Private Water – Beirut 2004
The Bathroom in the Dialogue of Cultures

- Jørgen Bach, Arkitema K/S, Århus-Denmark
- Gilles Desèvedavy, R&Sie..., Paris-France
- Yasmine Mahmoudieh, mahmoudieh design/mahmoudieh concepts, Berlin-Germany
- Suzette Riccotti, Agence Nelly Riccotti Archidactle, Bandol-France
- Sonja Wright, weight&shapes
- Nabil Gholam and Aram Yeretzian, nabil gholam architecture & planning, Beirut-Lebanon
- Ahmet Igdirligil, Sans Mimarlik, Bodrum-Turkey
- Simone Kosremelli, Simone Kosremelli Architects, Beirut-Lebanon
- Maha Nasrallah, Maha Nasrallah Architect, Beirut-Lebanon

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- Sonja Wright, wrightassociates, Munich-Germany
- Ana Corberó, Ana Corberó Painting, Sculpture & Design, Beirut-Lebanon
- Nabil Gholam und Aram Yeretzian, nabil gholam architecture & planning, Beirut-Lebanon
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- Simone Kosremelli, Simone Kosremelli Architects, Beirut-Lebanon
- Maha Nasrallah, Maha Nasrallah Architect, Beirut-Lebanon
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Why this workshop?
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“Laila could see the pictures quite clearly: those endlessly beautiful rooms, with the dome and the tiny windows that let in colourful light, and then the fun of skidding on the soapy marble floor with the other girls. And the girly chats and stories, laughter and lots of food.” *

For many centuries, going to the Hamam, or public bath, was a very important part of everyday life in the Middle East. The unique atmosphere created by the almost sacred architecture, and the bathing rituals designed to care for body and soul, enabled people to regularly forget their everyday cares for a few hours and immerse themselves in a world full of pleasant sensations. In Lebanon, where the third AquaTektur workshop was held, Hamam bath culture – already on the decline – suffered further with the outbreak of civil war: since then many baths have been closed, some of them even abandoned to ruin. But at the same time, since the end of armed conflict, the regeneration of Beirut has seen wonderful spas emerging in hotels, wellness centres or private homes, and not just here but all over the world.

The traditional Hamam played a truly important role in the context of the most recent AquaTektur workshop, which was hosted in Beirut by Axor, the designer brand from Hansgrohe AG. Five well-known architects from Central Europe and five from the Middle East came together with Axor to address the question of what effect the interaction between regional cultural traditions on the one hand and globalisation on the other would have in the bathroom. What spatial, functional and above all cultural and ritual traditions relating to baths can be found in the Middle East? How can these traditions be interpreted in contemporary terms, so as to respond appropriately and innovatively to the new needs of people today? What influence does the advance of globalisation have on local traditions? Many and varied answers to these and other questions, from a Middle Eastern and a European viewpoint, are documented in this book.

Beirut, where the event was held, is situated on the Mediterranean – as it were at the heart of Arabic bath culture – and should therefore serve as a source of inspiration for analysis and discussion.
During both of the previous AquaTektur workshops, held in Cuba, the work achieved was predominantly groundwork. Axor granted the participants unlimited freedom to come up with schemes that would begin with the pure form of water, and would grow to encompass tangible products and interior rooms, then finally achieve large projects and town planning schemes.

Now, the third AquaTektur event presents a prelude to a series of workshops, in which noteworthy regional bathing traditions in various cultural regions of the Earth are explored and are reflected through architecture and interior design. The aim is to initiate dialogue between different regional bathing cultures and customs, in order to develop new suggestions and ideas for contemporary bathing and baths, to flow into the first architectural projects and spatial concepts.

Why this workshop?
Arkitema K/S (DK)

The group of architects Arkitema K/S represents more than 30 years of experience within planning, architecture and design, supervision and inspection as well as construction project management and landscape architectural consultancy.

The most important resources are the know-how and skills of their employees, and the highest priority is given to ensure the enthusiastic involvement of each individual employee and the establishment and maintenance of genuine, personal contacts with clients. They attach the greatest importance to architectural competitions as a way of furthering such development and have, in recent years, won about 60 large competitions, both public and closed. Most of these projects have been built.

Arkitema was founded as a limited partnership in 1970 and is co-owned by eleven chartered architects.

Owner
Ole Nielsson, Lars Due, Helge Tindal, Poul Schülein, Jørgen Bach, Michael Harrebek, Kim Risager, Erling Stadager, Per Feldthaus, Thomas Carstens, Per Fischer

Projects
Sluseholmen, 800 flats, Copenhagen 2003–2005
Tuborg Sundpark, 120 condominiums, Hellerup 2002
Copenhagen Airport, Kastrup 1995–1998

Jørgen Bach

1964 born in Hobro
1986 building technician at the Ingeniørhøjskolen in Horsens
1992 Architekt maa, Arkitektskolen in Århus

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“Making with...” is their way of describing their research into a critical experience of architecture through a mutation of contextual parameters. Scenarios of hybridization, grafting, cloning, morphing give rise to perpetual transformation of architecture which strives to break down the antinomies of object/subject or object/territory. Experimental and inventive, the architecture of R&Sie... seeks to be profoundly critical and “deceptive”: an architecture which “contrasts a non-form which seems to be made of material from each situation”, “a drifting architecture.” Invited to the last five Biennales of Architecture of Venice, R&Sie... was teaching in London at Bartlett School, in Vienna at TU, and in 2004, at ESARQ, in Barcelona.

