## Ansam Abu Ahmad: EDU-SCAPE

The city of Nazareth has special status in terms of its religious, historical, and touristic importance. However, it suffers from several problems that affect the quality of life of residents. The project addresses two main problems: the first is related to urbanism, specifically a lack of public open spaces and increasing population density; the second pertains to education and learning methods used in the city’s schools. Although Nazareth has some open spaces, most of them are privately owned by churches, and they are fenced or surrounded by walls, which means they are largely inaccessible to wider society. Alongside this, the current education system does not use the outside environment, with lessons taking place only inside closed classrooms within school buildings, which cuts students off from the city. Indeed, there appears to be a commonality between these two problems—namely, a lack of public and open space. The research question is as follows: How can the development of educational environments mitigate limitations regarding open and public urban space in Nazareth? To address this question, the project reinvents the dialogue between schools and cities through re-planning of the city as one connected educational locale, where students can study informally anytime and anywhere. This involves delimiting a number of existing squares and defining them through the creation of new buildings, planning new public open spaces that increase urbanity and serve both schools and the city, and creating one system that connects them as an educational area that is integrated into the city.

##

## Lidia Abu Saleh: Of Steadfast Descent

Historically, the Druze people of the Golan Heights have been regarded as a steadfast community who resiliently safeguard their land and identity through the cultivation of their privately owned agricultural fields. However, this resilient collective identity has gradually been weakened since the annexation of the region in 1981, most prominently after ample opportunities for higher education were granted to the Golani people. Consequently, a significant generational dissonance is prevalent today among the Druze Golan population.

The project aims to restore this steadfast identity through an architectural intervention rooted in education. The intervention proposes a novel educational system where foreign formal education and local traditional knowledge are equally incorporated. Although the premise of this intervention is educational, the design functions in such a way that the different generations interact through architectural learning, as well as industrial, infrastructural, and social spaces located within the agricultural fields between Majdal Shams and Mas’ada. These individual spaces form units that ultimately contribute to a large-scale system scattered throughout the agricultural fields. The center of each learning unit comprises the existing locally built water catchments, which are used as functional tools for working and learning, as well as spaces of socialization.

##

## Nour Abuelhija: Greening, Growing, and Grounding

Wadi Nisnas is a unique, charming neighborhood in which each building has its own personality. It is the only Palestinian neighborhood that has survived war and destruction, and thus it represents Palestinian resilience in the city of Haifa. Given the history of its people and the uniqueness of its urban fabric as a Palestinian urban space, Wadi Nisnas holds significant value and potential. At present, this urban fabric is not reaching its full potential due to various issues regarding urban infrastructure. Thus far, authorities have focused on Wadi Nisnas’ ability to attract tourists, with little consideration for the locals’ dwelling quality. Such touristic activities implemented by authorities are perceived as a business opportunity for entrepreneurs; overall, Wadi Nisnas is seen as a space for tourists to visit rather than for residents to live in and express their culture and authenticity.

##

## Lour Fahoum: Pixelated Territory and Land-Shaping Mechanisms

The Dead Sea is deteriorating due to climate change and the over-exploitation of water sources for development and industrial human activities. This situation significantly affects the landscape, environment, and human activities taking place there. Consequently, the government has decided to assist the local population and regional authorities in addressing these damages and reducing associated risks by strengthening the infrastructure and empowering employment, research, and desert agriculture in the region.

The project examines how analyzing ecosystems and physical characteristics in each area can help mitigate the adverse effects of construction on nature and the environment. In other words, Pixelated Territory is an urban design project that aims to present a methodology for analyzing and planning sites more effectively based on promising approaches that address the challenges posed by climate change, as well as improving urban design through concepts such as landscape urbanism and design that incorporates nature principles. The methodology involves analyzing high-resolution data on the desired landscape and proposing infrastructure changes to produce simulated scenarios of sustainable urban development. The project recognizes the potential for developing a sustainable planning proposal to promote employment and research in the Dead Sea by establishing a research campus near Masada tourist and research points connected to Road 90. The proposed design has a small-scale focus to represent the architectural output of the suggested large-scale planning methodology. The ultimate goal is to utilize natural resources to minimize the negative effects of human interference in the landscape.

