



dpu summerLab



## DPU summerLab 2016 series - *Beirut: Riverside Ecologies and Contested Waterscapes*

5 September – 10 September 2016

in collaboration with:

- Dalia Chabarek
- the Design Department, Académie Libanaise des Beaux-Arts / University of Balamand

The Beirut River marks the edge of Municipal Beirut. It was once a prosperous river connecting the valleys of the country to the Mediterranean Sea, and promoting a social and ecological existence that resembles a healthy natural habitat. In light of industrialisation, the river stood victim to major changes in the city. The Beirut port, conveniently located near the river, motivated the transformation of neighbourhoods along the waters into industrial zones, inflicting a drastic impact on their pollution. The river's concretisation in 1968 as protection from flooding left its waters scarce, exterminated social behaviours along the river, and converted it into an unintentional open-air sewage in the city. More recently, during the garbage crisis of Beirut, the river served as a temporary dump for the entire city.

Along the edges of the Beirut River are culturally eclectic neighbourhoods, currently detached from the city and in dire need of upgrading. Urban mobility in these areas are greatly demarcated by the deteriorated and concretised river which prevents natural interconnectedness. Further isolation is due to the social fabric of these neighbourhoods that accommodate a number of populations in informal, temporary and degraded housing conditions: rural Lebanese in search for employment in the city, generations of Armenians originally fleeing the Armenian massacre in 1922, Kurds from various waves of migration, Palestinian refugees of

1948 and later years, Arab labourers, and more recently Syrian refugees. Deepening the malnutrition of the neighbourhoods is the consequence of the fifteen-year civil war which put them under the spotlight in heavy battling and destruction.

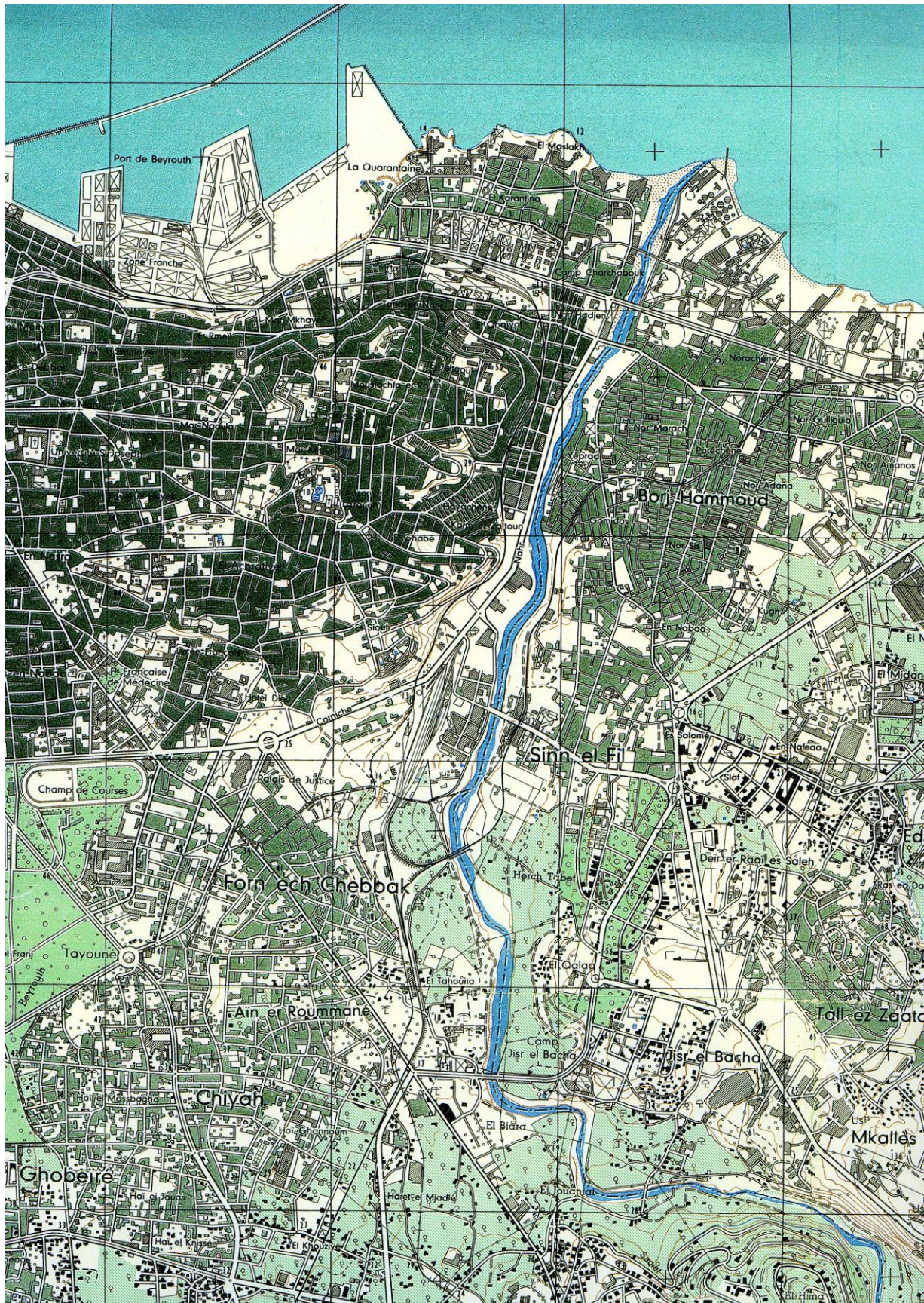
The Beirut summerLab 2016 will question the influence of a potentially natural element on its immediate surroundings, and as an opportunity for the whole city. Participants will learn from experts and activists that have been concerned with the river and its environment, and will reimagine the river as a naturally flourished corridor in the city. They will work collaboratively to perform design research on site, construct alternative narratives of the River and develop people-centred strategies for its sustainable future with the aim of responding to issues that have emerged in the research phase. The interventions that come out of the workshop will feed into the work of already existing initiatives to rehabilitate the river and its neighbours.

