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On the cover, photography by
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ISSN 3020-9595
Legal Deposit: MA 2262-2024
Edited by Modernroad in Málaga. Printed in Madrid



Modernroad is more than just a magazine; it's a curated experience that celebrates contemporary creativity. Each issue presents a collection of interviews, editorials, and profiles that explore the intersections of art, design, and lifestyle. The publication is known for its distinctive aesthetic, combining thoughtful content with compelling visuals to engage readers deeply .

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INTERVIEWS & EDITORIALS

Editor's Letter 33



Concrete Paths 37



Village By Boa 47



Visionary Projects 63



Tarek Shamma 77



The Lonely Romantics Club 91



Studio Akademos 111



Sophia Pega 125



Rudy Guénaire 139



please take me 155



Seven London 161



La Grande Des Campaux 177



Joy Flower Pot 191



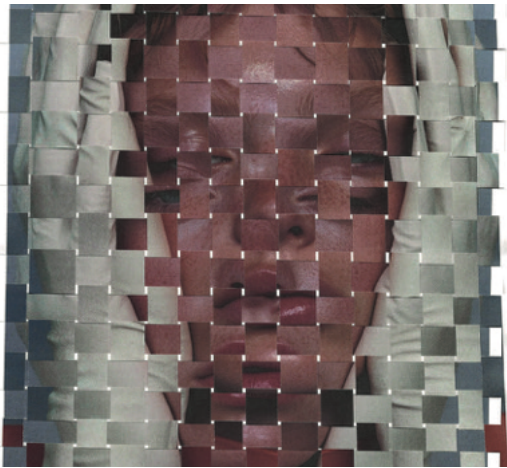
Heaps & Woods 217



Sophie Dries 287



Anna Eustaquio 338



AI: Revolution or Reckoning 204



One of The Boys 231