##

## Juman Ayoub: Maktub

In a uniform area, which may be perceived by an uncritical eye as one region, a straight boundary line divides the land into two separate spaces. This line, which is indiscriminate and based on no spatial criterion, passes by and separates neighboring houses. It carves up land that was once whole, gives and takes away rights, and separates generations of families without responsibility or consequences. In this context, the population of the village of Al-Walaja belongs to a purely functional space that contains extended families, who are often divided between the two areas of Walaja Jerusalem and Walaja Area C. Such families do not have the same administrative affiliation due to the dividing line. Although Al-Walaja Jerusalem is a residential neighborhood and not an open area, and though there is no intention to build infrastructure there, the Land Enforcement Authority inspectors visit the village frequently and issue demolition orders, which are carried out immediately unless there is an objection to the order’s execution. About 40% of houses in the village under the jurisdiction of Jerusalem are slated for demolition. In the absence of an outline plan, the petitions filed are dismissed one by one, and the demolition orders are executed shortly after the verdict is issued.

The project explores how the arbitrary boundary line imposed on the village can be critically used as a spatial tool for the physical presence of this absurd situation in which the inhabitants have found themselves. It provides a platform to realize the rights of the residents of Walaja Jerusalem and, at the same time, brings the realization of the physical expression of the almighty boundary line that carves up the land on its own divine whims.

##

## Shira Beery (Kinar): Sense and Sensibility

Our hearing capability is always activated, and we do not have the ability to turn our ears off, even when we are asleep. The sense of hearing in general and the act of listening in particular are important elements in the human experience, as they influence the way we perceive, feel, and remember places. One human factor responsible for activating our hearing and its influence on us is the field of music. The development of music, in all its genres, has spread throughout human history and has brought with it cultural changes and influences on human life and its built environment. The common guiding line for all genres is the structures that lead to the creation of a musical work. In other words, the structural rules of music are an equal point to how we perceive the process of building a foundation through the course of architectural design.

Like the effect of music on the listener, the role of space or architectural space is to instill a feeling within the visitor, to move something within them. Space provides a platform for connecting people, developing different interpretations of the space, provoking discussion, arousing emotion, and, above all, activating the collective senses. However, the way in which everyday spaces are planned in Israel today (i.e., the spaces between residential buildings in neighborhoods) denies the complete experience that architecture can provide, if only it is allowed room for creativity and sensual planning. The existing situation does not encourage a feeling of belonging, and spaces are lacking that facilitate interactions and experiences between residents and their surroundings. This places architects and users in a situation of monotony, emptiness, and the loss of broad sensory potential. Therefore, in my project, I present how the values, history, and foundation on which music is based can be combined to revitalize the current hibernating state of neighborhood planning. The design of spaces is created by translating musical building blocks into physical and architectural meanings. In this way, music is used as an instigator for planning and not just as an inspiration for all that it implies. The spaces are adapted to the neighborhood in which they are located to address any shortages in public programming frameworks. As a result, they provide a platform for experiential and sensory revitalization and human connection. The overall design produces a renewed intersection of values between the two worlds and contributes to conventional and everyday architecture multilayered sense experience, which has largely been ignored in contemporary Israeli design.