The workshop will launch with a city-wide explorative walk to provide an overview of Beirut's growth and development over the years, and contemplate the relationship of the natural versus the built environments. Following the walk, a series of lectures will introduce the case of the Beirut River, the sociopolitical and domestic situation of its neighbourhoods including Badawi and Bourj Hammoud, and some of the planned interventions that intend to improve its circumstances. On the second day, a "Toxic Tour" will focus on the Beirut River's decay and transformation from a natural to a toxic site. Participants will gather into groups for a brief research activity looking at the different aspects of liveability in and around the river. Following the presentations of their findings on the third day, participants assemble to final groups to research and plan sustainable interventions over the remaining course of the workshop to rehabilitate the river and its surroundings and present them on Friday evening. Site visits are organized on the third and fourth day of the workshop to Beirut's Green Line which demarcated the urban divide of the city during the fifteen-year Civil War, and to Dalieh, a coastal area overlooking the iconic Pigeon Rocks that serves as the last accessible open space along the Mediterranean and is under threat of real-estate development.



Omar Fakhoury, site specific intervention for TandemWorks | Date : 20 September 2015, removed by anonymous on 21 september | Banner, 3 x 24 m  
Translation to English: "I regret I won't be eating garbage and drinking sewage this season, for travel purpose" - The Sea.







## ***Draft programme***

### **DAY 1: MONDAY September 5**

Time	Exercise
9:00-9:30	<b>Welcome debrief</b> Group meets in Saifi Urban Gardens Brief introduction of the DPU summerLab by Camillo Boano and Vrouyr Joubanian
9:30-12:30	<b>Exploration of the City with Petra Samaha</b> This is the larger city stroll to set things into context
12:30-14:00	Lunch Break + Head to ALBA
14:00-17:30	<b>Talks <i>to be confirmed</i></b> A line up of different specialists will introduce different aspects of urban ecology in the city and the current situation in the Beirut River - Sandra Frem on Prosthetic Ecologies - Public Works on stories of old tenants in Badawi - TheOtherDada architecture lab on the Beirut River project
17:30-18:00	Debrief with Camillo Boano

