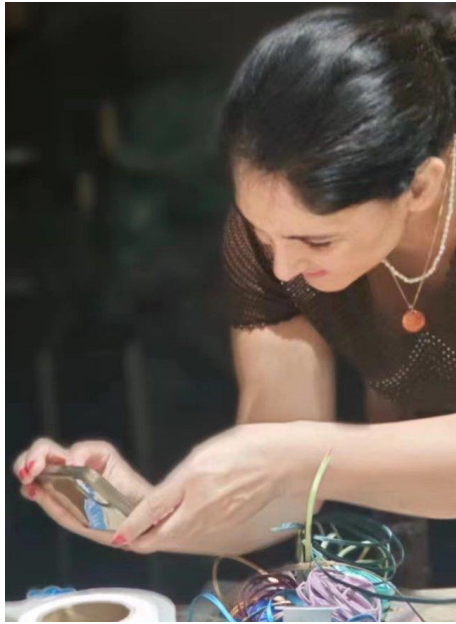


**Guest Editor:**



**Dr Dolly Daou**

**Member of Advisory Board for Cindrebay University's, Dubai. Co-founder and co-Chair of Food Think Tank, Cumulus Association. Kingston Citizen of the Year 2024, Australia**

*Dr Dolly Daou is on the advisory board of Cindrebay University in Dubai and since 2018, Dr Daou has been the co-founder and co-chair of Food Think Tank, Cumulus Association. In recognition for her career trajectory, Dr Daou achieved the Kingston Community Award of Citizen of the Year (2024) And was the finalist for Kingston Community Award, Women of Year (2024). Dr Daou was also awarded Al-Safeer Congress Ambassador Award from the Ministry of Economy and Tourism in Dubai.*

*Dr Daou completed a PhD in the reconstruction of cities and communities in the fields of architecture, interior architecture, urban design and anthropology. Dr Dolly Daou's academic experience in design education and research spans over 25 years,*

***of establishing higher education programs and leading non-for-profit organisations in Australia, Asia, Europe and in the Middle East. After establishing the Interior Architecture Program at Swinburne University of Technology, Dr Daou was invited to lead the Food Design Lab at l'École de design Nantes Atlantique in France. Dr Daou's global and multi-disciplinary experience, established the platform of her distinctive knowledge and expertise in higher education design programs and in non-for-profit organisations. Combining her Doctorate knowledge in interior architecture and urbanism with ecological management of food and natural resources, Dr Daou became one of the global food design experts with distinctive trans-disciplinary and multi-disciplinary skills and knowledge. Her expertise led her to develop and to transform theoretical research into impactful economical and ecological outcomes for higher education and for organisations.***

***Dr Daou collaborated with policy-makers to influence policies and to develop community projects. Also, Dr Daou established design entrepreneurship programs with a successful record of transforming ideas into business ventures. Dr Daou is author to many publications including: Unbounded on the Interior and Interiority (Cambridge scholars) and co-editor of Food Transformations: Adaptability, Connectivity and Identity (in-print by Routledge). <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5113-818X> Google Scholar: Dr Dolly Daou. Website: <https://dollydaou.org/>***

## **Editor's Note:**

### **20:20 Celebrating Women Designing Design Part I and II: Receptivity and Expressions**

*Dr Dolly Daou*

**I am privileged to have been invited for the third time as a Guest Editor at Design For All for their February and March 2025 special issues, to celebrate their 20-year anniversary. I wish to thank Dr Sunil Bhatia for inviting me as the guest editor to celebrate a significant milestone in Design For All's history and for all the authors who accepted my invitation and are trusting me to share their voices and to celebrate their achievements.**

**For 20 years, uninterrupted Design For All, demonstrated its commitment to high standard of design and research by inviting: authors, thought leaders and academics as guest editors for their monthly publications. To celebrate its anniversary Design For All is dedicating its 2025 publications to honour women designers. The February and March 2025 special issues are linked together through their celebration of 20 women designers; each special issue will feature 10 authors. I have titled the February special issue: 20:20 Celebrating Women Designing Design Part I: Receptivity, and for the March issue 20:20 Celebrating Women Designing Design Part II: Expression. These titles represent the ratio of 20 year-anniversary of Design For All to 20 remarkable authors. The authors were invited from a global network with a verified knowledge of their track record in contributing to designing design; many I have collaborated and/or I am currently collaborating with. Although only 20 women designers are celebrated in these issues, there are thousands of other designers**

from different genders that deserve to be recognised for their contribution to design. This opens an opportunity, for this project to continue to evolve into an archive of documenting the history of design through the celebration of people's trajectories and design contributions.