##

## Shani Drori: Tabula Plena

Since its founding, the state of Israel has been facing a housing crisis. There is a constant need for new apartments, which must be constructed quickly. This fact, combined with social, economic, and political interests—which have changed over the years—has led to monotonous and repetitive Israeli suburban landscapes. Such repetition, which manifests from the neighborhood level through to individual buildings, creates a sense of non-place. This suburban landscape style has resulted in uniform buildings and streets, making it difficult to determine which neighborhood one is in, whether it be Akko, Netanya, or Ashkelon. These new neighborhoods are being built on the periphery of existing cities, on lands that were once open—whether they were agricultural fields or natural uncultivated lands. Such spaces do not contain any values or characteristics deserving of preservation or consideration by planners. Thus, it is relatively easy to approach such environments as empty and clean slates. Such a “Tabula Rasa” planning approach, which essentially disregards or erases the existing environment, is even more easily taken in these empty open land reserves. Instead of creating unique and groundbreaking residential spaces, the approach encourages and allows for repetition and duplication, blocking any local characteristics of the Israeli residential environments. But are these reserves really empty? It can be argued that these “no man’s land” areas contain unique spatial qualities that can serve as the foundation for singular and unique planning. In my project, I demonstrate this new evaluation of these reserves, focusing on the area of hr/2,200 for the development of a land reserve south of Herzliya. By implementing advanced methods for parametric evaluation of the ground, I show how even the smallest nuances of the land can be translated into a high-quality residential neighborhood. Such neighborhoods can create an environment that meets all the needs of the modern lifestyle and harnesses local-specific values to achieve a unique habitat and a richer residential experience than that of the repetitive and monotonous spaces on offer today, while substantially increasing the number of residential units.

##

## Esther Guershon: [Missing]

Since the dawn of history, the existence of life has been dependent on water. Water originates from rainfall, which is divided into visible water (typified by visual and physical expression above the surface, such as lakes, springs, and streams) and hidden water (that is without visual expression and located below the surface, such as groundwater). At the beginning of human history we settled around these water sources, and, with the development of technology, we learned to channel the water. In doing so, we separated residential areas from agricultural areas based on natural water sources. With the help of technology, we channeled the water to other, often distant, regions. Further, alongside natural water sources man-made water sources were created, often hidden from view and far from awareness, such as via infrastructures hidden behind a fence with no access or observation point.

The project attempts to tell the contemporary water story, tying everything together in an integrated system: visible and hidden water, and natural and artificial elements. Revealing the story of water in the state of Israel, which is known to be arid, will highlight this resource as an important aspect of survival. In a country that is becoming more crowded, and where exposure to open spaces and nature is ever-diminishing, green and “blue” areas have many advantages in terms of ecological and environmental aspects, as well as in terms of human aspects such as well-being and mental health. The project deals with the discovery, dissemination, and exposure of the Moshav water transportation system between Gush Dan and the Negev while appropriating man-made resources as part of green areas. The project proposes the creation of axes that connect natural and man-made water from north to south, passing through sewage and effluence reservoirs; streams; water technologies; and local, productive as well as historical nature, and connecting city center areas to the periphery.

##

## Hamada Haidar: One City for Two Nations—Agonistic Spaces

The project is based on the research of Professor Chantal Moff, a political science researcher who discusses the concept of agonism. Agonism is a political philosophical concept that sheds light on the importance of conflict and its presence in political systems. Any attempt to solve this conflict will cause negative consequences, and, as architecture cannot deal with or solve conflicts, we should plan and design spaces in which such conflict can be expressed. The project deals with conflict spaces via a case study Lod, a mixed city with layers of national, historical, and spatial conflict, and with a Palestinian Arab minority that has been suffering from racism and oppression for decades. The city became uncontrollable during Shumer Humot, a series of events that led to many instances of violence between Arabs and Jews, which, in turn, led to the murder of Musa Hasona. Following these events, many tensions that existed in the city surfaced and became more visible than ever. This raises questions about how architecture should intervene, and how it can deal with the new situation. In particular, how can we create a fabric of agonistic protest spaces (spaces that represent the conflict and provide a platform on which it can be expressed) to address the national–political crisis in the city of Lod, and how can protest spaces be the main generator of urban planning? Such planning involves a fabric of agonistic protest spaces, each of which is characterized by a different architectural agenda. Some of the spaces deal with the development of open public spaces (e.g., the protest square), others with the preservation and utilization of existing historical spaces (e.g., the Khan Elhil), and still others with the addition and planning of architectural masses and buildings with diverse programs that serve various agendas (e.g., a city hall that represents the governing power or a political building that connects the Arab school with the pre-military college). The different spaces are connected by an elevated bridge that derives its shape from Palestinian infrastructure. This bridge passes through almost all of the abovementioned spaces and provides a third dimension (via height) to create another layer of space and more places to protest.