Gergei Erdei 298



Smalltown Glrl 351



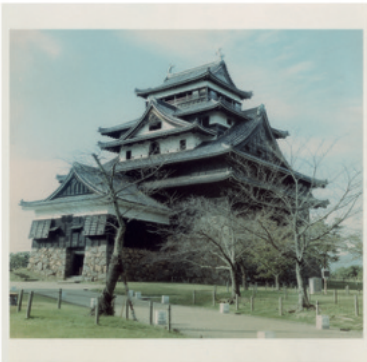
Han 209



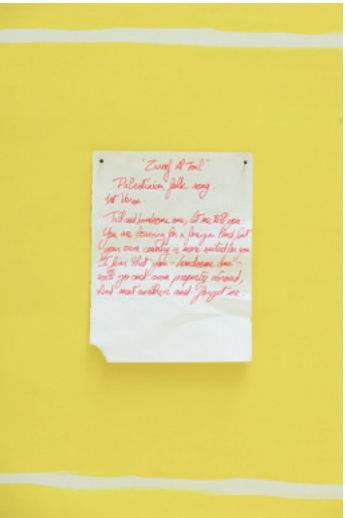
Le Hôtel Cayré Grand 255



Athan Mytilinaios 271



Forgotten Corners 311



Faissal El Malak 324



Abdulaziz Al Hosni 360

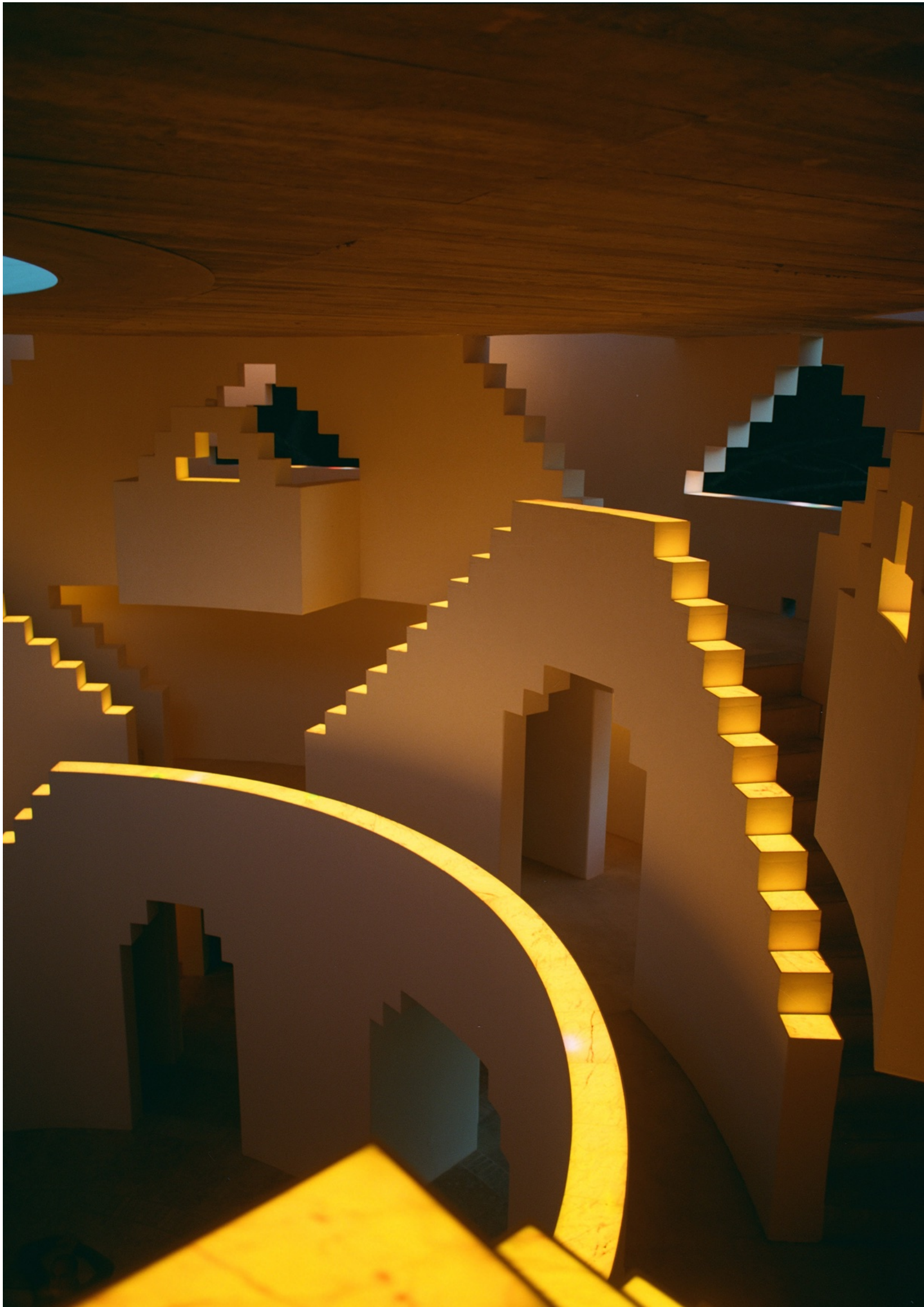


Darren Jett 374

TAREK SHAMA

“For me, tradition often lies in the materials—stone, wood, metal—while innovation comes in how they are used or combined. I like to play with the juxtaposition: sometimes using traditional techniques with contemporary forms, and other times introducing new methods to reinterpret classic details.”





TAREK

How did your early experiences in Egypt shape your architectural vision?

Growing up in Egypt, I was constantly surrounded by monuments and a history so much larger than life that it fueled my imagination from a very young age. At the same time, I witnessed my parents building houses, which gave me an early understanding of the act of making and the importance of construction, not just concept.

What was the most valuable lesson you learned from working with Zaha Hadid and David Chipperfield?

