

THE FUTURE OF DESIGN EDUCATION CONFERENCE

JUNE 27TH, WEST HALL, AUB

We will be engaged in a compelling discourse with some brilliant local and international design thinkers and educators. With an ever-changing landscape and understand of design as a discipline, what are the challenges that educators face today? How about the cultural significance of the designs produced? How come sociologists are now heads of design schools in Europe and the USA? What is the difference between multi-disciplinary and trans-disciplinary design? What does the future of design education entail and how drastically will it change in the future?

CONFERENCE PROGRAM

10:00 – 10:00 **REGISTRATION / WELCOME NOTE**

10:30 – 11:30 **THE DESIGN CULTURE CYCLE** Michael Erlhoff, Linda Selwood Choueiri, Tim Marshall and Howayda Al Harithy

A healthy culture is a particular configuration of behaviors and values that connect a social group of people to a place in a way where all needs can be met sustainably by the local resources. Design is the process of intention-guided specification and implementation of changes within a given context. This large scope of design makes it one of the most extensive mediums with which a culture is engaged. "Design and culture are mutually generative of each other"; this means that design uses culture to create new outcomes while culture receives them and creates new meaning. Ideally, it is a self-sustaining cycle: design is democratic because it needs local participation in every part of the cycle, and at the same time it responds a range of design requirements demanded by the unique needs of the culture.

It is an age old discourse that the import of Western design to the Arab world has caused a cultural identity crisis in a multitude of daily circumstances and social behavior. If the input of Western design imported to the Arab world has clearly had its positive and negative outcomes on Middle Eastern people, is there a potential for Arab culture to influence Western design.

11:30 – 12:30 **DESIGN & SOCIOLOGY** Gordon Hush, Uta Brandes, Jamer Hunt and Ayssar Arida

With a growing focus on the social implications of design, and the need for research methods derived from social sciences, it is not a surprise that sociologists are now leading some of the most progressive design schools in Europe and the USA. Design is a young field of study and is now setting its grounds in theory, having focused more on practice in the past. Nowadays, social design is a common topic in universities; yet there are also concerns of design losing its practical and commercial side and concentrating too much on the theoretic and research-led approach.

How significant are those concerns, and how relevant are those developments in design discourse? What are some advantages and disadvantages of this shift towards social sciences? How do students react to these changes? Are there any dangers of losing the practical and commercial side of design?

12:30 – 13:30 **LUNCH**

13:30 – 14:30 **FROM SINGLE TO TRANSDISCIPLINARY DESIGN** Jamer Hunt, Marc Baroud, Randa Abdel Baki and Uta Brandes

Many fields of study are starting to expand outside of the classical rigid confinements single disciplinary education systems and encouraging more fluid approaches by borrowing from other disciplines. Within design education today, some schools still adopt the single disciplinary system (e.g. graphic design or product design), while others have moved on to interdisciplinary methods (e.g. combining product and graphic design). Moreover, there are multidisciplinary curriculums, which combine design with seemingly irrelevant fields like healthcare or environmental studies. Nowadays, trans-disciplinary design seems to be the latest addition to this discourse.

How do educators nowadays choose what disciplinary approach to adopt? How do schools ensure a holistic and complete education when the borders are not clearly defined? Is there a risk of throwing the students into too many design theories and practices all at once? Are there specific preliminaries or requirements in order to go beyond single-disciplinary design education? Is it preferable that it is learnt within postgraduate studies?

14:30 – 16:00 **THE FUTURE OF DESIGN EDUCATION** Gordon Hush, Michael Erlhoff, Tim Marshall, Halim Choueiry and Howayda Al Harithy

In conclusion of the day's discussions and developments, we will be hearing from the heads of design schools about the future of design education and the challenges it brings. What are some of the plans within curriculums? Will there be major shifts in the education system? Should we invest in cultural exchange programs between the Middle East and Europe and the USA? Will there be sociologists leading Lebanese design schools? How is design education in Lebanon developing its social aspect? Are there plans to develop beyond the single-disciplinary approach?