##

## Sagiv Hemo: [Missing]

In Israel, industrial zones have a distinct presence within urban areas, with many dating back to the country’s early years in the 1950s and 1960s. These zones have transformed over time due to changing economic and societal trends, which have reshaped their perception and function. Some manufacturing units have relocated from city centers, freeing up significant space that has been repurposed for commercial, office, and leisure activities. Simultaneously, older industrial structures have fallen into disuse. Although these zones continue to be important for consumer goods production and urban infrastructure, they are often neglected, becoming somewhat of an urban “backyard.” The question of the future direction of these industrial zones has generated varied perspectives, including proposals for their conversion into office and tech hubs. However, Israel’s compact urban reality, combined with advancements in industrial technology and its transition into a circular economy, prompts reconsideration of the dynamic between production spaces and urban environments. A novel approach would be to integrate the natural environment, agricultural practices, and urban design seamlessly into these industrial zones. By distributing industrial facilities across multiple levels, with nearby residential integration, challenges such as noise and odor disturbances can be addressed. Technological innovations from the Fourth Industrial Revolution facilitate this integration, fostering collaborations among industry, academia, and education. Furthermore, the model extends to managing energy and materials within urban settings, emphasizing the significant role industrial zones play in reducing urban waste. The proposal encompasses principles that link waste management with public engagement, spanning diverse manufacturing sectors and facilitating the conceptual separation between urban activity and the city’s infrastructure. Kiryat Eitanim in Ashdod is a distinctive industrial zone, located next to renewal zones and the sports district.

The project strives to embody the concept of industrial urbanism in Kiryat Eitanim, acting as a link connecting Ashdod’s industrial zones, port, and residential neighborhoods. From an urban perspective, the project is based on the spatial structure of Ashdod’s quarters, integrating the urban nature of Nahal Lachish and the surrounding agriculture into the green framework of this district. At the quarter level, the project creates a multi-purpose block with an industrial core, including residential spaces, employment opportunities, and mixed-use public activities that incorporate waste-treatment facilities. Thus, the project establishes an industrial–urban quarter in Ashdod: the iQuarter.

## Roni Hillel: Desertification Buffer—A New Desert System

Global warming and sand migration are changing living conditions and the surface of the land itself. This phenomenon, called desertification, is mostly caused by humans due to firewood collection, excessive grazing of livestock, and overcultivation. Desertification has resulted in the aridification of once-fertile lands in various regions, including Israel. The shifting aridity line in Israel affects soil fertility and the regional climate, leading to poor harvesting and living. To mitigate desertification, sustainable land management practices are essential. This project explores the climate approach in architecture, where buildings are designed and constructed to suit specific climatic conditions. It emphasizes the importance of using local materials and innovative construction techniques based on traditional approaches. Desert architecture, which considers the unique challenges of arid regions, can play a crucial role in addressing desertification.

Several strategies have been proposed, including the use of microbial-induced CaCO3 precipitation (MICP) to stabilize local soil and improve soil fertility. The project implements the MICP method in the desert region of Israel to rehabilitate the land through sustainable construction practices. By combining artificial infiltration of water into soil, sustainable building design, and the use of local soil, the project aims to mitigate desertification and restore the region’s environmental balance. The settlement area proposes various typologies of buildings adapted to the desert conditions, utilizing topography and environmentally friendly construction methods. Through a holistic and systemic approach, the project intends to address desertification while promoting sustainable living conditions in the region.