From both Zaha and David, I learned that you must be able to do everything yourself, even the most tedious tasks, so that later, you not only understand how things are made but also what you are asking of your team. I also learned grit and perseverance—pushing boundaries, thinking outside the box, and embracing the challenge is part of the craft.

Your work balances tradition and innovation, how do you navigate this intersection?

For me, tradition often lies in the materials—stone, wood, metal—while innovation comes in how they are used or combined. I like to play with the juxtaposition: sometimes using traditional techniques with contemporary forms, and other times introducing new methods to reinterpret classic details.

Can you share insights into your creative process when designing a boutique versus a residential or cultural space?

It always starts with a spark—an idea, sometimes just a detail—that grows as the project develops. The brief, the location, and the client are essential components; every project is a dialogue between these three, and it's through this conversation that the narrative takes shape.

Geometry plays a key role in your work. What draws you to geometric forms?

I am drawn to geometry because it brings order and balance, creating a sense of harmony. Geometry helps me define proportions and rhythms, which I believe are at the core of making a space feel right, whether consciously or subconsciously.

How do you approach material selection in your projects?

SHAMA

Materiality is crucial, and I always begin by researching what is locally available—it roots the project in its place. From there, anything that comes from elsewhere must tie into the story and serve a clear purpose, not just be decorative.

Your designs often highlight craftsmanship, how do you ensure artisanal techniques remain relevant in contemporary architecture?

Craft is timeless because it is inherently human, and what is human rarely becomes obsolete. I make sure to create opportunities for artisans to showcase their skills and push their craft forward—it keeps it alive and relevant, while also enriching the project far beyond what machines can replicate.

How does your Egyptian heritage influence your work today?

My Egyptian heritage is always present, but it is not my only influence. I am proud of coming from a place where layers of civilizations have left their mark, and this richness often surfaces in my work, sometimes consciously, sometimes instinctively.

What emotions or experiences do you aim to evoke through your spaces?

Each project is different, but serenity is often a common thread—I want people to feel at ease. More importantly, I hope to spark curiosity, the desire to look closer and understand the space, its details, and its story.

You've worked on projects from Melides to Luxor, how do different cultural and geographical contexts affect your designs?

The context is everything—it is the anchor of the project. Understanding the local conditions, materials, and ways of life brings variety to the work and ensures that each project belongs to its place.

What has been the most challenging project you've worked on, and how did you overcome its complexities?

One of the most complex projects was *Yalla Nile*, a boat, which was a completely new typology for me. The timeline was extremely tight, but in the end, the creative freedom I was given helped me navigate the technical challenges and deliver something unique.

Could you share details about an upcoming project that excites you?



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I can't share everything just yet, but I am currently working on a house in Amsterdam that is very exciting. The client came without preconceived ideas, which has led to a very open and collaborative process where we are exploring local crafts and materials in unexpected ways.

How do you balance aesthetic beauty with functional practicality in your designs?

Logic is key—function comes first. A house or a shop has to work, whereas a folly might not. Once the function is in place, beauty can emerge through proportions, geometry, and attention to detail.

What role does sustainability play in your architectural vision?

Sustainability, for me, is about building things that will last. I prefer natural materials and traditional techniques because they age gracefully, keep craftsmen employed, and avoid the pitfalls of industrial, short-lived solutions.

How do you see the role of technology evolving in architecture and design?

Technology is an incredible tool—it helps us visualize, prototype, and sometimes even fabricate—but it will never replace human imagination. The challenge is to embrace it without losing the human touch that gives architecture its soul.

What advice would you give to young architects trying to carve their own path in the industry?

Be passionate, work hard, and persevere. Architecture is demanding, but if you love it, it will reward you in ways you cannot imagine.

Any future projects or long-term goals?

It feels presumptuous to state goals too boldly, but one dream is to create a center where craftsmen from different trades can come together and collaborate. I have often found that the magic happens at the intersection of different crafts, yet this is also where bottlenecks occur—I'd love to help unlock that potential.