Owner
François Roche, Stéphanie Lavaux, Jean Navarro

Projects
Wire Frame, bridge in Pouilly 2002
“Shearing”, Villa Barak, Sommières 2001
Aspiration, Cultural Centre in Venedig 1998

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Gilles Desèvedavy
1963 born in Bayonne
1993 diploma at the École d’Architecture de Paris-Villemin
1993 beginning of collaboration with R&Sie..., assistant professor at the University of Lyon

Aspiration, I-Venedig
1961 born in Hamburg
1977–1980 studies of art history in Geneva
1980–1982 studies of architecture at the
Engineer's School in Geneva
1982–1983 studies of interior design at the
College Notre Dame in Belmont
1983–1986 studies of architecture and interior
design at the University of California in Los
Angeles
1986 studio in Los Angeles
1992 studios in Hamburg und Berlin
Today: Studios in Berlin und London

Projects
Noga Hilton Hotel, Geneva 2006
Ivanstoroff Hotel, St. Petersburg 2006
Radison SAS Royal Hotel, Kopenhagen 2001
Hotel Rheinsberg "Haus am See", Berlin 2001

Yasmine Mahmoudieh

1961 born in Hamburg
1977–1980 studies of art history in Geneva
1980–1982 studies of architecture at the
Engineer’s School in Geneva
1982–1983 studies of interior design at the
College Notre Dame in Belmont
1983–1986 studies of architecture and interior
design at the University of California in Los
Angeles
1986 studio in Los Angeles
1992 studios in Hamburg und Berlin
Today: Studios in Berlin und London

Projects
Noga Hilton Hotel, Geneva 2006
Ivanstoroff Hotel, St. Petersburg 2006
Radison SAS Royal Hotel, Kopenhagen 2001
Hotel Rheinsberg “Haus am See”, Berlin 2001

mahmoudieh design/mahmoudieh concepts (D)

Strategy, aesthetics, function – this is the mission of
mahmoudieh design and mahmoudieh concepts. The
result: unique interior surroundings. Surroundings
which become a sensual mediator of a unique identity,
with quotations that relate to cultural issues and are
newly interpreted at the same time. Warm colours,
exceptional materials and innovative lighting concepts
create harmony away from stereotype and emptiness.
New materials often never used before are being re-
searched worldwide and used in various projects.

mahmoudieh design and mahmoudieh concepts work
worldwide for exceptional hotels, office complexes,
shopping centres and other interior design projects.
Supported by an international team of highly qualified
designers and interior architects. The head offices are
in Berlin and London.

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Hotel Rheinsberg “Haus am See”, D-Berlin
From private to public commissions, from the Le Goff, Marmonier and Lyrendi villas to the Stadium of Vitrolles, the Collège of Auriol, the Footbridge of Peace, and the Nickolaisaal of Potsdam, they gain insight into ideas, realisations and achievements, characterised by an ambiguous blend of respect for the context and transgression, of this architect who admires Mannerism and the Baroque for the creative liberties they allow, and who takes pleasure in working with the contrasts between the natural, the barbarian, the savage, the artificial and the civilised.

Owner
Rudy Ricciotti

Projects
Lighting of the central kitchen, St. Cyr sur Mer 2004
Restaurant l’Opium, Marseille 2003
Séverine Peraudin showroom, Paris 2001
Philharmonie Potsdam 2000
Hall of Honour, Conseil Général 13, Marseille 2000

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Suzette Ricciotti

1947 born in Thonon-les-Bains
1980 foundation of Agence Rudy Ricciotti Architecte with Rudy Riccotti:
– management
– design
– furniture showroom

Agence Rudy Ricciotti Architecte (F)
Sonja Wright

1962 born in Ritterswörth
1982–1987 studies of interior design at the Fachhochschule Rosenheim
1987–1988 various projects with Peter Stürzebecher in Munich
1988–1989 scholarship for the Fashion Institute of Technology and the Parson School of Design in New York
1989–2002 various projects with Schmidt-Schicketanz + Partner in Munich and Schmidhuber + Partner in Munich
since 2004 wrightassociates with Keith Wright in Munich

wrightassociates (D)

wrightassociates is formed of a group of interior designers and architects specialising in the design and development of projects for the private, commercial and hospitality sectors on an international scale. The team approaches ambitious themes about interior design, which require new spatial structures and creative solutions.
As a multi-national team, there is an understanding of the complex grid of factors including operational considerations, technical requirements, infrastructure, sensitive application of materials and appreciation of lifestyle quality, which ensures that each project results in stimulating interiors.

