

A telling storey

Lebanese architect, Nabil Gholam, has become exceptionally sought after, not just in our region but across the world. With his ability to master the form-function paradigm his works are far more than simple aesthetic masterpieces.

Sculpting the facades of buildings is a complex task. Apart creating visual styles, the architect gives the nature and structure to our material world. He forms the system of space in which we live and move thereby providing the material preconditions for the patterns of movement, encounter and avoidance which are the material realisation or even sometimes the originator of social relations. This is precisely the forte of Nabil Gholam who cherishes the form-function challenge and his passion for urban planning and architecture continues to surge without bound.

Gholam continues to structure his original spatial systems in countless quarters around the globe, whether in creating a skyscraper in China, a low-rise in Barcelona or an apartment in Beirut. With his team of over 60 like-minded architects and designers, the brainstorm for modern architectural plans is a continually rewarding task.

It all began in 1994, when he founded NG Architecture & Planning. Since then the firm has attracted many of the best talents and

built up a reputable team of multidisciplinary architects, designers and consultants creating everything from hotels, shops and even lamps from the foundation up.

If truth be told, Gholam's journey began even earlier. At the tender age of 12 he visited Pompeii, a partially buried Roman city near Naples. The city's arrangement so impressed him that he decided there and then to one day be part of the world of urban planning. Just a few years later that journey began when he attended the Ecole des Beaux Art in Paris in order to strengthen his raw talent with a degree in architecture. After an additional Master's degree in urban planning from Columbia University, Gholam had all the tools he needed.

Right away he went to work in New York joining postmodernist Catalan architect Ricardo Bofill's Taller de Arquitectura, eventually becoming senior partner in charge of international projects. In 1994, after seven years of living and working in France, Spain, China and the United



Left to right: The AZ house has exhilarating sea views of the Jounieh Port; The Merit Corporation's main headquarters contrast with neighbouring traditional architecture. (Lebanon)

States, he decided to set up his own practice and founded NG Architecture & Planning in his home country. He further consolidated his business in 2006 by setting up an additional NG Architecture & Planning office in Barcelona at which point skyscrapers became his fixation. Now, most of his works are on the rise, and we're talking high-rise.


Amongst his expansive skyscraper portfolio, are the Doha Oasis Towers in Qatar that boast over 145,000 squared-meters of built up area; Icon, set in Beirut, located at the highest point in Achrafieh; as well as the Platinum Tower in downtown Beirut which is already the highest residential tower on the Mediterranean.

But Gholam is not a single trick architect and he often likes his designs to be more down to earth if you would excuse the pun. Take L'Hotel Monot for example; a 1950s office building that he converted into a hotel consisting of 8 floors, complete with luxury suites. Another NG leisure facility found a short distance away is the Aqaba Hotel & Resort in Jordan. This project recaptures the serenity of its surroundings, offering breathtaking vistas and an unparalleled architectural experience.

With such a breadth of abilities it is next to impossible to pigeon-hole Gholam. He and his team take on external works, sometimes entire projects from the outside in and others that include only the

interiors. The Patchi store in London provides ample proof of their skilled interior design work, a shop in which purple walls serenely amplify the richness and romanticism of the mouth-watering chocolates.

Adding another feather to his cap, NG has ventured into the world of customised furniture design. Based on simple geometric forms, the true creativity kicks in when selecting the fabrics, colours and detailing of the pieces.

Gholam's portfolio is as rich and varied as his influences. Widely recognised as the best young architect the Middle East currently has to offer. We celebrate his contribution to raising the profile of contemporary Middle Eastern architecture and culture. 

WHO Nabil Gholam

WHAT NG Architecture & Planning is a firm of multi-talented designers and consultants behind many of the world's foremost projects.

WHERE There is a design office in Beirut and another in Barcelona.

WHY Gholam's exceptional understanding of the relation between architectural form and spatial behaviour.

www.ngarchitecture.com



Above: Saifi Village, Beirut, absorbing the dual character of the site-bustling highways versus calm lining.