Constructing an Urban Future: The sustainability and resilience of cities – infrastructures, communities, buildings and housing.

• Paper / Proposal Title:
Appropriating the public pavement as an extension of the Family home; Creation of unique ‘temporary’ urban typologies in Abu Dhabi

• Format(s):
In-person presentation / Written paper

• Author(s) Name:
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• University or Company Affiliation:
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• Abstract (300 words):
Formed in 1971, by European standards, the UAE is a very young nation. Over the past 46 years, Abu Dhabi, the capital, has grown to become a modern metropolis where living opportunities created by the rapid growth of the city attracted a multi-cultural society and generated an ever-changing urban fabric of high-rises and mega projects.

This rapid growth created a ‘buffer Zone’ of lesser-known neighborhoods, interweaved between high-rise towers and private residential palaces. In these areas, the residents were able to appropriate the public pavement as an extension of their homes, creating a unique ‘temporary’ urban typology.

The concept of small-incremental intervention, is a phenomenon that is well documented, and is referred to as; “do-it-yourself (DIY) urbanism”, “tactical urbanism”,


“pop-up urbanism” and “guerilla urbanism”. It naturally occurs within societies in the developing countries, and is often described as organic growth when taking place within the global cities.²

This paper’s intention, is to shed light on the present (un)ephemeral urban phenomena experienced in the streets of Abu Dhabi’s older neighborhoods and to contextualize it, linking it to the immediate past where residents individually transformed their houses responding to their culture, customs and particular family immediate needs.³ The paper culminates with the authors presentation of their Design and Build pedagogical experiments; responding to the observed urge of immediate urban space individualization.

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

Lina Ahmad is currently employed as an Assistant Professor at Zayed University, Abu Dhabi, holding a Master Degree (MArch) from the Architectural Association, in London. She has over 10 years of professional experience working as an architect; Ahmad’s work has been extensively exhibited, including at UAE’s National Pavilion at the 14th International Architecture Exhibition, Venice Biennale. She is also the recipient of the Architecture + Cityscape Awards 2003, “Designing for a new world”, under the category of ‘Aspiring Architect’. In 2015, Ahmad published a book titled; Cellular ‘Network’ City, presenting an investigation into the realm of algorithmic architectural design.

Marco Sosa is an Architect and Associate Professor teaching at the College of Arts and Creative Enterprises, Zayed University, Abu Dhabi. He holds a BA (Hons) and a postgraduate diploma in Architecture, and a MA in Architecture of Rapid Change and Scarce Resources from the London Metropolitan University. In 2012, Sosa published a photography book about the oldest functional mosque in the UAE. Sosa has also designed, participated and curated exhibitions, nationally and internationally. In 2014, Marco was appointed part of the curatorial team as Head of Design, for the First National Pavilion for the UAE at the 14th Venice Architecture Biennale.

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