University of Virginia in the USA and at the Bartlett, University College London. Before moving to Beirut in 1992, he was with the London Docklands Development Corporation as Head of Urban Design and Development Manager for a 120Ha dockside and riverfront site in the Royal Docks Area. He received an MA in architecture from Cambridge and a Masters in Urban Design from Harvard. He was joint author of *Beirut Reborn: the Restoration and Development of the Central District* (John Wiley Academy Editions, London, 1996).

Omar Abdulaziz Hallaj is the CEO of the Syria Trust for Development, a non-governmental foundation providing a framework for a variety of community based developmental initiatives in Syria. An architect and development consultant, Mr. Hallaj served in the past as the Team Leader for the German Technical Cooperation Project for the Development of Historic Cities in Yemen (GIZ). He also was a partner in Suradec, a consortium for urban development and urban heritage planning in Aleppo, Syria. His professional work closely concentrated on linking institutional, social and economic development concerns to the production of the built environment. He graduated from the University of Texas in 1989 and obtained a Masters of Architecture from the same university in 1992. Mr. Hallaj has researched, published and lectured on a variety of issues related to the history, economics and development policies in the Muslim world and Arab region. His work experience includes serving on commissions and management boards for a variety of public and private bodies dealing with urban development and conservation issues, developing administrative and legal frameworks for heritage conservation, microfinance, and involving private and non-governmental efforts in urban and local development. In 2007 Mr. Hallaj was a recipient of the Aga Khan Award for Architecture for his role as Team Leader for the Yemeni-German Shibam Urban Development Project. Subsequently, he served as a member of the Award's Master Jury in its 2010 cycle, and is currently a member of its Steering Committee.

Christoph Wessling is a city and regional planner, architect and part of the Berlin Chamber of Architects. He is also an Assistant Professor at the Department for Urban Development and Design; BTU-Cottbus, Germany. As the coordinator Christoph Wessling works on strengthening the cooperation between the Universities of the Middle-east and

the Brandenburg University of Technology, Cottbus (BTU-C). He has previously organized many workshops and academic exchange programs between the University of Cottbus, University of Baghdad, University of Aleppo, University of Damascus, University of Cairo and the American University of Beirut.

Thomas Stellmach studied Architecture at TU Berlin and UPC Barcelona. Recent examples of his work are Europe's largest urban design commission, «project A101» in Russia and UK's largest residential development, «Barking Riverside» in London for the Rotterdam based practice Maxwan A&U, as well as an urban vision for the 2.6 Million people of Aleppo, Syria. He was assistant professor for urban planning at the renowned Berlage Institute guest professor at the University for Science and Arts in Aleppo, Syria. He has lectured and conducted workshops at the Tsinghua University in Beijing, Strelka Institute in Moscow, the PRIC Conference in Baghdad, the UPC in Barcelona, and the Academy of Architecture in Amsterdam. Thomas recently won the European X competition with an urban plan for the city of Heidelberg, Germany. He is currently consulting UN-Habitat in Nairobi on urban planning methods. Besides this, Thomas was recently invited to lecture on Überbau's activities at the University of Trondheim, the PRIC Conference in Baghdad, the Planning Department of Berlin, the University of Timisoara, the MOD urban research collective from Bangalore, and the Academy of Architecture in Amsterdam. Thomas is owner and editor in-chief of the online architecture magazine dysturb.net.

Sandra Frem is an architect, urbanist and lecturer. She graduated with distinction with a DES in Architecture from the Lebanese University, and a Master of Science in Urbanism from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Her research focuses on the relationship of water and cities, and on the potential of ecological infrastructure to revitalize cities. Her thesis at MIT, *Nahr Beirut: Projections on an Infrastructural Landscape* won the SMArchS Prize for Outstanding Thesis. She has been a lecturer at the School of Architecture, Lebanese American University in Beirut and Byblos since 2009. She is a registered architect in Lebanon and her professional collaborations include offices such as DW5/Bernard Khoury Architects in Beirut and Hashim Sarkis Studios in Cambridge and Beirut.

Leon Telvizian is an Architect and Urbanist who was trained in Lebanon, Canada and France; University Professor. He is the Founder and Head of the Planning Department at the Lebanese University from 1997 to 2007; founder of CERDA (Centre d'Etude et de Recherche en Développement et Aménagement) at the Lebanese University; active member of UNESCO Chairs, namely in ‘Landscape and Environmental Design’; winner of many international scientific research competition projects, namely TEMPUS and PCSI (Projet de cooperation scientifique inter-universitaire) of AUF (Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie): « L'éclatement urbain à Beyrouth et à Damas : processus et modes d'action des municipalités ». His experience covers the fields of international cooperation and scientific and professional practice of urban planning and local development and has served as a consultant and expert for EU (Participatory Planning), UN-ESCWA (Urban Observatories for ESCWA Region), UN-HABITAT (Local Strategic Planning in Lebanon) and UNESCO (Urban Heritage).

Peter Gotsch is professor for international urban development at the Polytechnic University of Frankfurt Main. He graduated from the Technical University of Aachen (RWTH) and Columbia University (New York) and lectured at many Universities worldwide. Dr. Gotsch has worked as an architect for renowned design consultancies such as Herzog & Partner (Munich) and for international organizations such as the GIZ and UN-Habitat. His career has led him to work in more than 30 countries and he has devoted himself to studying issues of international urban development at a comparative level. Among the central questions of his theoretical attention is the exploration of the

'production of contemporary space' and in particular the specific impact of the private sector. His applied research is committed to the development of sustainable growth strategies as well the application of planning and design concepts in post-disaster situations. Dr. Gotsch is member of the scientific committee of the Network-Association of European Researchers on Urbanization in the South (N-AAERUS), as well as a board member of the German Society for the Scientific Inquiry on Planning and Building in Developing Countries (TRIALOG). Currently, Dr. Gotsch is working on an extended databank featuring Neo-Town examples and a book on the issue titled *Cities of Demand*.

