

By Rana Aytug

PARADIGM DESIGN HOUSE ABDEL RAHMAN KALOTI AND SAJA NASHASHIBI SHIFTING THE PARADIGM

Established in 2010 by architects Abdel Rahman Kaloti and Saja Nashashibi, Paradigm Design House is a collaboration of talented architects and designers whose main aim is to transform creative potentials brought by design opportunities into reality. Services include architecture, landscape, interior, renovation and rehabilitation and the team works with clients through an integrated approach where design, research and professional skills come together in order to deliver a unique and personal product. At Paradigm Design House, the team is fully aware that everything it does has expansive implications and consequences, well beyond architecture, affecting the environment, local economies and community.



Can you tell us how you both met and at what point you decided to collaborate and establish Paradigm Design House?

That is a great story of friendship and partnership at the same time. We met at the University of Jordan when we both were in our freshman year. This happened one day when I bumped into Saja as she was arguing with an IT course instructor. Her logic drew my attention and I immediately knew that she thought, in a way or another, like me. After a short talk, we both realized we had solid principles in common. From that day on, we worked together as an academic team, then as freelancers and years later in the same corporation. This is how we built a team with the same architectural background, the same experience and the same interests;

our architectural education and characters complete one another. As for establishing our own office, that was a vision we both had from the very beginning. We planned, worked hard and finally managed to make the dream come true.

How did you come about the name of your firm and what core values does the term paradigm reflect?

We both believe that the process of design is the most important element in the architectural equation. The more the process of design is based on model architectural principles, the easier it is to transform creative potentials brought by design opportunities into reality. The model thinking process integrates design, research and professional skills together in order to deliver a unique and personal





product. Paradigm means an example serving as a model, and this is exactly what we want to be. Accordingly and as the name implies, we are fully aware that everything we do has expansive implications and consequences, well beyond architecture, affecting our environment, local economies and our own community. We believe that it is only through design that we manage to perceive our surrounding natural and man-made world.

Having both worked in corporate offices prior to collaborating, what visions did you share in terms of what would distinguish Paradigm DH?

We both worked in corporate offices of the same standards and visions where we learned a lot in terms of discipline, organizational behavior and how to see the

picture through a wide perspective. Yet, we think architecture is industrialized through firms and corporate offices, which limits creativity and sublimates the design process in a sort of rigid mold, thus affecting the final product. Architecture is a form of art that should be practiced freely, without rules and regulations. Paradigm DH is an architectural lab where the experimental approach distinguishes our design process. The end product could be successfully similar to others but the experiments behind the scenery are what really count.

How would you define your architectural approach and style?

Our main slogan in design is "Less is more." We experiment with different styles through this approach no matter what the nature and scale of the project is.



Our projects vary from interior to urban planning and landscape all designed with the notion of "Simplicity is beauty."

The establishment of your office coincides with a significant time in Amman's architectural scene. In what ways do you feel Paradigm DH can meet the demands of such a promising yet challenging time and how do you feel it will positively contribute to Amman's architectural scene?

In such an architectural scene, we have one straightforward message: if you want to excel and stand out, keep it simple. Life is getting more sophisticated in all its aspects and we believe that our designs should bring a peaceful experience for the users.

What are some of the materials that

you are most interested in working with?

We appreciate simple, natural and raw materials. We experiment with new materials of different natures through diverse designs depending on a number of perimeters starting from the site itself up to the details of branding.

Paradigm DH set the stage for your design approach and vision. How do you feel you have succeeded in creating a sense of harmony and balance as a result of the interventions introduced?

Harmony and balance are both displayed at our offices through the duality in contrasting materials and the aim to experiment with something new. At the Paradigm DH offices, rough and smooth





textures, recycled and new materials, raw and treated elements all come together harmoniously to convey our main message: simple yet outstanding.

Which projects do you feel best define Paradigm DH and if you could choose to design the project of your dreams, what would it be?

Each project we design reshapes and redefines Paradigm DH. We learn, experiment and discover every time we open our sketchbooks for a new concept or idea. Paradigm DH office sets our design approach and vision clearly in terms of design process, concept, materials and ambiance. Any community-based project would be an icon for Paradigm. It is one of our sought-after opportunities to design for our local

communities in terms of experience, environment and quality of space.

As part of the generation of rising architects, what responsibilities do you feel are expected of you and in what ways have you applied them in your projects?

We believe that part of our mission is to preserve culture through our architecture yet introduce new technologies that reshape the architecture of today, enhancing the quality of space as well as the user experience. The latter should support our cultural identity and enrich it. Another quite important responsibility we should consider is our nature. We should use architecture to serve and protect nature through environmentally-friendly materials and sustainable approaches. ■