## DAY 2: TUESDAY September 6

Time	Exercise
9:00-9:30	<b>Quick introduction</b> Group meets at Saifi Urban Gardens, quick introduction
9:30-12:00	<b>Toxic Tour with Yasmina Choueiri</b> Guided promenade of the river
12:00-13:30	Lunch Break + Head back to ALBA
13:30-14:30	- Camillo Boano from the BUDD programme at DPU on mapping and representation of urban ecology
14:30-15:00	<b>Initial Mapping of the River</b> Introduction of 5 different themes to be explored in relation to mapping the neighbourhood: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Economic and commercial identity</li> <li>• Movement and mobility</li> <li>• Social identity</li> <li>• Cultural manifestations</li> <li>• Environmental situation</li> </ul> At this point the students will pick randomly a theme from a hat and will be divided into temporary thematic teams.
15:00-16:00	<b>Explore your theme</b> (facilitated by Vrouyr Joubanian) Within each group <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have a conversation about your theme, and from your notes (information gathered since Monday) pull-out the insights relevant to your theme. Share with your group.</li> <li>• As a team select the three most important points in regards to your theme</li> <li>• Come up with ways to map the area and collect data</li> <li>• Prepare a set of questions to ask to locals and in the neighbourhood</li> </ul>
16:00-	<b>Field research</b> Prepare for field work by assigning roles to each team member (interviewer, note-taker, photographer, etc.) Gather the information you need and debrief within your team at the end of your field time to prepare for the next day presentations.

### DAY 3: WEDNESDAY September 7

Time	Exercise
9:00-9:30	<b>Quick introduction</b> Group meets at ALBA Debrief on yesterday and next activity
9:30-11:30	<b>Internal presentations</b> Each team presents their finding according to their theme. 10 min presentation per team plus brief feedback from everyone.
11:30-12:30	<b>Division into final groups</b> Based on the information shared earlier during the presentations, each team writes 3 major insights from their findings. Using the 15 insights we create clusters and allow for each person to choose the area of focus they would like to work with. Up to 6 teams.
12:30-13:30	Lunch Break
13:30-15:00	<b>Define the <i>problématique</i></b> (facilitated by Vrouyr Joubanian) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Identify various problem areas/statements</li> <li>- Hone in on one problem area that can be addressed by the team</li> <li>- Each group drafts a few HMWs</li> <li>- Identify stakeholders (who is affected by this topic and how are they affected)</li> <li>- Ideation</li> </ul>
15:30-17:30	<b>Dalieh visit with The Civil Campaign to Protect the Dalieh of Raouche</b> Walking and boat journey of Dalieh and the coastline

## DAY 4: THURSDAY September 8

Time	Exercise
9:00-9:30	<b>Quick introduction</b> Group meets at Saifi Urban Gardens Debrief on yesterday and next activity
10:00-12:30	<b>Experiencing the Green Line with Mona El Hallak</b> Walking through the Green Line
12:30-13:30	Lunch Break
13:30-	<b>Team work</b> Each team develops their idea further Mentors go around seeing teams individually  At this point teams are expected to have a clear idea for their proposal (Field work when necessary)

## DAY 5: FRIDAY September 9

Time	Exercise
9:00-9:30	<b>Quick introduction</b> Group meets at ALBA Debrief on yesterday
9:30-13:30	<b>Team work</b> Each team develops their idea further Mentors go around seeing teams individually  Teams have to start developing visual presentation
13:30-14:30	Lunch Break
14:30-17:00	<b>Team work</b> Each team develops their idea further Mentors go around seeing teams individually  Teams finalize their presentation
17:00	<b>Final presentations, discussions and reflections</b> Each team get 15min with Q&A

### ***Local Facilitators***

**Dalia Chabarek** is a sociologist with a Master in Urban Development Planning from The Bartlett's Development Planning Unit at University College London. She has experience working at the United Nations (Resident Coordinator's Office and Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees) and at the American University of Beirut's Neighborhood Initiative. Currently she is working at Sharjah Art Foundation. She is also an independent researcher and has published several articles and an e-book on borders, division, memory and identity in Beirut.

**Vrouyr Joubanian** is a Lebanese-Armenian multidisciplinary designer and the program manager at MENA Design Research Center, a Beirut-based non-profit organization that seeks to raise awareness about the social impact of design in the Middle East. He is the co-founder of Beirut Design Week, the largest design festival in the region and a former Fulbright scholar. He is faculty member at the Académie Libanaise des Beaux-Arts, where he teaches courses in design research and serves as the Design Department's outreach coordinator. Vrouyr has a Master of Industrial Design from the University of the Arts in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania in the United States and a Master of Product Design from Académie libanaise des Beaux-Arts in Beirut, Lebanon.