Rabih Shibli is a lecturer at the department of Landscape Design and Ecological Management, which he joined after receiving his masters' degree in Urban Design from the American University of Beirut. In September 2006 he founded and directed Beit Bil Jnoub, a non-profit civil organization that was heavily involved in the reconstruction process in the aftermath of the July War. Since October 2009, he has served as the team leader of the community projects and development unit (CPDU) at the center of civic engagement and community service (CCECS), which has been engaged in the development and implementation of a number of sustainable projects along the Lebanese territory.

Lee Frederix is a Beirut-based artist and designer who studied Architecture at Georgia Tech, Fine Arts at Université de Paris VIII, and obtained his MArch in Landscape Urbanism from Notre Dame University. He is currently an Assistant Professor of Interior Design at AUST in Beirut, where he also serves as Coordinator for all Art History and Theories courses. He has also worked as a research assistant at both NDU and AUB. Outside of academia, Lee works as an artist, product designer, and DJ. He recently founded HQ, an open studio for art and design in a converted garage in the up-and-coming Mar Mikhael district of Beirut. His work, which reveals the artist's sensual treatment of materials and their subtle juxtaposition, has been featured in publications and exhibitions both in Beirut and abroad.

Abdul Halim Jabr is a Beirut-based architect and part-time faculty at the AUB Department of Architecture and Design since October 1991. His professional experience includes local and international work demonstrating a commitment to environmentally-responsive design and context-sensitive planning. A number of urban scale projects that he was involved with were recognized by US and international agencies or professional bodies. Jabr operates as an independent consultant since 2000, offering design and management services to institutional clients and engineering and planning firms. The accumulated work experience and the resilience of the set-up allow to custom-assemble the best team for a given project, locally or in partnership with an international firm. Clients and collaborating entities include: Ateliers Lion Architectes Urbanistes (Paris FR), Booz Allen Hamilton (Beirut LB), Rafael Vinoly Architects (New York USA) and UN-Habitat (Beirut LB).

Matthew Carmona is Professor of Planning and Urban Design at the Bartlett School of Planning, UCL. His research has focused on the policy context for delivering better quality built and natural environments, having worked on a range of research projects examining design policies and guidance, design coding, residential design and development processes, delivering urban renaissance, the value of urban and architectural design, the working relationships between, housing providers and planners, measuring quality in planning , managing external public space, local environmental quality and standards and contemporary London squares. Professor Carmona is on the editorial board of Urban Design Quarterly, is European Associate Editor for the Journal of Urban Design and edits the Design in the Built Environment book series for Ashgate. In 2002 he worked with Norman Foster & Associates to win the West Kowloon Cultural District International Masterplanning competition. He is Vice Chair of the RTPIs Research and Knowledge

Committee and serves on CABEs Research Reference Group. He is a regular advisor to government agencies both in the UK and overseas and writes a column for *Town & Country Planning*, the journal of the Town & Country Planning Association. Between 2003 and 2011 Matthew Carmona was Head of the Bartlett School of Planning. He now leads on urban design across the Faculty.

Mona Harb is Associate Professor of Urban Planning and Policy at the American University of Beirut. She is the author of *Le Hezbollah à Beyrouth (1985-2000): de la banlieue à la ville* (Karthala-IFPO, 2010). Her second book (co-authored with Lara Deeb and forthcoming with Princeton University Press) investigates the spatial impacts of new moral leisure geographies on the city-suburb nexus. Currently, she is beginning an investigation of regional governments' practices of spatial planning and development in Lebanon. Harb has authored several book chapters as well as journal articles and essays in journals such as *Third World Quarterly*, *International Journal for Urban and Regional Research*, *Arab Studies Journal*, *Ethnos*, *Critique Internationale* and *Genèses*. She is the recipient of research awards from the Wenner-Gren Foundation, the ACLS, and Middle-East Awards.

<http://aub.academia.edu/MonaHarb>

Mohamad Kashef is the chair of Architectural Engineering Department and Provost Advisor at ALHOSN University in the United Arab Emirates. He practiced architecture, urban planning and project management with multinational consulting firms and construction companies in the United States, Canada, Egypt and Saudi Arabia. Professor Kashef taught courses, seminars and studios in architectural design, urban design, historic preservation and theory of architecture and urbanism and assisted cities and communities in the United States in the preparation of downtown development plans and urban design guidelines. He is a registered architect with the Ontario Association of Architects in Canada and Licensed General Contractor in the United States. Professor Kashef's research is focused on introducing a balanced physical planning and design agenda that integrates architectural and planning knowledge with an emphasis on sustainable practices. Another special research interest is in tall buildings and multi-use structures that integrate unique architectural configurations with innovative technologies and green solutions.

Sam Jacoby is a chartered architect in private practice in London and a director of the MPhil Projective Cities programme in the Architectural Association School of Architecture (projectivecities.aaschool.ac.uk). He has previously taught in various parts of the AA since 2002 (Intermediate School tutor, Diploma School unit master, History & Theory Studies lecturer, and Spring Semester Programme director) and was a studio leader at the University of Nottingham. He was co-editor of a special issue on urbanism by Architectural Design, 'Typological Urbanism: Projective Cities' (2011), co-authored and editor of the book *Typological Formations: Renewable Building Types and the City* (2007), and co-curator of the exhibition *Urban Futures: Ideas of the City* at the UTS Gallery in Sydney (2009).

Carole Levesque completed a technical degree in architecture in 1995 and an undergraduate degree in Environmental Design at the University of Quebec in Montreal in 1998. She then completed a M.Arch. degree at the University of British Columbia after which she practiced architecture at DatumZero, New York City. She completed her Ph.D. in the History and Theory of architecture at the University of Montreal in February 2009 researching, writing and working on temporary architecture. While working on her Ph.D., she was an adjunct professor at the University of Montreal and at the University of Quebec in Montreal and continued to work as a freelance architect. She was also one of the founding members of Vrac Environnement, a non-profit organization based in Montreal promoting and realizing sustainable projects in local communities. She is currently an assistant professor at the American University of Beirut, Lebanon.

