

SCRIPT: Behind the Walls of AUC

Yara Deghidly
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Link: <https://soundcloud.com/user-149867029/behind-the-walls-of-auc>

Lead in: This audio feature is done on the architecture of the AUC campus because it's one of the best campuses globally and has a very unique design done with the contribution of an international team of architects with 7 firms from 3 different countries.

MUSIC: Fade in "Welcome Algeria" by Fenek Studio [copyrights free]. (1.48 min.)

Because the American University in Cairo (AUC) campus has been always known globally as one of the best university campuses with its unique design, this audio feature is made to discuss the architecture of AUC featuring architect Amira Ayman and Omar Ayyad. (15.0 sec.)

Omar Ayyad is an engineer who made a diploma in Islamic architecture. Omar explains that Islamic architecture is always tied to mosques and religious style, however it encompasses both sacred and secular styles. (12.0 sec.)

SOUNDBITE: OA: This term developed in the Islamic period, and it has distinct characteristics. Those characteristics belong to the 7th century. (9.0 sec.)

He also describes that what distinct Islamic architecture in character is the use of calligraphy, decorative details, geometric patterns, and lots of other techniques. (9.0 sec.)

Not only the aesthetics of the AUC campus that grabbed people's attention globally, but also the sustainable design of the campus. It took several awards for being one of the most environmentally friendly institutions among lots of countries. (12.0 sec.)

SOUNDBITE: OA: It's not just about the Islamic styles that give a unique identity, but also the purpose it was made for. It was featured several times as one of the most sustainable campuses, and are still working on the things that I'm sure would have a

great impact. The campus as a whole is made in a very smart way, the design combines the beauty of the Islamic architecture with modernity. (26.0 sec.)

This is reflected on the huge area of greenery on campus, the trees, palms, and fountains that you can see everywhere while walking through the campus. (8.0 sec.)

NAT SOUNDS: Water fountain sounds and walking steps in the gardens area. (6.0 sec.)

Architect Amira Ayman will talk about the architectural identity of the American University in Cairo. She graduated from the school of architecture and design, and did her master's degree in Islamic art and architecture. (10.0 sec.)

MUSIC: "Mezyena" by Fenek Studio [copyrights free]. (2.06 min.)

SOUND BITE: AA: First of all I'm extremely interested in history and how history and politics and like everything social reflects on architecture and art. But the reason I actually started being interested in this was because my grandfather did the renovation of the Kaaba in Mecca years and years back, and many years ago before he passed away he told me that he's interested in writing a book about it. He had some rare documents and photos and he asked me to assist him. (30.0 sec.)

Amira's grandfather unintentionally pulled her towards Islamic art, and that's when she decided to pursue that path. (7.0 sec.)

SOUND BITE: AA: My attention slowly started turning towards these buildings or the architecture itself. Obviously I live in Egypt so I was very immersed in this culture and I understood a lot about it. (13.0 sec.)

Although AUC is a westernized institution, it succeeded heavily in being one of the very few places to use Islamic architecture in intricate ways that reflects the Egyptian culture and history. (11.0 sec.)

SOUND BITE: AA: So, I don't really think it's really hard to embed the Egyptian, and like, I'd say Islamic culture into AUC even though it's a westernized university. It is in Egypt and serving mostly Egyptians and it's really important that it fits within the culture, so yes, even though we see patterns on the wall, even behind the logos, I'd say like, fabric, some of them they have a bit more of like an Islamic or like Egyptian inspired design, because yes even though we see certain things with our own bare eyes, but character is really what you feel with your heart, what you get to experience from the architecture. So I believe this is actually the most important part, and this is not the part where you see, it's the part you experience, and architecture is really about experiencing. (50.0 sec.)

There are great differences between both AUC campuses in terms of size, location, and the time when they were built, yet, a lot of people feel that both have the same identity in the use of Islamic architectural styles. (12.0 sec.)

SOUND BITE: AA: They're very different in terms of concepts and everything. But then it comes in a city context, and I don't think it was built all at the same time. The nature of its settings and surroundings is basically the urban fabric around it seems like it really influenced it. That's entirely different from the new campus because it was bought as a very huge piece of land. And they had a lot of control so they didn't really have very strict boundaries and they were not building within a city fabric. (35.0 sec.)

MUSIC: "Welcome Algeria" by Fenek Studio. (1.18 min.)

The nature of the settings and surroundings influence the identity of the each campus. (4.0 sec.)

SOUND BITE: AA: The idea of us linking both together is more psychologically than anything else. (4.0 sec.)

The execution of the architectural designs, master plan, and construction of the AUC encompasses a lot of efforts and a huge number of architects who collaborated to have this great outcome. Some inspirations behind the architectural designs of the campus were from many temples and historical monuments in Egypt. (18.0 sec.)

This audio feature was produced by Yara Deghidy for the Audio Production course at the American University in Cairo, taught by professor kim fox in the Fall semester of 2018. Special

thanks to interviewees Amira Ayman and Omar Ayyad, to the teaching assistant Hanady Omran, and to Fenek studio for the music. (16.0 sec.)

MUSIC: Fade out – “Welcome Algeria” by Fenek Studio.