Experiential Design – Rethinking relations between people, objects and environments

• Paper / Proposal Title:
  Paper Dwelling Displaced Identity

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• Abstract (300 words):

In today’s ongoing crisis pertaining to adjustment to displacement, expatriation of refugees, reintegration and rehabilitation, it is fundamental to consider the issue of ‘identity’. Dissecting an ‘original home’, a family’s hearth, becomes a central design tool to understand and fully appreciate identity. In a contemporary culture that disseminates information at a speed that prevents in-depth analysis, quite often the intended meaning is lost. The purpose of the dwelling becomes blurred and its boundaries undefined.

This study will address interdisciplinary, superimposition, and cross-programming issues, with an aim to give birth to a new meaning. Communication becomes a seamless flow between reality and mediated reality, forming a heightened reality more real than reality itself.

The interdisciplinary process involves a re-thinking of design as it relates to narrative and to narrative as it relates to design. Tactic, rather than strategy, is employed. Allegory and symbol are avoided. Instead, the design applies tactics such as camouflage, trickery,
mimicry, wit, deception, guileful ruse and stealth, and conditions are resolved through crafty accommodations, not conflict - evolved not designed.

At Zayed University, students devised design solutions in scenarios ranging from a survey of their homes, to re-designing each into a different single home, then breaking the single home into multiple homes, and finally integrating an external philanthropic program into their newly designed spaces. The survey ascertained tools and vehicles, self and identity, memory and place, cultural and social trends, etc. The single home redesign established thresholds, programmatic conflicts and negotiations, spatial associations and dominance. The multiple home redesign addressed scale and proportion along with spatial compromises. Finally, the insertion of an external program considered interdisciplinary issues, cross-programming and transitional spaces.

The study’s objective is to compile and assimilate data, photographs, sketches and models depicting processes and parallels to develop a plausible link across identity and dwelling.

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

Karim Musfy is a seasoned executive and a design professor with over 20 years of international experience in development, consultancy and academia.

Currently an Assistant Professor of Interior Design at Zayed University, Karim has worked with several highly-reputable design consultancy firms including KEO in Abu Dhabi, Skidmore Owings & Merrill (SOM) and Perkins & Will in New York managing large-scale projects. He also worked with leading developers, overseeing global projects collectively worth circa USD 30 Billion.

Karim started his career in architecture with Eisenman Architects in NY, then managed his own practice in Beirut while serving as Adjunct Professor of Architecture at the American University of Beirut (AUB) for a period of 8 years. He also served as Assistant Professor at the American University of Sharjah (AUS) for a year.

Karim holds a Master of Architecture degree from Columbia University. He is a member of the Project Management Institute in New York City and the Order of Engineers and Architects in Lebanon. His work was cited in numerous publications including A+U and El Croquis and he is mentioned in Eisenman Architect’s publications Diagram Diaries and Selected and Current Works.