Giuseppe Cinà is an architect (M.Sc., Palermo) and planner (Ph.D, Venice). Appointed as Associate professor at Politecnico of Turin, he taught courses in undergraduate and graduate programs, including Planning studios, Landscape planning, Urban Design, in Italy and abroad. He is the author of several monographs and scholarly articles on urban design, territorial planning and landscape, with a special focus on processes of ‘urban innovation’ in emergent cities (Algiers, Istanbul, Bucharest, Baghdad etc.). He is also the author of Master plans, Operational urban schemes, Researches for public and private bodies.

Mohamed Al Assam has over 40 years of professional experience in the Middle East. He established his private practice, Dewan Architects & Engineers, in 1984 in the UAE's capital Abu Dhabi, followed by offices in Dubai (1999), Baghdad (2003), Manila (2008), Riyadh (2009), Doha (2011) and Basra (2011). Serving as both Chairman and Managing Director, Al Assam continues to be actively involved in the design process, a passion which was the main driver in his establishment of Dewan more than 28 years ago. Mohamed Al Assam has led the growth and success of the firm, with Dewan receiving many awards for excellence and recently placed on the ‘World Architecture Top 100’ list by the esteemed UK Building Design Magazine for the fourth consecutive year for its ethics, practices and professionalism. DEWAN is currently staffed with over 250 professionals and working on an extensive portfolio of projects in various sectors and across 10 countries in the GCC, Africa, and Asia. Mr. Al Assam is an active speaker and debater, and contributes often to public and professional forums.

Sateh El-Arnaout is a Chartered Engineer in the UK, with more than 24 years of experience shared between the private sector and the World Bank. He is currently a Senior Urban Development Specialist at the World Bank in Washington, DC leading projects in areas such as urban and regional development, tourism development, social housing, upgrading of informal settlements, municipal finance including intergovernmental fiscal transfers and the establishment of municipal funds, post conflict reconstruction and disaster risk management as well as infrastructure finance and private sector participation in land development. Dr. El-Arnaout worked in more than sixteen (16) countries spread over Europe (United Kingdom and Georgia), Africa (Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya and Sudan), the Middle East (Egypt, Lebanon, Yemen, Iraq, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates) and Asia (Iran, Pakistan and East Timor). During 2010-11, he was seconded to the Government of Lebanon and provided policy advice in areas related to regional development, special economic zones, border areas management strategies, infrastructure reforms and post-conflict reconstruction. Dr. El-Arnaout has recently completed an extended infrastructure assessment mission to Libya and identified a technical assistance framework for the World Bank’s future engagement with the country. He has also launched a pioneering exercise in Lebanon on credit rating of municipalities and the establishment of a Municipal Development Fund for Lebanon.

Anne Vernez Moudon is a Professor of Architecture, Landscape Architecture, and Urban Design and Planning and Adjunct Professor of Epidemiology and Civil and Environmental Engineering at the University of Washington where she also directs the Urban Form Lab (UFL). Dr. Moudon was past-President of the International Seminar on Urban Morphology (ISUF), a Faculty Associate at the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy, in Cambridge, MA; and a Fellow of the Urban Land Institute in Washington, D.C. The UFL specializes in the spatial analysis of the built environment using micro-scale data in Geographic Information Systems. Professor Moudon’s research addresses topics such as land monitoring, neighborhood and street design, non-motorized transportation, physical activity, and access to food environments. She has published many articles in urban design, transportation, and public health journals. Professor Moudon’s books include *Built for Change: Neighborhood*

Architecture in San Francisco (MIT Press, 1986), *Public Streets for Public Use* (Columbia University Press, 1991) and *Monitoring Land Supply with Geographic Information Systems* (with M. Hubner, John Wiley & Sons, 2000). She also published several monographs, such as *Master-Planned Communities: Shaping Exurbs in the 1990* (with B. Wiseman and K.J. Kim, distributed by the APA Bookstore, 1992) and *Urban Design: Reshaping Our Cities* (with W. Attoe, University of Washington, College of Architecture and Urban Planning, 1995).

Heiko Schmid is a Professor and Chair of Economic Geography at the Department of Geography, University of Jena, Germany. He specializes in political, social and economic geography and the Middle East. Between 1998 and 2001 Heiko Schmid was the coordinator of the research project “The reconstruction of Beirut/Lebanon” funded by the German Research Association. For the same period, he was visiting fellow at the German Orient Institute in Beirut, Lebanon. In 2001 he finished his PhD at the University of Heidelberg, Faculty of Mathematics and Science. His thesis *The Reconstruction of Downtown Beirut, a Contribution to an Acting Oriented Political Geographical Conflict Research*, was awarded the “Hans-Bobek Award 2002” of the Austrian Geographical Society. In autumn 2005 he was visiting scholar at the Department of Sociology at the University of Nevada in Las Vegas. In 2007 Heiko Schmid completed his “habilitation” [German post-doc program] with a book on the *Economy of fascination – Dubai and Las Vegas as examples of themed urban landscapes* at the University in Heidelberg. In 2009 Heiko Schmid was awarded the “Academic Award in Human Geography” of the “Prof. Dr. Frithjof Voss Foundation – Foundation for Geography”. Among his publications are: a monograph on the reconstruction of downtown Beirut, *Der Wiederaufbau des Beiruter Stadtzentrums [The Reconstruction of Downtown Beirut]* (2002), a recently published book on *Economy of Fascination: Dubai and Las Vegas as Themed Urban Landscapes* (2009) and an anthology on *Cities and Fascination: Beyond the Surplus of Meaning* together with Wolf-Dietrich Sahr (Curitiba, Brazil) and John Urry (Lancaster).

