

Friday, April 26th 2024

**School of
Architecture
and Design**

FACULTY RESEARCH DAY 2024

Friday April 26, 2024
LAU Beirut
Gezairi Building
Room 910

The SArD Faculty Research Day is a one-day event that brings together research active and interested faculty members from across the school. The event aims to highlight the breadth of ongoing research being done within the school while providing a platform for the exchange of ideas, cross-disciplinary discussions, and the dissemination of research-related support and resources provided by LAU.

This event is organized by the SArD Teaching and Learning Committee and distinguishes itself from other research-oriented events at LAU as it hones in on both scholarly and practice-based research unique to art, design, and architecture faculty at the university.

The first half of the day includes three presentation sessions by research-active faculty in the school. Each session is followed by an open discussion. The second half of the day begins with an overview of research-related support and resources provided by LAU followed by an open discussion regarding challenges and opportunities. The day concludes with a lucky draw of prizes.

A light breakfast, lunch, and refreshments will be served.

Program

09:00am – 09:15am	Breakfast
09:15am – 09:30am	Welcome and Introduction
09:30am – 10:25am	Presentation Session I: Spatial Dynamics, Representations, and Cities [Beirut]
10:35am – 11:30am	Presentation Session II: Design, Cultural Identity, and the Region
11:40am – 12:25pm	Presentation Session III: Perception, Reflection, and Critical Inquiry
12:25pm – 1:30pm	Lunch
1:30pm – 2:30pm	Research Support and Resources [Dr. Walid Marrouch, Assistant Dean of GSR]
2:30pm – 3:15pm	Facilitated Discussion: Challenges & Opportunities
3:15pm – 3:30pm	Closing Remarks and Lucky Draw

9:30AM – 10:25AM

PRESENTATION SESSION I SPATIAL DYNAMICS, REPRESENTATIONS, AND CITIES [BEIRUT]

9:30am – 9:40am

Intimacies in Migrations: From Research to Design

Dr. Stéphanie Dadour

In the 2010s, influx of “migrants” is one of the main topics of international politics. Many countries cannot admit closing their borders – but don’t open them neither. The political decisions, the system of regularization, the control and the treatment of “migrants” demonstrate a state of crisis. In France, to overcome the disengagement of the state regarding these populations, some associations as well as citizens decide to host homeless migrants. Hospitality is not a spontaneous act; it requires individual effort, especially on the spatial and temporal levels. After a 3 years-research invoking an ethno-architectural approach, I will present the narratives and representations of the hosts and hosted: the spaces-times of everyday life. To what extent does living space, domestic space and home-making spatialize hospitality? What are the places of a relational construction between hosts and hosted? On the other hand, I will present a refugee center we are designing in the suburb of Paris.

9:40am – 9:50am

Creative Cartographies: Mapping Beirut's Landscapes of Uncertainty

Lee Frederix

As our bearings in the city become more closely tied to virtual references and temporal events, mapping becomes a didactic process to open up awareness of the changing dynamics that define the cities we inhabit. Through scholarly and artistic practice, I have been exploring a sort of “alternative mapping” of contemporary Beirut, incorporating Guattari’s machinic, Debord’s psychogeography, and Rauschenberg’s neo-Dada approach to objects. The subsequent mappings do not present the recognizable urban forms or landmarks usually associated with Beirut; my “maps” are not about way-finding. Instead, they are anecdotal diagrams, abstract schematics, and stylized image/objects that are intended as creative visualizations of subjective experiences and cultural practices in our city.

9:50am – 10:00am

Shoreline Narratives: Emerge and Submerge

Leyla El Sayed Hussein and Roula El Khoury

The Beirut shoreline has been heavily depicted in the oral history of its residents, as well as in significant literary works. The shoreline has been heavily used, but poorly studied and documented. Architects usually draw blueprints of buildings and infrastructure, and rarely draw water, along with its morphological and geological layers. In different historical instants, the Beirut water was an attractor for a city to emerge, and for dwelling to occur. But also, the Beirut water was an attractor for a city to submerge, especially under a capitalist system, where building near water is a machine for building more, but not for living. We aim to understand this shifting ground and explore alternative mapping and representation methods.

10:00am – 10:10am

Breathing New Life Into the Concrete Jungle: Sustainable Retrofit in Lebanon

Michel Francis

The research proposes a framework to improve energy efficiency in Lebanon’s existing building stock. The current lack of effective building codes, reliance on uncontrolled ventilation, and lack of proper demand-side energy planning create high energy demands. This project aims to demonstrate that cost-effective retrofits using passive strategies and improved building envelopes can significantly reduce energy use.

The research investigates:

- The state of existing buildings
- Effective and cost-efficient envelope improvement
- Effective passive and low-energy environmental control techniques
- Integration of these strategies with efficient building services
- Lifecycle costs and health benefits
- Implementation strategies and policy recommendations

The project’s outcome is to establish a plan for large-scale building upgrades that can lessen the burden on Lebanon’s energy grid and improve occupant health.