### ***Speakers' Background***

**Mona El Hallak** received her B. Arch from AUB in 1990 and her Master of Architecture from Syracuse University-Florence Program in 1994. She runs her own consultancy office with many residential projects built and under construction in Beirut. She is a member and founding member at several NGOs that promote the preservation of architectural, musical and photographic heritage. She led several architectural heritage preservation campaigns and succeeded in transforming the "Barakat Building" in Sodeco to Beit Beirut museum of memory after 15 years of lobbying. She is currently engaged in the "Civil Campaign to protect the Dalieh of Raouche"

**Petra Samaha** has a Master of Architecture from the Lebanese University (2013), and a Master of Urban Design from the American University of Beirut (2015). Her work focuses on the issue of public spaces in low-income neighbourhoods including Nabaa (Bourj Hammoud, Greater Beirut) and public transportation in Beirut. She has published in Jadaliyya and in "Practicing the Public" issued with As-Safir Lebanese daily, and is expecting to publish with AUB Issam Fares Institute for Public Policy and International Affairs.

**Public Works** is a design and research studio initiated by Abir Saksouk and Nadine Bekdache in 2012. By overlaying the disciplines of architecture and design with the study of urbanism, they aim to engage critically, politically and creatively in a number of urban and public issues in Lebanon. The studio also balances between commissioned work and self-initiated projects, an autonomous framework that allows for new possibilities of discussion and exchange to emerge.

**Sandra Frem** holds a SMArchS in Architecture and Urbanism from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and a DES in Architecture from the Lebanese University, both with distinction. Her academic research focuses on histories and theories of infrastructural landscapes, and the relationship between cities and water. Frem has been on the faculty of the school of architecture at the Lebanese American University where she taught architecture studios between 2009 and 2014. In parallel with her academic career, Frem is a founding member of platau | platform for architecture and urbanism, a collaborative practice based in Beirut.



**The Civil Campaign to Protect the Dalieh of Raouche** emerged in March 2013 to advocate for the preservation and enhancement of the role of Dalieh as an open-access shared space for all city dwellers and visitors. It is a coalition of individuals and non-governmental organizations encompassing civilians, parents and children, young and old, who are committed to the protection of Beirut's shared spaces, particularly its seafront façade as the asset to maintain the livability of the city.

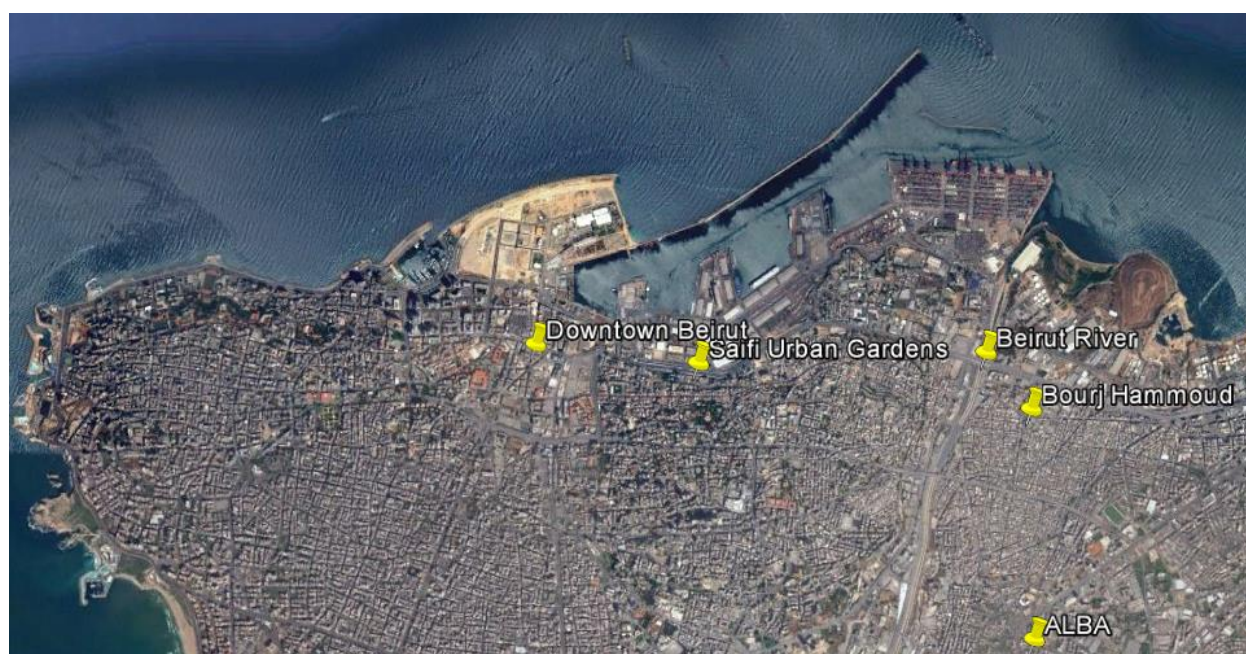
**theOtherDada [tOD]** Integrated Architecture Lab activates projects across architecture, design, and art by creating unconventional links at the frontier of science. Based on Biomimicry, tOD's work promotes a symbiotic relationship between nature and the built environment by exploring new ways of creating generous and regenerative buildings; in essence developing creative solutions that have a positive impact.