Anne Marie Galmstrup is Associate Partner at Henning Larsen Architects and Principal of Henning Larsen Levant. Currently based in Beirut, Lebanon, the Levant studio develops initial designs and projects in the MENA region and Turkey. Anne Marie is a highly experienced designer and is behind a number of design concepts for distinctive international cultural and educational projects. She specializes in cultural and educational buildings with a particular focus on museums and learning environments and has been lead designer for several masterplan projects. Anne Marie has a special ability to drive complex projects forward and has vast experience working in large multicultural and multidisciplinary project teams. Anne Marie was lead architect for the Massar Children's Discovery Centre in Damascus, from initial concept to construction supervision. The project is one out of a number of first prize winning competitions designed by Anne Marie. In addition to her involvement in projects, Anne Marie is the initiator of and responsible person for the Imagination workshops in the MENA region - an independent platform aiming for cross cultural dialogue between architecture students from various cultural and learning environments. She has worked on projects in the Middle East for more than nine years and has lived in the region since 2009.

Caecilia Pieri is the head of the Urban Observatory, Observatoire urbain du Proche-Orient and a senior editor at Editions du Patrimoine, Paris, is a scholar of architecture, urbanism, and cultural heritage. She has a PhD in History of Architecture and Urbanism from the Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales (Paris). She has traveled widely in the Middle East for over twenty years. Dr Pieri's recent publications include, *Baghdad Arts Deco: Architectural Brickwork, 1920-1950* (2011). This book is a homage to the modern landscape of Iraq. Despite dictatorship, international sanctions, and the ravages of war, Baghdad endures with a surprisingly exceptional modern architectural heritage.

Ala Al-Hamarneh holds a Ph.D. in Human Geography. He is assistant professor for Human Geography at the Institute of Geography and senior researcher at the Center for Research on the Arab World, University of Mainz, Germany. His fields of research include international migration, neoliberal urbanization, tourism, cinematic hermeneutic and the globalization of services. He has published on Islamic tourism, Palestinian refugee camps, postmodern geographies, urban developments, internationalization of higher education in the Arab World and Arab cinemas. He has just started a 4-years research project on "Neoliberal Urbanizations in the Arab World" funded by the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft focusing on Gulf capital cities, Cairo and Amman. His last co-editor volume *Islam and Muslims in Germany* (2008, Brill) won the "Outstanding Academic Title Award" 2008 by Choice Magazine.

Momen El-Houseiny is a PhD Candidate at UC Berkeley in Architecture with designated emphasis on Global Metropolitan Studies and Anthropology. He lectured and gave talks at Cairo University, UC Berkeley and Stanford. Momen's doctoral research is about spaces of exclusion and citizenship in Cairo. He looks at spatial daily contestations and the right to the city post Jan-25 in a cross-sectional perspective cutting through Tahrir Square, informal quarters to the previously apolitical gated communities. Momen graduated from Cairo University in 2003, experienced architect for 4 years, taking role in the design of the AUC-new campus and other projects. He worked in Non-governmental Organization for community development in Old Historic Cairo of Darb al-Ahmar and informal quarter of Bulaq. His research interests include; history of architecture and urbanism, neoliberal spaces, citizenship and the architectures of globalization. Momen's was published at several conferences & journals like, IASTE, Jadaliyya and the Journal of Architectural Education.

Rachid Chamoun joined LAU in fall 1992 as a full-time faculty member in architecture and design. He served as the director of the School of Architecture and Design, and later as the chair of the Department of Architecture and Design in the School of Engineering and Architecture (1995–2000). He has taught interior and architectural design studios, regional urbanism, regional architecture, landscape architecture and urban planning courses. His coursework has had a growing focus on community-building projects. Chamoun has also been the founding director of the Urban Planning Institute (UPI) at LAU since 1995. His current research in urban studies is stimulated and shared through the participation of a pluralistic global community.

Sinan Hassan, Architect, Artist& poet, is the principal &founder of S.O.S.A (Studio Of Sinan Archiculture) as well as a senior lecturer (and design advisor) at AUB. Personally, Sinan tries to fulfill the literal meaning of his name (by spearheading contemporary architecture in Syria). He is widely considered to be the most accomplished, most published, and internationally established Syrian architect. He received his first architectural degree from Damascus University (with first rank honors)in 1985, before receiving three more from top US schools (1988-1996). Scholarly Sinan has made several notable contributions and was featured in several renowned international publications. In addition, he lectured, presented and exhibited regionally and worldwide. He joined the architectural faculty at the American university of Beirut in 2010, after serving as leading(& founding) faculty member at the International University of Science& Technology (2005- 2010). Professionally, Sinan continues to lead the most prominent local architectural practice in Syria, winning several professional prizes and awards, and gaining high profile recognition for his published buildings and projects. His work testifies to his commitment to challenge prevailing local architectural standards, as well as to elevate the local architectural discourse, and to place his country on the map.

Shahira H. Fahmy is an architect whose work strives to create a balance between new spatial concepts and existing context: culture, tradition, urban morphology and climate in the pursuit of a language that encompasses all fields of design. Being featured by The Financial Times as the designer who marks Egypt's debut at the show in Milan in 2007, Shahira H. Fahmy's work has been acclaimed internationally and her designs have been credited with a number of prestigious architectural and design awards. Shahira studied architecture at the Faculty of Engineering, Cairo University, Egypt (B.Arch 1997) where she received a Masters degree in Architecture (M.Arch 2004). Upon graduation, Shahira has been engaged in research and teaching before establishing her practice in 2005. Her early experience includes working as an architect with the leading engineering firm "Dar El Handasah" and collaborating with prominent designers and architects such as Pierre-Yves Rochon, Paris and Legoretta + Legoretta, Mexico. In 2005, Shahira H. Fahmy Architects has emerged as one of the most innovative design-focused practices in the middle-east. The firm's projects—which range from large scale urban and housing projects to interiors and product design—include the Performing and Visual Arts Theater and the Oriental Hall in the American university of Cairo, the Designopolis urban space (Greater Cairo Region) and many housing projects assigned by SODIC Real Estate, such as Westown Block 36.