I have kept the same Editor's Note for both special issues to position and link the context, process and purpose of both publications in addition to explaining the background of Design For All. The process began by inviting authors from different disciplinary backgrounds to share their thoughts, stories and knowledge by writing 1000-2000 words on a topic of their choice. Through academic articles, essays, and reflective writing each author selected their topic based on their own reflections, disciplines, professional experiences and career trajectory. As the authors were designing their own lives and careers they were also designing and contributing to design.

The original intention of this special issue has been to position and recognise the achievements of the authors, by offering an open platform for authors to share their voices and trusting that their voices will be heard, respected, recognised and appreciated. During the editing process, as I abided by the scholarly standards of academic publications, I ensured minimum intrusion on the writing. I kept the authors' original voices, uninfluenced and in their original cultural, and linguistic context, meaning and purpose. The authors' voices expressed the urgency of the design state and of the issues facing design at the present moment, to be heard now globally and across sectors.

The outcome of this special issue evolved into two rich depositories of design knowledge from a diversity of design topics, disciplines,

language and cultures. The articles demonstrate the value of the universal language of design practice, education and research globally. The February and March special issues combined include articles written by twenty authors from seventeen different countries across five continents and different design and architectural disciplines, which demonstrate the receptivity of design and the diversity of the authors' expressions.

The value of these papers are in the topics and their reflections on the authors' career trajectories and their definition of design, as an open, adaptable, and a relevant discipline. In both issues, new disciplines, thought processes, storytelling advocacy, methods, methodologies, and perspectives are introduced to show the value of design in our lives and in education and practice across sectors.

The journal issues were designed sequentially to celebrate the different areas of design. The February issue is part I of the 20:20 Celebrating Women Designing Design, and explores the different definitions and openness of design beyond a singular discipline, which reflects its receptivity and adaptability. The March Issue is Part II of the 20:20 Celebrating Women Designing Design and explores design expressions, through storytelling advocacy, cultural contexts, sustainable and ecological design, inspirational career trajectories and questions on higher education internationalisation and funding.

The cover image shows a perspective through the glass at the Le Louvre in Abu Dhabi. I have used the same cover page as a visual link between Part I and Part II, to represent the visual identity of 20:20 Celebrating Women Designing Design. The image was selected due its representation of the two design themes of these special issues: receptivity and expression. Through this cultural

exchange, the architect Jean Nouvel, combined both the French and the Emirati's cultural context and identity, expressing the receptivity of both cultures and the historical significance of Le Louvre. Similarly, the 20 authors across continents unite through their receptivity, and through their expression of their design contribution, based on their different cultural and disciplinary perspectives and experiences. The text that appears on the glass, is the first part of Rumi's quote in English and in French, which adds another cultural and lingual dimension and meaning. The original quote is: 'Everything in the universe is within you'. This quote reflects the authors' creative achievements and contribution; their internal calling and purpose led them to being open and receptive in their careers for the possibilities of design receptibility and expressions.

It has been an inspirational experience working on these special issues with incredible women, and witnessing these two archives of design storytelling come together. I invite you to read, understand and respect the voices of the twenty influential authors, who continue to inspire, motivate and contribute to designing design, across disciplines and continents. As I celebrate with Design For All their 20-year anniversary, I also celebrate the achievements of the twenty women and every person who is designing their own life trajectory, while contributing to their local and global community. With the hope that this publication will evolve into an impactful project to narrate more successful stories and to celebrate the value of design.

