

Dialogues on Social Innovation

February 2nd, 2016, 6.30 pm

Venue: DAAD premises, 11 El Saleh Ayoub, Zamalek, Cairo

“Debating the Urban Fabric: Local initiatives and perspectives for transregional research”

Cities of the Middle East are undergoing immense transformations, making more urgent than ever the need to record, discuss and circulate knowledge, histories and reflections regarding such changes to our urban environments. In the aftermath of 2011, Cairo was a thriving terrain for the emergence of new initiatives that engage with the city in innovative and socially responsible manner. One way to positively intervene in the field of urban development is to stimulate public discourse about the city. This dialogue will explore local initiatives and perspectives for transregional research in Urban Studies. Mohamed Elshahed will present different initiatives such as Cairo Observer and the Cairo School of Urban Studies that attempt to make the city a topic of everyday conversation, not only for specialists but for the many publics that live and move in its spaces. Elshahed's contribution will be introduced by Georges Khalil, the Coordinator of the Forum Transregionale Studien, who will present different initiatives in Berlin, such as the EUME fellow program, that provide fellows from the Middle East with the opportunity to elaborate their research within a transregional perspective.

Mohamed Elshahed is a Cairo-based architect, independent researcher and writer. From 2013-15 he was a fellow of Europe in the Middle East - The Middle East in Europe (EUME) and Art Histories and Aesthetic Practices, two research programs at the Berlin-based Forum Transregionale Studien. He obtained his doctoral degree from the Middle East Studies Department at New York University and a Master in Architecture Studies from MIT. He is the founder and editor of Cairoobserver.com.

Georges Khalil is the Academic Coordinator of the Forum Transregionale Studien, Berlin. He is also responsible for the research program EUME. He was the Coordinator of the Working Group “Modernity and Islam” at the Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin from 1998-2006. Georges Khalil studied History, Political Science and Islamic Studies in Hamburg and Cairo, and European Studies at the Europa-Kolleg Hamburg.

The Dialogue on Social Innovation is jointly organized by the Cairo offices of the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), Freie Universität Berlin, and the Orient-Institut Beirut (OIB).