

Health: The Design, Planning and Politics of How and Where We Live

- **Paper / Proposal Title:**

Sustaining National Housing – the changing role of the villa and its impact on the health and wellbeing of the resident.

- **Format:**

Written Paper / presentation

- **Author(s) Name:**

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- **University or Company Affiliation:**

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- **Abstract (300 words):**

Housing, particularly government driven housing, raises more than just questions surrounding architecture but also as a vehicle to identify lifestyle changes which inevitable impact health. By focusing this research on the United Arab Emirates region and particularly the Emirati National Villa (1960-present) these issues can be mapped over its 60 year history to better understand the implications housing has had on health and wellbeing in this region.

The National Villa interior would be considered as a way to explore the changes over the last 60 years, which in turn could be mapped to policies at a government level. The interior factors also have an impact on the larger urban scale. The world is rapidly urbanising. Elsheshtawy chapter on Emerging Cities, reveal the Arab city is undergoing transformations, the changes are mostly driven by global capital and economics and

due to this there is change in the urban form. This can clearly be seen when we look to the traditional landscape of the old communities verses the new communities, where hundreds if not thousands of residential developments are carving up the desert.

We do not, yet, have a context where we inherit buildings in this region; we have space to build a new, a freedom not easily found in other cities. It's this freedom that encourages extreme scale, shapes and materials in architecture. We are now in a position as designers to back up ones seemingly subjective choices. Cognitive architecture, the study of the brains capabilities and motivations, decision making, emotional response, memory and health can be understood through brain activates and response patterns; scientific data combined with medical data. We understand that environments, interior or exterior, impact people's behavior and intern their health. Every aspect of our environment can have a positive or negative impact on us. If science could help the design profession in justifying the value of good design, healthy designs, this would a powerful asset in this advancing region.

• **Author(s) Biography (200 words each):**

Sophie Johnson is a PhD candidate at The Royal College of Art and is currently working on research surrounding Emirati National Housing in the UAE. She also has 11 years of teaching experience from Foundation to Masters level at several of London's leading university's such as, Wimbledon School of Arts, Central St Martins, Chelsea College of Arts and Ravensbourne as well as others. Sophie's professional background in interior design projects have ranged from bespoke pieces to whole schemes and she has assisted many clients to realise their ideas. From a very exciting high-end start to her design career it went full circle when Sophie decided to return to university to lecture. Alongside the lecturing, Sophie has regularly written for the BBC History Magazine – FootSteps, and contributed to several Middle Eastern publications such as Harpers Bazar, Arabian Houses, Better Homes. Sophie also present's her research at international conferences.