10:10AM – 10:25AM

DISCUSSION

10:25AM – 10:35AM

BREAK

10:35AM – 11:30AM

PRESENTATION SESSION II DESIGN, CULTURAL IDENTITY, AND THE REGION

10:35am – 10:45am

رحلة

Looking at the Arab World

Hicham Bou Akl

We were at a loss as to how to answer to the question: “What does the contemporary Arab world look like?” There is something both singular and commonplace about such a landscape. It has nothing to do with erstwhile orientalist representations which the Arab world projects of itself. It is vast, real, concrete, in motion: contemporary. The tools at our disposal to describe this landscape are obsolete. Our project is a journey and the ensuing travelogue: Rihla. This genre of Arab literature that dates back to the 12th century, mixing observation and narration is enriched by encounters made on the journey.

Co-authored by: Hicham Bou Akl and Mounir Ayoub

10:55am – 11:05am

Mouna Bassili Sehnaoui: The First Lebanese Woman Graphic Designer to Brand Her Nation

Dr. Yasmine Taan

Amidst the political and social landscape of the late 1960s and early 1970s Lebanon, Mouna Bassili Sehnaoui emerged as a pioneering figure, shaping the nation's visual narrative through her prolific design for the National Council of Tourism in Lebanon. My presentation looks into Sehnaoui's extensive design production, including over a hundred printed posters, flyers and booklets between the late 1960s and early 1980s, focusing on her significant role in defining Lebanon's image during a pivotal period of nation-building and modernization. Drawing on vernacular language and a hybrid Arab identity, Sehnaoui's designs reflect a nuanced cultural synthesis, bridging the Franco-Arab influences of her upbringing in Alexandria. Through her paintings, lithographs, and promotional materials, she intricately weaves together heritage, history, and contemporary youth culture, capturing the essence of Beirut's vibrant nightlife and the rich layers of Lebanon's historical tapestry. Tracing Sehnaoui's journey, this presentation explores a selection of Sehnaoui's publications that showcase Lebanon's allure to a global audience, leaving an indelible mark on the country's visual representation.

10:45am – 10:55am

Navigating Multilingual Design Landscapes

Randa Abdel Baki

The practical implementation of bilingual designs and typography serves as a focal point within this discourse, emphasizing the significance and challenges of duality in design paradigms. Concurrently, a comprehensive examination of the evolutionary trajectory from calligraphy to type design and pattern studies is undertaken. At the core of this inquiry lies my proposition concerning Latin-Arabic typographic classifications and systems. This proposal strives to uphold the integrity of the Arabic script while also safeguarding local languages and cultures, in conjunction with more widespread linguistic forms. It serves as a bastion for cultural and linguistic diversity, adaptable to the predominant language of any given region, thereby, equipping designers with effective methodologies for crafting comprehensive harmonized bilingual layouts. This proposition promotes a wider acceptance of multi-script methodologies in the realms of design and typography, offering valuable guidance for future endeavors in this multifaceted domain.

11:05am – 11:15am

Unveiling Multifaceted Meanings: An Exploration of Region-Related Symbols

Melissa Plourde Khoury

My research has been both of personal and professional relevance. The foundation of my inquiries lies in examining region-related symbols as a visual lexicon. Curating small collections of various contemporary visual artifacts, I initially set out to explore their embedded signs drawing from the fields of linguistics and semiotics as means of understanding the visual. The symbols I have studied include war ruins, regional landmarks, and cultural iconography lending themselves to secondary layers of analysis grounded in architectural theory, memory, and cultural studies. By observing interconnections within and between artifacts, I recognize the ways they are multifaceted taking on new significance, recontextualizing the past, and fostering collective understandings.

11:15AM– 11:30AM

DISCUSSION

11:30AM– 11:40AM

BREAK

11:40AM – 12:25PM

PRESENTATION SESSION III PERCEPTION, REFLECTION, AND CRITICAL INQUIRY

11:40am – 11:50am

A Phenomenological Ground for Relational Perception

Dr. Chahid Akoury

Relational perception is a cognitive act enabling users to both epistemically handle a given object and ontologically reason about it. The condition for such a perceptive act is fully dependent on an understanding of support relations and knowledge of the situation at hand. Such knowledge according to this article is present and afforded by a ground condition. According to James J. Gibson the ground is what supports the survival of the animal. In other words, the discoverability of the environment, its textures and surfaces, and therefore the animal's abilities to navigate and interact with it relies strictly on perception. Additionally, this article posits the importance of relational perception in experiencing artistic practices. It presents a strong argument in support of a philosophy of becoming, where aesthetics, materiality, and haptic relations, are interweaved and experienced as an architected landscape. In this regard, artworks are not simply viewed, but become lived space, as they afford an amalgamation of mental constructs and affective phenomenological experiences.

12:00pm – 12:10pm

Research vs. Scholarship, and My Own Experience in Academia

Dr. Elie Haddad

In this short presentation, I will discuss my own experience in academia, from the PhD studies to later developments, and the process I took in developing my own line of research leading to various publications; and the challenges that practitioners in the fields of art and architecture face. I will also attempt to shed some light on the continuing dichotomy between scholarship and research, on which there seems to be no consensus yet.

11:50am – 12:00pm

8 Slides – 18 Years of Activity

Elie Harfouche

Using eight slides, Elie Harfouche discusses his activity since 2006 covering education, practice, teaching and research. He reflects on what constitutes research within his activity and identifies research outputs be it projects, conference papers, or publications. He also sets two conditions for defining a research active position: a 'continuous critically informed work' and the 'production of knowledge'; and tries to locate these notions within his selected work. Finally, issues of 'knowledge sharing' and 'dissemination of ideas' are discussed and challenged.

12:10PM– 12:25PM

DISCUSSION