

4-20 September

The Port of Gaza

The 2023 UMAR summer school is a three week workshop programme, followed by a design competition, open to all the Mediterranean architecture graduate students looking to start and develop their practice in the region. This year's summer school focus on sustainability and resilience, addressing major infrastructural, territorial and urban challenges in the Port of Gaza. The programme is an opportunity for regaining this mediterranean port agency as a material urban entity, which has been denied due to the risk of "normalizing" an abnormal situation. The aim is to rethink the meaning of the port as an urban place, taking advantage of Gaza's limitations to explore a sustainable agenda which can produce new ideas to regenerate and intervene along the Mediterranean coastal cities.

It is a chance for future architects, from all over the region, to show their talent and get exposure and potentially interact and intervene within their community motivated by a Mediterranean agenda and knowledge exchange.

Important Dates

Registration: Register before July 30, 2023
Sessions with mentors from the 13th different UMAR state members: 4th – 20th September 2023. Monday to Wednesday (online) 17:30 GMT+3
Final Submission: October 15, 2023
Announcement of Results: December 15, 2023

Exhibition inauguration at venue to be confirmed: July 14, 2024.
The exhibition will rotate around UMAR's 13 member states.

Participants

Graduate students from different schools of architecture within the UMAR member states may join. As a goal we encourage the selection (through open registration) of two students from each member state (24 students), except for Palestine where there would be 12 students from the different schools of architecture in Palestine (3 students per school). These 36 participants will form groups of three selected through a lottery of interests to further develop the 12 design agendas proposed in the programme brief.

Mentors

A total of twelve Palestinian mentors, from different fields of study and interest, will guide each student team. These mentors will present their research and work in the format of remote lecture along the three weeks programme (one or two session per day, three days a week) and provide the

students with recommended readings. In parallel, a group of four faculty members from Palestinian schools will support the students with research material and facilitate remotely the discussions at the end of every workshop session during three days a week, from Monday to Wednesday. At the end of each mentor's lecture there will be an open session of Q&A for the participants that will be moderated by the four Palestinian schools faculty. This material, the online lectures, the research material and data, and the recommended readings will be published and accessed by the participants at the UMAR website in the format of weekly newsletter (alternatively these can also be shared by email on a weekly basis). The organisation encourage participants to work together in teams and in an interdisciplinary manner attracting support from specialists outside the field of architecture.

Jury

An external jury formed by four distinct architects, nominated by UMAR and the Jordanian Engineering Association respectively, will select the winning proposal.

Prize

The participant(s) behind the winning proposal shall receive \$1000. The jury will also decide on the number of honourable mentions to assign to the remaining participants.

The 12 proposals will be exhibited at venue location to be determined and to inaugurate on July 14, 2024 during the celebrations of UMAR's anniversary. Following the inaugural venue, the exhibition shall travel throughout the different member sections. It will also be published online at the UMAR website and disseminated through different social networks and architecture online platforms.

Submission

The submitted material must include the following materials, to be comprised in 6 posters with a square format inscribed in a A2, with 420x420mm :

- Location map of the area within the Port of Gaza
- Site analysis of the current condition of the Port
- Maps of the new design of the area of the Port selected
- Sections, Elevations and Plans of the proposal for the Port area selected
- 3D Views + Collage
- A written description and detailed sketches of the urban fixtures and agenda being proposed
- A plan detailing how the idea/proposal can be executed/implemented
- Any other studies that are specific to the design

All drawings should be submitted as PDF and may include multimedia formats.

Design Brief

The participants are invited to choose a part or an element of the Port of Gaza, and incorporate on it the list of agendas being provided below (a kind of Mediterranean Sustainable

Development Goals). The choice could be done as the result of analyzing the site and selecting a specific place the student think is in much need of the intervention or an opportunity for development, it could be a space the student frequent a lot, a space that inspire him/her or even an area on the waterfront where the student has spent time or related to a similar condition in their hometown or holiday town.

Participants are encouraged to be bold, daring and spearheading creative thinking in how they approach the brief. There is no limit but the limits of the imagination of the architect. The proposal should consider the multiple users of the public spaces, urban fixtures, waste management, safety, the environment, the rain season, and the feasibility of executing.

Below are some further details and guidelines as to what is expected to be included within the design/idea proposal. This is by no means a comprehensive list. Choose an area at the Port of Gaza and develop a proposal for it that considers the following open questions:

1. Environment: How can the port contribute to solve the most pressing problems in the city of Gaza (soil degradation, water pollution, salination, sewage treatment)? What environmental role in relation of the existing ecosystems can the port play (energy saving and generation, heat gain, air quality, use of local materials)? Do these phenomena change over time, over day and night, the seasons? Has the port (and its extended offshore and inland area of influence) macro and micro potentials at the surface of its material and built elements, in order to address climate change, revert the negative impact of fishing activities and motorised operations? Should the port water surfaces be used differently than the capacity to store boats?

2. Safety: Is the port a city constituent which can ensure safety, specifically for the most vulnerable? Can the proposals consider elements that would create safer public spaces rather than an escape way to the sea?

3. Waterfront: How to enhance the relation of the high dense urban fabric of Gaza with the beach and the port? How can the port and its material configuration work as a transition between the ground of the city and the waterfront, beach, sand and sea?

4. Aesthetics: How can the local architecture identity be retaken to develop and renew the port? Is the idea of wellbeing related to aesthetically pleasing? Is the acknowledgement of a unique identity that provides familiarity for those living in the city and working in the port?

5. Innovation: How can innovation be incorporated within the scope and function of a port in relation to its infrastructural condition, innovative program or construction technology and techniques?

6. Health and wellbeing: Could the port and its continuity to the beach become a local health and wellbeing spot in a very dense region and one of the highest growth rate area in the world? What kind of activities could be activated or incorporated to improve health and wellbeing? Can the port improve and reimagine the infrastructures of the city, stormwater collection, sewage treatment, waste disposal through other uses in the port?

7. Community engagement: How to engage the whole community living around the urban fabric of the Port and all the users of the space, independently of their condition (refugees, citizens, tourists, temporary workers, etc) in the short and the long term? How can this process of community engagement can build on the social fabric of the Port and the city?

8. Policies: What can the Port, its function, plan, structures, spatial configuration, building processes and materials teach us about the dynamics of the city? And how to intervene in the port for it to become a “sustainable” manifesto of a relationship of port- city and its people in order to extract good lessons from it to incorporate in other Mediterranean ports?

10. Circular Economy and Feasibility: Could the proposal be part of a circular economy strategy in order to achieve a feasible and sustainable proposal also social and economically?

11. Public Spaces: How to support all inhabitants' inclusion & integration in the design of public spaces? How can the Port be treated as a design and development opportunity to develop public space? Could it accommodate existing traditions of using public spaces for communal occasions? Can the new port encourage freedom of movement, inspire children's imagination as well as spaces of active and passive learning through play?

12. Urban Fixtures: How would the proposal be able to enhance the port and its surroundings through urban design and its fixtures [such as benches, waste disposal bins, clothes donations container, drinking water fountains, lighting, book exchange units, etc.]?