Biography

Robert Saliba is an Associate Professor of Architecture, Urban Design and Planning at the American University of Beirut. He holds a PhD in Urban and Architecture History from the University of Paris VIII [2004], a Master of Urban Planning degree from the University of Michigan-Ann Arbor [1980], and a Bachelor of Architecture degree from the Academie Libanaise des Beaux-Arts [ALBA] [1974].

Saliba is the author of *Beyrouth Architectures: aux sources de l’modernité 1920-1940* [Parenthèses, 2009]; and *Beirut City Center Recovery: The Foch-Allenby and Etoile Conservation Area* [Steidl, 2004]. He has authored book chapters with Leiden, the Agha Khan Awards, URBAMA, and published articles in international journals such as *Urban Design International, and Traditional Dwellings and Settlements Review*. Saliba was the recipient of the British Chevening Scholarship for Post Graduate Research [1996-1997], and was a visiting professor in urban design and postwar reconstruction at the Department of Architecture, Technical University of Damstadt, Germany, during the spring term of 2011.

Saliba has acted as a land use planning consultant for international organizations such as the World Bank and UN-Habitat. He has also worked as a City Planning Associate at Community Redevelopment Agency of the City of Los Angeles [1980-1983]. His area of specialization is colonial architecture and urbanism with a special emphasis on the Late Ottoman and French Mandate periods in Lebanon and Syria. The research he does engages townscape interpretation and typo-morphology as analytic tools for understanding the evolution of urban form. His more recent research focuses on postwar reconstruction and urban design education and practice with an emphasis on emerging paradigms, such as landscape urbanism, and their applicability to the Middle Eastern context.

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR IN THE DEPARTMENT OF ARCHITECTURE AND DESIGN
Abstract

This informal talk will be a personal reflection on design teaching, practice, and research over the last three decades. Through a personal itinerary it will highlight how architects, urban designers, and planners narrate the city, how they engage with their discipline, and how they negotiate a distance “away from” and “in reference to” global disciplinary trends. Case studies in studio teaching, design research and consulting will highlight the changing townscape of education and practice in Lebanon and the region since the 1970s. The talk is built on the premise that design disciplines are in constant flux, that individual careers are in permanent transition, and that shaping the physical environment starts with a continuous willingness to reshape ones approach, understanding, perception, and imagination.