##

## Amir Kaadan: Metro-Ship, the Stitched City of Rehane, Wadi A’ara Area

The northern triangle area (Wadi A’ara), trapped between a system of heavy infrastructure layouts, hosts more than 200,000 people. This area is surrounded by the separation wall to the east, the Wadi A’ara Highway (65) to the north, and the country’s largest highway to the west. The people inhabiting the area are suffocated, and it lacks major land development projects. The proposed urban development project for the northern triangle area demonstrates a strategic approach to addressing challenges posed by infrastructure and separation walls. The region’s resilience has led to a unique ecosystem of cultural identity and specialization. By investing in urban development tools and spatial layouts, this project harnesses local strengths to create a network of connectivity that promotes sustainability and social collectivity. Designing a sustainable metropolis in Wadi A’ara is an intricate process due to the politicized infrastructure. However, any challenges can be overcome by leveraging existing resources and integrating diverse communities. A holistic approach to embracing the region’s natural attributes and carefully considering the impacts of infrastructure will help in developing a metropolis that promotes cohesion, sustainability, and economic growth. The planning of a metropolis in Wadi A’ara requires balancing urbanization with the preservation of natural resources and heritage. Incorporating green spaces, renewable energy, and efficient transportation can create a livable environment, and providing diverse public functions will enhance community well-being. Indeed, the integration of modular architecture will maintain the area’s cultural heritage while ensuring the standards of modern living are met. The progressive stages of development—from healthcare and education to sports and commerce—comprise a transformative vision. This comprehensive plan intertwines infrastructure and social progress, fostering unity, innovation, and shared aspirations. Ultimately, it aspires to create a harmonious metropolis that transcends conflicts and cultivates a united and prosperous community.

##

##

## Christina Kotov: Between Screen and Reality—Simulations as a Planning Aid

In the virtual era, especially following the COVID-19 pandemic, various domains have undergone transformations that have changed the way we operate. These changes have not bypassed the realms of planners and landscape architects. At present, readily available tools are underutilized at the interface between planning and the digital world, and it is unclear how the new tools offered by the virtual world can be better leveraged. In this context, I explore how pre-execution planning can be examined to meet the needs of the target population. The project “Between Screen and Reality” combines virtual-reality technologies and intelligent virtual agents. These technologies, drawn from software development and game design, are integrated with knowledge from the field of landscape architecture. This integration creates an innovative tool that is able to precisely, interestingly, and rapidly examine the effectiveness of planning. Additionally, the tool allows planners to understand how people interact with physical space—where they prefer to go, which points they are drawn to, where they linger, and where they encounter difficulties in usage (e.g., due to mobility limitations or visual impairments). The use of this tool is examined in the environment of Parents’ House in the new northern neighborhood of Tel Aviv. This environment contains other public buildings, with Parents’ House located adjacent to a hospital. The majority of people in Parents’ House have various physical disabilities. The ultimate goal of the project is to demonstrate that, by using the tool, a more accommodating environment can be created for the target population.

##

## Amiel Libling: The Leftover Network

Food, the resource that we all love, cannot live without, and are surrounded by from the moment we are born, accompanies us through various aspects of life: cooking for an upcoming holiday meal, shopping at a market, or even throwing it away. Food has played a vital role in the development of human civilization, and, prior to the modern era, it was also a generative force in urban environments. Living spaces were shaped around agricultural fields, supply areas, and food-reception spaces, all of which became integral components of city infrastructure. Cities themselves have evolved into tapestries that encapsulate the stages of food within their open spaces, giving rise to urban identities forged at the intersection of sustenance and physical space. Modernist planning, advocating for the separation of functions, has gradually pushed the food chain to the outskirts of cities. Today, the last vestiges of this history can be observed on crowded supermarket shelves or within the confines of backyard trash cans. In this project, inspired by architect Rem Koolhaas’ concept of “garbage space,” I seek out spaces originally designed as integral nodes of the food chain and that now primarily consist of vast enclosed commercial areas whose surrounding areas lack identity and are relegated to residual status. These inter-building areas, termed “urban garbage spaces,” have been neglected over time. I leverage this as a foundation to establish a new urban network, unveiling the urban food chain with reference to both leftover sustenance and abandoned spaces. The innovative network comprises a range of volumetric interventions that underline the significance of the backyard by introducing programs and structural modifications within these garbage spaces. This intervention strategy is applied to the heart of Afula, which serves as a case study. The city initially flourished as an agricultural center, where food held profound cultural importance; however, as the city expanded, food-related zones migrated outward, replaced by expansive supermarkets belonging to major food chains. By executing a series of interventions around and within these garbage spaces, I aim to unearth the historical food fabric of the city and its streets, weaving a new tapestry of public spaces and supplementary programs. This holistic approach will enable the city’s resurgence, facilitated by the revitalization of its “residue fabric.”