Yves Lion is the founding Architect and urban designer at Atelier Yves Lion, Paris and a Professor and Director of l'École nationale supérieure d'architecture, de la ville et des territoires (Marne-la-Vallée). Set up in 1974, his agency focused on social housing, an issue which he worked on in many different towns in France. To date, almost 6,000 social and private housing units have been built or are currently under construction. As the winner of the prestigious Grand Prix d'Urbanisme in 2007, Yves Lion also enjoys an international reputation in this field, conducting territorial studies and presenting large-scale development projects in France and abroad. In North Africa, he worked on projects in Fes, Rabat, Casablanca and Tunis. In Saudi Arabia, he won the competition for holy sites in Mecca. He has also been involved in numerous international consultations e.g. Antwerp, Basel, Strasbourg/Kehl, Berlin, Beirut, Casablanca, Tetouan, Tokyo, Tripoli (Libya), Seoul, Daejeon (South Korea) etc. With the Descartes Group, he was one of the ten teams selected during the international consultation for the future of Greater Paris, "The Great Challenge of the Greater Paris District". Yves Lion has produced some outstanding public buildings (the Law Courts in Lyon, the Conference Centre in Nantes, the French Charles de Gaulle High School in Damascus), winning numerous prizes along the way (including the Équerre d'argent 1989 for the Franco-American Museum in Blérancourt and the Équerre d'argent 2003 for the French Embassy in Beirut).

George Arbid is an Associate Professor of Architecture at AUB. He received his Doctor of Design degree from Harvard University Graduate School of Design and his Diplôme d'Etudes Supérieures en Architecture from the Académie Libanaise des Beaux-Arts. Prior to his stay at Harvard, he was a Fulbright Visiting Scholar at the History, Theory and Criticism Program at MIT. His area of interest covers mostly modern architecture in Lebanon and the region. Among his writings is *Beirut: the Phoenix and the Reconstruction Predicament*, an essay that he wrote for Urbanization and the Changing Character of the Arab City published by ESCWA in 2005. He is also the author of the forthcoming book *Karol Schayer architect, a Pole in Beirut*. His published architecture practice includes *The Shabb and Salem Residences*, the latter having been nominated for the Aga Khan Award in 1998.

> Preliminary Abstracts (*following the order of the program*)

Angus Gavin. The Corporate Discourse: New Planning Mechanisms, Design Competitions, Regional Branding

Planning mechanisms for the regeneration of central Beirut introduced US/UK models new to Lebanon. A 3D urban design plan, replacing exploitation coefficients, responds to market demand and townscape opportunities, allowing the salvage of valuable heritage through transfer of building rights. The plan is street-based, assigning high value to the public domain at 49% of the land area, enhancing the downtown with almost half of Beirut's green spaces. A key objective of downtown renewal is to reposition Beirut, recovering some of its prewar pre-eminence from the rising global cities of the Gulf. Cities are everywhere in competition. We have sought the talents of internationally acclaimed architects and public space designers to help reposition Beirut as the Levant's multi-confessional, cosmopolitan city of history, culture, education and commerce: leisure destination of choice for the Arab World, the diaspora and a growing clientele from the US, Europe and Asia. Finally, through experience gained in Beirut, one of the largest and most challenging inner city and waterfront regeneration projects in the world today, we have established a strong, regional 'brand' of sustainable, mixed-use urban development and place-making in the Mediterranean tradition. We are now exporting this to other countries in the MENA and Mediterranean regions.

Omar Abdelaziz Hallaj. The Cultural Discourse on Regionalism in Urban Design: A Case Study on the Role of the Aga Khan Award for Architecture

The Aga Khan Award for Architecture was initiated 35 years ago against out of a concern over the increased marginalization of Muslim communities. The positing of a Muslim collective against a universal international style was problematic though the Award was not concerned with a specific ideological construct of Islam. Its focus was set on communities rather than on Islam. The world inhabited by Muslim communities was thought to be sufficiently diverse that no one single ideological construct would be able of dominating it. The main concern was to identify alternative practices that could help communities reorganize the built environment to meet their local needs. In the process the Award evolved into one of the strongest advocates for regionalism. However, to avoid a normative practice based on religion, the Award became identified with local social practices of space making and not system building. The mission of the successive juries was to recognize best practices and encourage self confidence in Muslim communities to solve their own problems. Such initiatives are often limited and non-replicable; replication being a normative taboo to be avoided. Over the years the Award gained a solid professional image as a socially orientated Architectural Awards. Yet, in its very insistence on not being ideologically normative it codified regionalism disguised in small scale collective action. The paper will try to focus on a number of urban projects that were nominated, short listed and/or awarded. The objective is to try to highlight how the process of identifying winning urban design projects was handled within the process of localizing collective action. Therefore, the emphasis was placed on collective construction processes and not on processes of constructing the collective.

Christoph Wessling. Merging the Intercultural and Cross-Cultural: The Case of Joint Urban Design Workshops between Germany and Universities in the Arab World

Since 2006 we have organised Joint Urban Design Workshops; nearly every year at different Universities of our cooperation network with the Universities of Aleppo, Baghdad, Cairo/Giza, Damascus, the American University of Beirut and the Brandenburg University of Technology Cottbus. All workshops concentrated on tasks and case studies following the thematic focal of our network –Vitalization of Historic City Districts. Mixed student groups with students from all participating Universities designed development concepts for the

specific task and each group started with the priority on one of our general topics: “development of public spaces”, “community based development strategies”, “new typologies” and “urban design guidelines and the integration of traffic development”. The intercultural teamwork within the workshops makes the different social and educational backgrounds as well as the various working procedures of students from Germany and the Middle East visible. Sometimes, they made work even difficult. Nevertheless and maybe rather therefore were student-groups able to present joint and convincing design-results – within the short-term working time. More than on account of a clear workshop-structure those results were chiefly possible due to the meeting of different experiences, which led to new approaches.

