Experiential Design – Rethinking relations between people, objects and environments

• Paper / Proposal Title:
Physical and Psychological Effects of Biophilic Design on the Elderly Living Care for Dementia

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• Abstract (300 words):
“Retirement is no longer an individual’s last few declining years but rather the beginning of a significant portion of an individual’s life.” (Wassum, 2013)

Although elder people are often considered as a homogeneous social group which is ‘passive’, ‘unproductive’ and dependent, yet, elders are anything but a homogeneous group. Not all seniors will become terminally ill the day after they turn 60. Older people can live vigorous and active lives specially if they’re encouraged to be productive, they can be economic contributors as well. As a result, aging has become a great challenge for the health care systems as it has been highly neglected the past few years in Egypt. Especially with the large growth in the oldest group (+70yrs old) that constitutes 31.73% of the Egyptian elders and 2.5% of the Egyptian population. Moreover, Research in Egypt indicates that many factors are prompting family caregivers in Cairo to employ formal or paid care-workers to look after their older relatives, despite the long-standing norms of family care. (Hussein, S., & Ismail, M., 2016). Additionally, many informal carers might not
be equipped or appropriately designed to the type of care associated with ageing, such as complex and dementia needs.

“Study nature, love nature, stay close to nature. It will never fail you” (Wright, n.d.). One of the main problems addressed in this thesis is the disconnection of elders to nature, as there is very little research that focuses on the importance of elders to stay connected to nature. The quoted statement explains the importance of the connection between human beings and nature, which proves a concept that human evolution, has been reliant on the natural environment, for a sense of overall well-being and personal fulfillment since the beginning of mankind (Kellert, Heerwagen and Mador, 2008). The thesis discusses how the incorporation of Biophilia and Biophilic Design is regarded as a therapeutic resource to promote well-being and functionality among elders with dementia.

**Key Words:** Biophilic Design, Well-Being, Elderly Living, Therapeutic Design, Interior Design, Biophilia Hypothesis, Environmental Design, Aging, Dementia

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

Alaa Sewaify was initially trained as an undergraduate at Al Hilal Consultancy Company at Sharjah, United Arab of Emirates. She later completed her graduate studies RIBA 1 in 2015, in architecture, minor Interior Design at University of Arab Academy for Science and Technology and Maritime Transport – Egypt, Alexandria Main Campus. She then worked as an intern at TEC, Egypt-Alexandria where she worked on numerous projects including residential and commercial. Three years later in 2018, she completed her RIBA 2.

She has been working from 2016 until now, as a Part Time Teaching Assistant in the University of Arab Academy for Science and Technology and Maritime Transport – Egypt, Alexandria. She has been teaching Graduation Project and supervising design studios. Her Goal is to achieve her PhD within the next four years, and to make a difference within the interior design field through her researches and degrees.