##

## Alaa Mansour: Elshikonat

The project in Tira, Israel, aims to create a housing planning method for young Arab couples that reflects their traditional cultural living patterns. By integrating the significance of land and place, the project encourages these couples to view housing as a lasting home rather than a temporary dwelling. The question that the project seeks to address is: How can the housing typology in Arab society be effectively adapted to align with the patterns of daily life and address the problems posed by land shortages?

##

## Juan Marjieh: Off “Shelf Buildings” and the Open Public Realm Effect

High-rise structures have become increasingly common in Israel and urban areas worldwide, driven by their capacity to maximize land use and provide living and working spaces for growing populations. However, this surge in a specific type of building design aimed at maximizing residences and workspaces in minimal time has raised concerns about the negative impact this has on the microclimate and the overall surroundings of neighboring regions. In response, a novel concept has emerged: shelf buildings. These are pre-designed structures listed in a building catalog that are capable of being rapidly constructed across a wide area. This study examines the intricate relationship between wind, sunlight, and buildings, investigating the effects of these aspects on the microclimate of public open spaces. It seeks to understand how such factors influence the built environment, enhance thermal comfort, and shape both internal and external spaces. To enhance comprehension during the initial design stages, a comprehensive methodology has been developed, integrating cutting-edge tools such as computational fluid dynamics, Grasshopper, and Ladybug. This integrated approach enables the climatic optimization of wind, sun exposure, and thermal comfort within urban spaces, effectively transforming the external climate into a proactive planning tool. By utilizing advanced technologies capable of analyzing, converting, and testing external climate data, the planning process gains a powerful new dimension. The outcomes of this optimization process can inform the development of an innovative architectural typology that harnesses the site’s climatic strengths. A meticulously designed complex showcases achievable values and novel architectural prospects within this emerging typology. Consequently, it prompts a re-evaluation of the symbiotic relationship between outdoor climate and the design of residential and urban environments.

##

## Uri Michaeli: The Seam: An Opportunity to Change Perceptions and Relationships in the Space between West and East Jerusalem

Relations between Jewish Israelis and Arab Palestinians in Jerusalem are characterized by pessimism and extremism, alongside daily life in spaces of contact used by both populations. Although the city advocates spatial differentiation, the multiplicity and diversity of the population, alongside urban densification, create increased friction between the different communities, which meet together in public urban spaces. On the one hand, such meetings may heighten conflict and be hostile and explosive in nature; on the other hand, it serves as an opportunity to see the other side and positively change the perceptions of residents and their attitudes toward each other. Since the occupation of the eastern part of Jerusalem in 1967, a physical and mental seam has formed between the Jewish and Palestinian neighborhoods. In addition to a huge functional and socio-economic gap, this legal–political seam is characterized by neglect and feelings of discomfort, fear, and foreignness. Thus, it represents a major obstacle to human and urban activity. However, as Jerusalem has high accessibility and a special identity in the eyes of the residents on both sides, it has great potential for the rectification and improvement of inter-community relations.

The project aims to create a common and active space along the seam: it seeks to expand and deepen connections between the eastern and western parts of the city; to increase the sense of security and inclusion; and to enhance the well-being of both sides through commerce, leisure, and traffic services near the home. To create relaxed and positive interactions, the intervention in the designated space aims to ensure a balance between the sense of place and the preservation of cultural assets by means of intensive development and the integration of elements that generate activity. The path to an existential alternative in Jerusalem involves the continuation of daily contact between all of its residents and requires spatial solutions that encourage coexistence and improve life under one urban roof. Due to its physical and mental location, the seam space presents an opportunity to create infrastructure for contact between the city’s populations and to shape their perceptions of each other.