Thomas Stellmach. Aleppo City Development Strategy: An Ecological-Regional Design Perspective

This talk sketches out an urban vision for the city of Aleppo, reflecting its skills, people, mechanisms and potentials, and outlines a conceptual urban framework on a city-wide scale, in which they can flourish and evolve. In contrast to the existing masterplan and a dominant culture of over-regulation – that proved to be useless given the overwhelming informality of Aleppo’s development – it proposes a strategy that accepts the underlying forces of the city. Instead of working against them, it instrumentalises these urban mechanisms to secure future qualities and steer urban development. Through principles of flat administrative hierarchies, participation, phasing, space reservation, layered decentralization, integrated mobility and the introduction of strong public spaces of various scales, it proposes the reorganization the city based on its existing structure, socio-economic and environmental potentials. Far from proposing a final state of desirable development, it enables opportunities for future transformation and growth scenarios, through integrating the different components of the city which are too often seen as isolated aspects. The analysis of aerial maps, demographic development and the existing ratified masterplan grounded these ideas in the reality of the city. An integral part of this process was to show the structure of the city to the stakeholders via a diagrammatic set of illustrations, layer by layer — green spaces, centres, transport systems – which enabled them to see the city they are so familiar with in a new light. Transparency in decision making and a flexible strategic approach (opposed to a rigid masterplan) were certainly the major components we could introduce as western planners to the local practice.

Sandra Frem. Transforming Nahr Beirut: From Obsolete Infrastructure to Infrastructural Landscape

Trans[forming] Nahr Beirut is a project that tackles several critical challenges in Beirut: water shortage, lack of public space, urban and ecological fragmentation, and obsolete infrastructure in a city pressured by development. Responding to such conditions, the project proposes a transformative process on Beirut’s canalized river -Nahr Beirut, where such issues are intersected and magnified. In the proposed transformation, the obsolete flood mitigation channel mutates into an ecological corridor that harvests/grows water for the city and becomes an infrastructural landscape that combines water and mobility systems with opportunities for public space. This physical mutation is achieved through the deployment of water treatment and reclamation networks. Countering the top-down approach of a massive infrastructural intervention, the proposed networks are made of adaptive small-scale living systems that operate environmentally at the city scale. They embed multi-performative functions (hydrological /ecological/ connective) with landscaped and recreational civic spaces on top of them, thus presenting economical and social incentives to create public space along the river. In the phased implementation process, measures for reclaiming water and enhancing its quality become the driving agent for rehabilitation. Re-envisioning urban rivers as hybrid infrastructures offers us the opportunity for a new interpretation of their role in the Arab city -to allow them to regain

their civic and environmental significance, and to redefine infrastructure's new values and purposes in contemporary urbanism. I argue that the interdisciplinary approach used in this project- coupling infrastructural strategies with social and urban solutions – is a powerful method; relevant for the Arab world where water resources are limited and most often contested.

Peter Gotsch. Decoding Private Urbanism and Sustainability: Lessons from Neo-Towns

This contribution examines the nature of urban design in the context of private urbanisation and discusses its repercussions to sustainable development, aiming at triggering a discussion on implications for the Middle East North Africa (MENA) region. The private sector plays a pivotal role in urban innovation and development. Banks, infrastructure firms, industrial conglomerates, and construction enterprises control urbanisation processes. Projects such as New Cairo, Alsunuth, or Qatar's Pearl exemplify the trend in the MENA region. The desire for modernisation and world-class standards includes many green- and eco-city schemes. Seeking to appraise sustainability issues most approaches cope with the externalities of private urbanisation. In contrast this contribution aims at a deeper appreciation of the phenomenon. We argue that the lack of a profound understanding of the nature of private urban development (and of the political economy of urban design) hinders us from developing more sustainable and resilient solutions – in particular when it comes to the scale of buildings, neighbourhoods, and towns. The contribution draws on a comparative research project on privately developed towns (Gotsch 2010, www.neo-town.org). The lessons offered stem from Navi Mumbai (Mumbai), Alphaville-Tamboré (São Paulo), and Bumi Serpong Damai (Jakarta), a new generation of privately developed Neo-Towns.

Rabih Chebli. Environmental Design between Research and Practice: Case studies by the Center for Civic Engagement and Community Service at the American University of Beirut

The Community Projects and Development Unit (CPDU), a division of the Center for Civic Engagement and Community Service (CCECS) – AUB, has been setting venues for involving students and faculty members from various departments in hands-on developmental projects within underserviced areas. As Team Leader I will present three case-study-projects by the CPDU in partnership with various departments at AUB and community representatives: “Reclaiming the Traditional Water Conservation Practices in Rural South Lebanon – case of Marwaheen Village”, “Urban Agriculture – Women’s Vocational Training Center – Ein El Hilwi Palestinian Refugee camp”, and “Upgrading Sabra Market”. All three projects belong to territories where the will of the state fades, and where the non-mastered non-planned areas establish self-governance bodies relative to each setting. Street-smart ingenuity enables local inhabitants to circumvent the daily challenges and counter the neglect or absence of the state departments. Order is maintained at a bare minimum and chaos is often neutralized to secure safety and access to basic services. A participatory planning /design model is fully adopted to implement grassroots initiatives that build on securing consensus on a general theme, incorporating local knowledge, and securing political-stakeholders’ support, bringing environmental design research into practice. (200 words including title)

Lee Frederix. Cultural Infrastructure for the Margins: A Machinic Approach to Nahr Beirut

In broadening the definition of infrastructure to include social and cultural networks within the city, this current work takes inspiration from certain western models, both traditional and alternative, in addressing a case study of the marginal territories of contemporary Beirut. Attempting to investigate both the socio-economic and spatial aspects of marginality, the work conceptualizes the Beirut River, not as an environmental entity, but as an edge condition and as the potential site for operational strategies in the development of a

cultural infrastructure. The work applies contemporary theories of *machinic processes* (Najle, 2003) to the site, but only after a conventional analysis has been carried out in order to diagnose pertinent landscape issues. This dual methodology highlights the complementarity between the two approaches, articulating systems and networks within the site and shifting “the attention away from the object qualities of space to the systems that condition the urban form” (Corner, 2006). The resulting ‘synthetic ecologies’ maps depict a process-based intervention that acts as a systemic catalyst and reconfigures the site as a horizontal network open for future appropriation and permutations. The diagrams are operational as opposed to quantitative in the sense that they emphasize means over ends and logic over compositional design (Corner, 2006). This inherent indeterminacy situates the work as a reflective exercise that creates open-ended and non-deterministic results, providing an alternative paradigm for investigating both the physical and socio-cultural margins of the city.

