

BDW2018 “Design and the City: _____”

OPEN HOUSE to present theme and new participatory approach

BDW2018

Beirut Design Week announces “Design and the City: _____” as the theme of its seventh edition to be held between 22 and 29 June, 2018. Under this theme, BDW invited designers to consider the transformative role of their designs in every aspect of life in the city, from public spaces to the smallest detail in the interior of our homes, offices and places of recreation, and “to bring forward their own visions of how their practices can contribute to good governance, social inclusion and environmental justice”

According to the curatorial statement of the upcoming edition, the theme urges designers to deal with the notion of design as an active agent of social change in such ways that express needs, desires and dreams of the city’s inhabitants. “Design is in every aspect of our life. It can be traced down from a simple water tap to a sustainable water purification system, from a door handle to cutting edge way-finding apps, from a small piece of everyday chinaware to 3D-printed food, and from a hand-knit scarf to space-tech. The endless list of possibilities in the design-scape is what constitutes and remakes our experiences.”

“Design and the City: _____” proposes to asks the following questions: How can designers across the wide spectrum of the creative industry channel ideas and skills to model objects, tools and structures that address blind spots, shortages and problems within the urban experience? And in what ways can they collaborate with other stakeholders (activists, environmentalists, artisans, entrepreneurs, agriculturalists and food experts, technology consultants, and researchers etc.) to face systemic and supplemental challenges?

Open House

This year, BDW has sought to adopt a participatory approach in all aspects of strategy, planning and implementation. A new development in BDW’s organizational structure, this approach reflects its commitment to its own curatorial theme and will culminate in organizing an Open House event on February 8, 2018 at antwork, Spears – Beirut.

The Open House invites designers alongside activists, writers, educators, students etc. in order to present the theme and the possibilities it opens to deal with design for a new configuration of sociality that fulfills people’s aspirations and perceptions of good living, equal representation and social inclusion. The Open House also aims to expand on the questions that are posed by BDW this year and discuss their concrete applications in every aspect of the design practice. Offering an interactive platform for exchanging propositions and presenting ideas, the event will enable a dynamic that pushes the understanding of the idea of design towards solutions that respond to the current needs of social transformation. Additionally, practitioners and stakeholders are called on to take part in every aspect of the organizing the Beirut Design Week for 2018.

Doreen Toutikian, Founding Director, commented on this new approach in BDW saying: “As we enter the 7th year of our national design festival, we would like to share and celebrate with you our latest developments for the upcoming year BDW2018. We’ve come a long way since our humble beginnings in 2012, and with every year Beirut Design Week grew alongside the design community exploring new themes, spaces, participants, and a variety of educational, inspiring, networking and engaging events.”

She added: “Beirut Design Week has always been a grassroots initiative led by a small group of young individuals with a passion for developing the design sector in Lebanon and building a supportive and self-sustaining design community from the bottom up. With these social values in mind, we now enter a new chapter in our history and we welcome a new team to center stage with a new methodology of developing the program of the festival.”

Ghassan Salameh, the newly appointed Director of Beirut Design Week, said: “Growing up in a city of great contradictions can sometimes expose us to insecurities which, if viewed from the lens of opportunity, can lead to change. Beirut has always been referred to as the city of creative export with many individuals succeeding abroad and partake in shaping other cities with their art and design skills. During the past couple of years, and for the first time in our recent history, the city is experiencing a rise in local independent initiatives and movements wanting to reshape our city to become a more just, tolerant and livable space.”

He added: “Beirut Design Week has pioneered in setting the Lebanese capital as a regional center of attraction for design, thus, contributing in the growth of the design and making community. Today, the challenge is different. As design is changing to become a more accessible and cross-disciplinary tool, our job is to create a more sustainable platform that meets this change.”

About BDW

Beirut Design Week is the largest growing design festival in the Middle East & North Africa, conceived to showcase Lebanese design and promote creative exchange with regional and international design communities.

Established in 2012, BDW is an initiative of MENA DRC, a non-profit organization with a focus on promoting a diverse understanding of design in the region through collaborative multidisciplinary projects and rigorous design research. For six consecutive years, BDW has maintained creative, educational, promotional, cultural, organizational, and financial partnerships with numerous local and international institutions with the shared vision of fostering ties within the local and international design communities.

BDW features a wide spectrum of design practices, from architecture to product design, furniture and lighting, fashion, tech, and graphic design. The aim of this event is to provide a unique and sustainable platform to support Lebanese designers, revitalize local design cultures and industries, and raise national profile as a touristic and creative hub by promoting cultural exchange.