##

## Shireen Saad Dawahry: Between Hod and Hud

Yearning, longing for home, or a desire for the homeland represent a recognized global phenomenon that usually stems from political, national, and social conflicts. In Israel, following the 1948 war, more than 500 Arab villages were emptied and destroyed, and their inhabitants were deported. The destruction of these villages helped to dictate a new collective memory upon which Israel was founded. The village of Ein Hud is a unique and unusual case study, since, after the inhabitants were deported, the buildings and texture were preserved and turned into an artistic space to serve Israeli artists—members of the Dada movement. Once full of life, the facilities have become scenic locations, and their original residents have become refugees a mere 1.5 kilometers from their homes. The original Ein Hud became Ein Hod, while the new settlement took the original name Ein Hud. Although the spatial and physical expression of identity and culture remains in Ein Hod, the original inhabitants fought for their existence in Israel and have faced many challenges over the years. Today, Ein Hod is a village that lacks basic urban infrastructure and is limited in terms of development areas; the inhabitants suffer due to illegal construction and daily observation of their abandoned houses. Although Ein Hod is supposed to be a continuation of Ein Hud, it stands today as a levee—dark and far from attention. In light of this, a question arises: How can a public system be created that makes the story of the original residents present brings back the abandoned ones, and fills the existing lack in the fabric of the village of Ein Hud?

##

## Haya Sarsur: The Web—Potential Versus Challenge in the Development of Kufur Qassim

Over the years, Arab towns in Israel have undergone a gradual process of development, from a rural texture to a dense urban texture. In most towns and cities, this process was not based on or guided by proper planning; instead, these areas grew and expanded randomly from a dense historical core. After the establishment of Israel, the Arab population grew sevenfold in the first 50 years. Despite this, in national and local master plans, the scope of lands designated for residential use did not change, and the restrictions on them increased through methods such as land expropriation, the imposition of significant borders and barriers, and a reduction in the designations of these areas and land uses. In the context of Kufur Qassim, which is located in the highly strategic central district, land-use restrictions are associated with several spatial, economic, social, and environmental issues, all of which have negative impacts on city development.

The project outlines a vision that utilizes the potential of the city’s lands and its unique characteristics, creating an opportunity to address the challenges of expansion while considering Kufur Qassim’s cultural and natural values, as well as creating a base for an orientation system to enrich the uses and empower the community. To meet these goals, the concept “landscape of recognition” is used, in which the urban fabric is revitalized by identifying and giving presence to local values. This will also involve emphasizing significant traffic axes, developing public centers, and utilizing the location’s olive groves to make them part of the whole network in general and of the open spaces network in particular. In essence, the project proposes a network of accessible public spaces that extend throughout the city through different stories and statements along the “recognitions” axis, including returning expropriated lands to their owners, strengthening and revitalizing the existing urban fabric, revitalizing the presence of natural and environmental values, and planning new areas for urban development.

##

## Gali Schechner: Between Cities and Fields

Israel is facing critical problems due to being a small country with a rapidly growing population. By 2050, the country’s population is projected to nearly double, which will make it one of the world’s most densely populated countries. This population growth necessitates a substantial increase in housing supply. Moreover, there is a corresponding need for Israeli agriculture to ramp up production to meet the demands of this expanding population. The country’s land resources are limited, and there is a need to preserve open lands. Therefore, to address the housing demand, urban areas must be densified. This also applies to agricultural land, which must produce more food with the same amount of land resources. However, the reality is that, though housing stock is expanding, agricultural output remains modest. In response to the rapidly growing population, the nation’s planning policy has created spatial separation between urban areas and surrounding open landscapes. This separation is physically manifested through highways and railways.