# **Designing for humanity: Food interior and the urban**

*Dr Dolly Daou*

## **Abstract**

**Similar to the inspirational authors in this special issue, I am sharing my story and voice to present and link the major career milestones that contributed to designing my professional life. We design according to what we know, our personal memories and our everyday experience are revealed through the choices we make in life and through the design processes. These experiences influence our: creativity, limitations, innovations, and choices of topics and disciplines. My personal background led me towards designing my life based on my multi-cultural and trans-disciplinary experience and background. I chose interior design as my discipline, and through my PhD I combined interior design with architecture, urban design and anthropology. This multi-disciplinary topic prepared me to be open and adaptable to different disciplines and expanded my area of research into food design and into design strategies based on my interior design education, research and practice. This article will describe my three main areas of research: The interior of urbanity, food and identity and food design entrepreneurship education. These milestones explain how my bespoke design research methodology contributed to design, by combining interior design, food design and entrepreneurship education.**

## **The centre of our being**

**There has been many milestones in my career trajectory that led me to develop distinctive skill-sets and designed my identity by**

**working across disciplines, cultures and continents, mainly in: Australasia, Europe and the Middle East. In 'Over the Mainstream' in DIDI's special issue, upon the invitation of Andrea Sicklinger (2002), I wrote: 'The essence of design is to push boundaries of innovation and to question: what else is out there? And how can we do things differently' (Daou, 2020, p. 192). This is how I led my personal and professional life to continue to push the design boundaries in education, research and in practice. I have demonstrated this creativity through global projects and in my leadership roles. During my collaborative projects I practice trans-disciplinary and transcultural design working between academia, industry, research and government. I am currently collaborating on these projects with some of the authors who contributed to this special issue. I will explain this collaboration further in the sections below titled: Interior of urbanity, Food and identity and Food design entrepreneurship education. These sections are linked through the innovation of design research and through the adaptability of my design research methodology. Interior design philosophy, research and practice is the platform that I expanded on and adapted to explore food design research and entrepreneurship.**

**My interior design education played a significant role in expanding my trans-disciplinary knowledge and expertise to design beyond the scope of interiority. In addition, my professional global network played a key role in supporting my career trajectory, sharing knowledge, and expertise and shifting my perspective towards a new cultural and disciplinary knowledge. I also take into account the role of my personal multi-cultural and trilingual background (English, French and Arabic), as an Australian from a Lebanese and a Francophone origin, who lived, worked and led programs and organisations across continents. This offers the reader context into my trans-disciplinary and trans-cultural career trajectory driven by**



my passion for design.

### **The interior of urbanity**

Through interior design education, research and practice I developed an in-depth knowledge into other disciplines, such as: architecture, urban design and social behaviour. I was introduced to inhabitation and placemaking from an interior design context, and that was my point of departure. On my first day in the interior design program, I knew I wanted to become an academic and selected my post-graduate topic. My Doctorate was titled 'Beirut: the absent vision' and comprised of two volumes: The thesis and the Book of Maps. I explored the city centre as an external urban place with interior qualities. I examined how war and violence transform the city's identity as it transforms its urban fabric, based on people's memories and everyday, using Beirut, Berlin, Sarajevo and Mostar as case studies. Through my PhD, I inhabited virtually old Beirut, 'the Paris of the East'. In the book of maps, I collected maps from the French archives to document the evolution of Beirut's site and urban maps from the Pre-Palaeolithic period until 2005. This methodology was recently revisited and adapted into a landscape architectural project revived by my former PhD supervisor Dr. Gini Lee. The project is on the lost garden of Altichiero near Padua. I was introduced to this project in 2006, when I translated a diary written in French by Justina Wynn, Countess Orsini Rosenberg. Through our collaboration, Gini and I will be applying our transdisciplinary and transcultural experiences from design and architectural perspectives.