**Yasmina Choueiri** (MS Urban Environmental Management, BS Landscape Design and Eco-management) is an Urban Environmental Consultant and Landscape Designer, specialized in sustainable development with a focus on water management. Her projects at theOtherDada consist of landscaping, land-use planning, environmental architecture and bio-inspired interventions. She is also a researcher and lecturer at American University of Beirut.

## **Workshop information**

**1. Accommodation.** Accommodation for international participants of the workshop is covered by our generous partner ALBA. You will be staying at Saifi Urban Gardens (<http://saifigardens.com/>) on Pasteur Street in Gemmayze. The hostel is within close proximity to the city center (15 minute walk) and the workshop site (15 minute walk), and at the heart of one of the most vibrant neighborhoods in the city with cafes, restaurants and bars everywhere. Breakfast is included and internet is available. You will be sharing a bedroom with one other person, and each room is equipped with its own bathroom. Booking number: 96498725. You can check in any time after 2 pm on Sunday 4th of September, and you will need to check out at 12 noon on Sunday the 11th.

Saifi Urban Gardens is an international hub in Beirut, with a garden, an institute for Arabic language, a rooftop bar (Coop D'état) and a ground floor bar/restaurant providing Lebanese food (Em Nazih).



**2. Organization.** Group transportation and facilities will be covered. Meals, individual expenses, individual transport and extra nights will not be covered. Every morning we will meet at Saifi Urban Gardens and move collectively from there. Please refer to the schedule for timings.

**3. Daily logistics.** Every morning we will meet at Saifi Urban Gardens, unless stated otherwise. Please refer to the schedule for timings and locations.

**4. Health and security.** Here are some useful numbers for emergency cases:

Tourist Police: 1735

Lebanese Red Cross: 140

Civil Defense: 125

General Security: 1717

Beirut Rafic Hariri Airport: 150

On Gemmayze, you can find a police station, a number of other hospitals nearby, and various pharmacies. In case you need anything, please contact Dalia Chabarek from the workshop team (+9613969174) or ask the hotel reception.

The workshop will take place mostly at the site and at ALBA. On the first day of the workshop there will be an organized tour throughout the city. Movements outside of these locations will no longer be under the responsibility of the organizers of the workshop. Please refrain from moving south and entering the Southern Suburbs.

**5. Transportation.**

From and to the airport: the airport is approximately 15-20 minutes away from the hotel. It is advisable that you get in touch with a taxi company to arrange for pick-up. Taxis found at the airport tend to charge a lot of money, especially to tourists. Uber taxis work fine. If interested, please share with us your flight details, and we can cluster international participants arriving around the same time and arrange for taxis to pick them up. Please note that the taxi fare would need to be covered by you.

The airport is within close proximity to the Southern Suburbs of Beirut. Please ensure that you do not drive through the suburbs when commuting to and from the airport.

**Transportation within the city:** A list of taxi companies functioning in Beirut can be found in this link: <http://www.beirut.com/Taxi>. Taxi cars roaming around the streets of Beirut usually have a taxi sign on them. There is a difference between 'service' fares and 'taxi' fares; the 'service' is a shared cab you pull from the street and share with other random passengers. The standard fare is 2,000 LL per person (a little over a dollar), but in case of longer journeys, the cab driver would possibly suggest that you pay the price of two 'services' (4,000 LL) or the amount of a 'taxi' fare. The 'taxi' fare allows you to enjoy the journey without any random passengers, though the driver may attempt to fool you and stop for other passengers. The standard 'taxi' fare amounts to 7,000 LL.

**6. Currency.** The official currency of Lebanon is the Lebanese Lira, but US dollar notes (not coins) are widely used as well. The standard conversion rate is 1 USD = 1,500 LL.