Matthew Carmona. Decoding Design Governance

The relation between governance processes in our cities and the ‘public’ aspiration for better design quality has long been a contested arena. The debate turns on a number of often repeated tensions, between property rights and public interests, between design freedom and public taste, between those with design skills and those with none, between one definition of good design and another the list goes on. Yet despite the tensions, the desire for the state to have a role and stake in how buildings and spaces are shaped through planning and other means remains as popular as ever, and largely universal. So can the public sector legitimately influence design for the better and if so whose design and how? This is the key question asked in this talk which will draw on examples from the UK and Europe in order to make the case for a legitimate design governance.

Mohamad Kashef. Theory of Urban Space: Straddling the Divide

This is a multidisciplinary theoretical exposé from urban geography and sociology, planning, architecture, urban design, and urban political economy. This study develops a nuanced theoretical understanding that straddles the intellectual divide between architecture, planning, and urban social sciences. It raises critical questions regarding the dialectics of human agency and social structures on the one hand and built forms and social and cultural conventions on the other. It mainly highlights intellectual discrepancies between architecture and planning studies which precipitate conflicting concepts of urban space and design approaches. The premise of this theoretical journey is that integrating architecture and planning as well as urban geography perspectives of built forms and development processes is crucial to establish a socially and culturally responsive urban design discourse. By exposing discrepancies and juxtaposing areas of disagreement among theories, the study lays the grounds for more in-depth studies aimed at developing an interdisciplinary understanding of urban form and design.

Sam Jacoby. Architectural Urbanism: The Operativity of Built Form

The presumption of architectural urbanism is that typological reasoning provides the primary cross-disciplinary instruments. In the design of buildings and cities, we generally rely on received forms and established norms conveyed through typological knowledge that we either fulfill or reject. By abstracting the *deep structures* of build forms—by revealing their common organizational and structural diagrams—type can be analyzed and projected, permitting an operative definition of parameters affecting architectural form and its relationship to the city. Fundamental to making typo-diagrammatic knowledge instrumental to the multi-scalar city is the premise that architecture does not just exist as a specific object at one scale, but as a generic possibility. If urbanity can be said to be the synthesis of *dominant types*—critical buildings and urban armatures constitutive to its formation—typology presents both practice-driven formal solutions and equally a socio-political and

cultural content, which are necessary to design, structure, and administer an urban plan. Therefore, a continued rethinking of the effect of types, including their often anticipated or endured expiry, is necessary. It inevitably raises new questions of control, difference, and participation, and ultimately discloses a different *Idea of the City*.

Mohamed Al Assam. The Urban Renewal of “Holy Shrine” Cities in Iraq: Case studies of Kadhimiyah / Baghdad, Najaf and Karbala

The deterioration of Iraqi Historic Cities was part of a major collapse of Civil Values and “Ruralization” of the Urban Life, due to colonization, political unrest and military actions, which disrupt a smooth and continuous civil developments and prosperity. This talk will present Dewan’s interventions in three urban renewal projects in Iraq awarded to the office: Kadhimiyah / Baghdad, Najaf and Karbala). First I will provide a brief historical background of the three “Holy Shrines” cities, in terms of their development, deterioration and status quo, followed by our documentation, surveys and analysis of the existing conditions in order to reach workable urban scenarios and development alternatives for the future. I will also stress the following major challenges facing projects of this delicate nature and scale:

- Spatial: how to accommodate the increasing number of pilgrims in a city that is medieval and still protect the integrity of the urban fabric
- Political: how to work with the politically layered authority, and different (often contradicted) stake holders
- Heritage: what is heritage and how to address it?
- Residents, Visitors or “Bricks”? who has the priority?

I will try to sketch our visions for the type of future we want, and to whom this future is intended for.

Anne Vernez Moudon. From Research to Practice: Re-Designing the Automobile City

Urban design has a rich history as a theory-driven field guiding practice. The theory is normative, defining ideal urban forms. Yet rarely are its applications evaluated to establish a knowledge base for practice. Other disciplines provide substantive knowledge on how city form functions and affects society and economy. Different streams of research have recently flagged the negative impacts of the over-reliance on inner-city motorized transport, showing that: land consumption associated with urban vehicular infrastructure exacerbates the costs of intra-city travel; urban traffic congestion lowers productivity and contributes to unacceptable levels of air and water pollution; environmental toxicity is linked to increasing rates of asthma and cancers; automobile dependency aggravates increases in sedentary life styles, leading to obesity, diabetes 2, and cardio-vascular diseases; and motor-vehicle collisions are third in causes of disability-adjusted life year loss. While most cities continue to favor automobiles over other forms of transport, some have sought to reverse the trend: Seoul, New York, and Shanghai provide directions for re-capturing urban space as places inhabited by humans rather than cars. These cities serve as testing grounds for the generation of future urban design theories.

Heiko Schmid. Dubai’s Economy of Fascination: Urban Growth between Sustainability and Economic Success

Large investments in the real estate and tourism sector, as well as rising numbers of investors, tourists and immigrants, have led to a sustained boom in Dubai. At the same time, and against the background of urban governance and the transfer of competences to private and semi-state actors, a brisk urban transformation has been embarked upon, with the creation of countless entertainment, shopping, and artificial worlds. This development is primarily characterised by the theming of everyday life, but above all an “Economy of Fascination”. The centerpiece of the presentation is an analysis of the most important factors for the success of themed urban landscapes such as Dubai. Nevertheless, the

current global economic crisis has left its marks on Dubai and points up the vulnerability of such urban development most clearly. While the crisis has caused a standstill of most of Dubai's megaprojects, it could also be seen as a chance for the city: The years of prosperity have led to a discrepancy between public planning and private-sector project development causing difficulties in terms of providing the necessary public infrastructure. Against this background the current crisis could be used to overcome the existing deficits of Dubai's master planning.