### **Food and identity**

Food design, was established in Europe, in the 1980s, known in Australia and in many other countries as food innovation. Upon my

return to Australia from Europe, I introduced food design by writing an industry paper for the *Fight Food Waste Cooperative Research Centre* at RMIT titled: 'Food Design methodology' and an opinion piece for the *Fifth Element* titled 'healthy planets, healthy community'. I have noticed that every country develops its own cultural context on food design, especially when it comes to food identity and its socio-economic values. I was first introduced to food design at l'École de design Nantes Atlantique, where I was invited to become the Director of the Food Design Lab in 2018 (at the time the lab was called New Eating Habits). I am often asked, what does design has to do with food? Or what is the link between interior, urban design and food? The link is the methodology of design research, to generate new food systems and eating habits and innovate solutions to achieve a balance between ecology and economy. In the last few decades, especially due to the climate crisis there has been a major shift from designing for humans to designing for humanity. Humanity means all beings, placing the health and well-being of the planet at the centre, rather than the need for consumption. I define food design as: '... the study of the relationship between people and their natural and built environments'. I explore in my research the simultaneous relationship between eating habits and our natural and inhabited environments based on the sensory experience.

I have developed my own bespoke methodology that ensures tangible outcomes for organisations and institutes to achieve economic and ecological values specifically in food design. This involves the methodology, philosophy, practice and research of interior design combined with design strategy. Through this methodology I develop the interior and exterior context of the urban, which includes micro and macro habits and systems of inhabitation and of placemaking. The inhabitation of these spaces

also require an understanding of our daily behavioural patterns, and how it influences our, sensory experience, and our eating habits, which ultimately influences our built and natural environments. I collaborate with social science, food engineering, and business to develop tangible projects analysing and questioning the pressure on natural resources and the efficiency and viability of food systems. To explore these topics further I am publishing a co-edited book with Professor Melanie Sarantou titled: *Food Transformation, Adaptation, Connectivity, and identity*, which will be published by Routledge. The book will explore the evolving relationship between people and food migration from a food design perspective. We invite global experts in food across disciplines to write articles on the process of food transformation and connectivity during migration, which leads to the adaptation of new food identity. This reinforces the role of food design, which is to design for humanity.

### **Food Entrepreneurship Education**

In a previous article for Design For All, where I was an invited guest editor for their October 2023 special issue, which I titled: 'Entrepreneurship mindset in design', I explored the cultural differences between design innovation and entrepreneurship. During my leadership to the Food Design Lab at l'École de design Nantes Atlantique I combined the food design process with entrepreneurship mindset to develop a food design entrepreneurship education strategy. Writing on this process I explained: 'Entrepreneurship mindset in design is combining successful design idea with a successful business strategy for the 'moral good' of the community and for a sustained economic growth. From the first idea the designer and the entrepreneur are building their process on a potential; they both take risks (*entreprendre*) and action to experiment and transform ideas that

**make a difference in people's lives. However, the main point of difference in the mindset between a designer and an entrepreneur is the validation of the idea by transforming it into a profitable business, based on market needs." (Daou, 2023, p. 11-12)**

**I have adapted this strategy to other disciplines and recently applied it in my leadership to an Art and Technology design program in China, with successful award-winning records. I start with a premise that every creative project has the potential to evolve into an entrepreneurship project based on the mindset of the innovator.**

### **What's next**

**As a guest editor of this issue, I have been inspired by the trajectory of the authors, many have supported me on my own trajectory and we continue to collaborate together. In this article, I am celebrating my own achievements as well as the achievements of my network, which played a key role in encouraging my success, adding to my knowledge and allowing me to shift my perspective as a interior designer and a food design researcher**

**In my career I have followed many paths, combining interior design, urban design, food design, and architecture to create my unique design identity, signed by my experience and my design ethos and life philosophy. Even if people try to copy or use these methods and follow the same path it will not be the same, it will evolve into something new. Interior design was the platform and the spark that ignited my trans-disciplinary career, while my multicultural perspective was part of my personal life and my upbringing. As I continue to build upon my education, personal and professional global career I open the potential to expand into new horizons, and new perspectives, to inhabit the limitless possibilities**

**of design. This is the essence of design spirit and mindset.**

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