The project examines opportunities to share the urban fabric with agricultural land, instead of separating them from each other. The project suggests that cities can benefit from sharing such agricultural land, and vice versa. The research question guiding this project is: How can sharing land between cities and agriculture contribute to the quality of life of the city’s residents, and to increasing agricultural productivity? The planning proposal principles are based on research into spaces where land sharing already exists. These principles are implemented in Kfar Saba, due to its location within the densely populated Tel Aviv metropolis, and the agricultural lands that surround Kfar Saba. The proposal encompasses both urban and building scales.

##

## Dasha Subbotina: Teaching Environment

The typology of the school system, which was originally based on factory methods, has not changed significantly in the last century. Despite evolutions in the nature of the labor market and the skills that are valued by employers, the curriculum, and the way it is delivered, have not adapted to the young people of the contemporary era. Moreover, the entire education system is characterized by a physical and programmatic disconnect from society and the surrounding city.

The project offers a new educational concept based on a connection to the real world: the physical and the human. This concept entails a rethinking of the planning approach of educational spaces and aims to strengthen cooperation between students, teachers, and the various professionals who are involved in the course of study. The project integrates the education system and the city, such that the two systems grow together and depend on each other. The education style strengthens a sense of local belonging through its connection to the city, and, at the same time, the city facilitates these programmatic and physical connections, which are necessary for the development of mutual relations from a young age.

##

## Yoav Tebeka: #Unconsumerism

Beginning in the 1990s, and influenced by suburban planning in the US, the concept of the Israeli mall arose and a dizzying wave of newly built shopping centers swept the country. However, from the beginning of the 2000s, the surplus of trading areas, alongside changing consumption habits, led to the decline and abandonment of many shopping malls. In recent times, the launching of new city malls has been accompanied by a strong and unpleasant feeling of déjà vu.

The project focuses on the city of Rishon Lezion, where seven shopping malls were built in two years (1991–1993). Of these, six are no longer active, standing as empty boxes surrounded by parking lots in the heart of the crowded public space of Gush Dan. The project examines the community and environmental potential of abandoned complexes (and complexes that may be abandoned in the future), and offers new and sustainable thinking for their renewed use. Shopping centers, it is proposed, should change their purpose toward acting as affordable housing, strengthening local trade, and responding to public neighborhood needs while placing emphasis on strengthening the community. For this purpose, a construction typology is developed that combines residences, trade, and crafts and ensures the new complexes serve as an important layer in the urban sequence, rather than interrupting as in the existing situation. Such buildings should also be integrated into regional infrastructural systems, such as Rishon Lezion’s drainage system, which will contribute to urban resilience in dealing with runoff events. The project examines questions concerning the climate crisis, the housing crisis, and social crises, offering an array of planning tools for the sustainable use of similar complexes and similar phenomena in other places across the Israeli landscape.

##

## Timna Zauder Shchori: “Back Streets”

The Back Streets project was conceived out of concern for the safety and vulnerability experienced by pedestrians on the streets of Tel Aviv. In 2023, the transition from brick-and-mortar shopping to online shopping increased substantially, and an array of delivery services (e.g., Wolt and Yango) became widely available across many areas of life. This has created large-scale pressure on urban infrastructure. Today, the road network is struggling to accommodate the growing number of tiny vehicles (micro-mobility vehicles) and two- and four-wheeled vehicles, creating competition for space. As a result, traffic accidents involving pedestrians have increased, leading to a growing sense of insecurity when using pavements and public spaces alongside city streets.

To address these challenges, the project offers a system that is woven into and complements the existing urban network. Instead of competing on existing streets, this system incorporates unused areas between buildings that are currently used for parking, storage, or illegal construction to create a safe and continuous environment for pedestrians. It is an environment of intense streets where preference is given exclusively to pedestrians. This can be thought of as a type of “affirmative action” that does not harm the orderly conduct of existing streets while providing a natural opportunity for the development of processes typical of most cities in the developed world: hyper-logistics and digital consumerism.

##

##