Anne-Marie Galmstrup. Designing a New Financial District in Riyadh

The physical planning of our cities influences our immediate surroundings; not only from a subjective visual viewpoint but in the way they are used and how people engage with each other. Buildings are more than a beautiful envelope and urban plans are more than the bird's eye view perspective. New master planned cities, together with today's larger privatization, do not necessarily destroy our public realm - but they need to respond to their setting and function at eyelevel. Cities mature and change over time as they grow with their inhabitants. New planned cities often do not have much time to grow and are sometimes developed based on direct solutions vs. strategic visions. Through examples, such as the King Abdullah Financial District in Riyadh, will the talk focus on the architects and planner's visionary image of a project vs. the clients and the issue of collaboration process vs. negotiation.

Caecilia Pieri. Baghdad: A Pending Globalization?

Between the Tanzimat period and the current situation which witnesses obstructed living circulations because of security devices, and despite its leading role in the fields of modern arts, culture and knowledge starting from the Thirties, Baghdad has never ceased to suffer from arbitrary and aborted attempts at modernizing its urban shape and space. Various exported or recycled patterns have repeatedly proved inadequate to the local context, and the continuous political instability has been hardly compatible with the long term vision of urban planning. Today, a new process of metropolization is about to begin through large-scale and advertised urban projects in areas which are far away from the hyper-centre. This (deliberately?) does not face the most serious problem of Baghdad's centre: a newly installed "civil war urbanism", with an urban layout of concrete T-Walls which corresponds either to the main ethno-sectarian dividing lines, or to the regressive pre-modern grid of "mini green zones" cropping everywhere.

Last, the peripheral-like degradation of the hyper-centre illustrates the worst aspects of a pending globalization: a close and unsolvable intermingling between slums and middle-class housing which weakens any hope of short-term civil reconciliation.

Momen El-Houseiny. Tahrir Square: The Dialectics of Modernity

Celebratory night-shots of Tahrir Square became global incidents of power and popular imaginary for non-violent revolutions. These representations celebrated the capacities modern public space finally came to embrace after decades of policing and authoritarian regimes. The "modernity" promise of the public space originally imported from Parisian urbanism to Cairo during the nineteenth century has finally harbored in the 21st century. Or these were the thoughts urban historians hailed the "liberated" public space referring to its historical genii. Tahrir representations were so mesmerizing in effect that were too totalizing and abstract from the grounded realities. The reality is a compound contingency of informal street-tactics that the frenzy shots of the formal public space of "Tahrir" have underscored. The dialectics of modernity and public space soon came to realization. The same "liberating" space became a bare witness to "massacres." The reality is that the Parisian urbanism was first drafted with a military mindset to coerce the potential revolt of the French people. So were its realization in Cairo and many cities in the 21st century. This promise to control the masses and run over them with armored vehicles in wide-open

streets was the promise citizens in Cairo were to realize only in 2011

Rachid Chamoun. Reclaiming Beirut's Central District Public Square(s)

Many areas throughout Lebanon suffer from transpiring warfare conditions, dire economic and social situations, and this has been continuing for years. These tragic conditions are considered as an integral part of the socio-technical interactions of the metropolitan region of Beirut. There are many actions and re-actions that have had a decisive impact on the reclaimed- post- war- city; (public and private actions/institutional and governmental actions). These actions and reactions have been activated by ideological, religious and or political diversity as a source of tensions, competing territorial claims, polarisation and seclusion in the form of public protests. This paper seeks to evaluate the recurring urban conditions: (urbanization and demographics changes); draws upon the confusion and declares the various problematic issues which derive mainly from the lack of a proper physical frame (formal vs. informal settlements, temporary vs. permanent urban patterns, public events, public protests, etc...) that regulates the distribution, movement and spatial perception of people within and beyond the city. As a result of these conditions, Beirut has been captured by pertinent protests since March 8th / 14th 2005 and was reclaimed as a public space/ tent city? December 1st 2007. The social meaning and relevance of this research is based on defending and protecting freedoms, negotiating peaceful settlement of conflicts, supporting the power in its democratic trends and decisions, and promoting civil society. Furthermore, this research is stimulated and shared through the participation of a pluralistic global community that encompasses a broad spectrum of research by scientists, planners, architects, political scientists and other scholars with original views on urban development, creativity, planning and politics.

Sinan Hassan. Two Square and One City: The Umayyad and Abbasid Squares in Damascus

The term “contestation” is challenging and usually synonymous with conflict and controversy. It is also close to my personal striving nature and the characteristics of the Umayyad and Abbasid squares. Such a (personal) state / definition of contestation, stems from a post-structuralist contestation of conventional methods in architecture and is imported from other fields. It aims at contesting the official narration, the conventional architectural representation of history, the local discourse of heritage and identity, the presumed disciplinary autonomy of architecture and its conventions, the local urban discourse of “roundabouts” and “public squares”, the term “Arab or Islamic city”, and the way we usually qualify the “City” (as opposed to mere urban agglomeration). As such, I will be interrogating the civility and civicness, but also the “Citiness” of (our) cities.

The talk is divided into two parts: a general theory intended to establish the intellectual background and titled “Urban manifesto: The capital C and the Citiness of Cities”, and a section titled “Two courts and one city: The Abbasid and Umayyad squares” outlining the operational mechanisms of two unique case studies. Hence, the paper outlines the major relevant theoretical underpinnings, as well as the diverse scholarly themes of this author/designer, and his interdisciplinary approach to design. This is exemplified in interventions in a peculiar city like Damascus; namely two of its most geographically important urban peripheral poles: two large public squares.