Owner
Sonja Wright, Keith Wright

Projects
Marriott Hotel, Cologne 2005
Business Lounge Bittner + Krull, Munich 2004
Sheraton Hotel, Krakow 2004
Marriott Airport Hotel, Warsaw 2003

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Ana Corberó

1961 born in Barcelona
1981–1984 Merit Scholarship, Bachelors in Fine Art, Southern Methodist University in Dallas
1985–1986 Merit and Teaching Scholarship, University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia
1985 Merit Scholarship, Cleveland Art Institute by Lacoste France
1988 Merit Scholarship, Maters in Fine Art Pratt Institute in New York

Ana Corberó Painting, Sculpture and Design (RL)

Ana Corberó was born in Barcelona, Spain, but as soon as freedom beckoned she left for wider shores. Since then she has lived in eleven cities on three different continents. In the same way her life goes, her work goes: all over the place. Trying to define itself in a variety of media, the work can range from formal drawing to video, from ceramics to high tech printings, from oil painting and bronze sculpture up to furniture design or a conceptual travelling circus. Rampant schizophrenia, you might suspect, or perhaps just old fashioned curious. Furthermore, she confesses she wholly agree with Man Ray’s tenet: “You must lose respect for your materials”.

Projects
Sculpture, Galeria Guereta, Madrid 2005
Paintings, Instituto Cervantes, Beirut 2005
Permanent exhibition, Maus Haus, Barcelona 2004
Opening of Maus Haus, Permanent exhibition of furniture and lighting Beirut 2002

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Large Dragonbutterflies Table Lamp
Nabil Gholam

1962  born in Beirut
1986–1988  Columbia University, School of Architecture, Planning and Historical Preservation, New York, Master of Science in Urban Planning
since 1994  nabil gholam architecture & planning SARL in Beirut

Aram Yeretzian

1966  born in Beirut
1989  Bachelor of Architecture from the American University of Beirut
1990–1997  architect at L’ARCH’ in Nice
since 1999  partner at Prime Design in Beirut
since 2001  instructor at Notre Dame University in Zouk Mosbeh
since 2002  Senior Architect at nabil gholam architecture & planning in Beirut

nabil gholam architecture & planning (RL)

Today, nabil gholam architecture & planning is ceaselessly curious and enthusiastic team and is still engaged in a perpetual process of questioning and experimenting. It is continuously learning from every step and evolving, remaining, committed to a set of core values focused on delivering quality design and intelligent services in order to enable the clients to achieve their goals.

Whether working on a complex master plan, a specialized building or a domestic object, nabil gholam architecture & planning approaches the design process seamlessly through research and dialogue, talking into account the broader social, cultural and economic concern. Its principal guidelines are to secure optimal functioning, to be ecologically sensitive, to integrate in an intelligent way into the given environment, to ensure that the systems are flexible and can evolve, and to find simple solutions to complex problems.

Owner
Nabil Gholam

Projects
Foch 94 Residential Development, Beirut 2004
Aqaba Hotel & Resort, Aqaba 2004
Apartment tower, BCD, Beirut 2002
Minsk Plaza, Victory Park, Minsk 2002

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Foch 94, RL-Beirut
Ahmet Igdirligil

1955  born in Bursa
1972–1975  B.S. Middle East Technical University in Ankara
1975–1983  M. Arch Mimar Sinan University, Department of Architecture in Istanbul
1977–1983  employed with architect Sevki Pekin in Istanbul
1980  employed with Prof. Roland Rainer’s architectural office in Vienna
1983  relocated to Austria and beginning of employment with Walter Stelzhammer in Vienna
1984–1988  scholarship from the Austrian Government for the study of spas in Austria and Budapest
1989  foundation of the Sans Mimarlik Architectural Office in Bodrum

Sans Mimarlik (TR)

The designs of Sans Mimarlik are inspired by vernacular architecture. They use traditional materials in a modern style. The defining characteristics of their residential and hotel projects are “harmony with the environment and respect to local culture”. Their restorations consist primarily of traditional old stone houses. Sans Mimarlik also provides consultation and applications for hydrotherapy and health centers, spas, and contemporary as well as traditional hamams.

Owner
Ahmet Igdirligil

Projects
Tourism Complex, Bodrum 2004
5 Sterne Holiday Village, Bodrum 2004
Sedat Yazici, Bodrum 2004
Cevdet Basacik House, Bodrum 2003
Ada Hotel and Hamam, Bodrum 1997

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Simone Kosremelli

1950 born in Beirut
1969–1974 School of Architecture, American University of Beirut
1978–1981 free-lance architect and urban planner in Lebanon
1978–1980 part-time teacher at the American University of Beirut
1981 establishment of the own architectural firm in Beirut
1988–1991 consulting architect for large scale architectural projects in Abu Dhabi
1991–1996 branch office Abu Dhabi

Projects
Hotel Damascus 2004
Branch, First National Bank, Jounieh 2004
Duplex, Baabda 2003
Cottage, Jiyeh 2002

Simone Kosremelli Architects (RL)

The office was established in 1981 by Simone Kosremelli. All through these years, they have produced quality projects with character. They cater for people who are respectful of their traditions and environmentally concerned.

The architecture they design is pure geometrically, volumetrically complex in the interior and visually coherent in the exterior. It is rooted in traditions, but not based on the past. It uses vernacular elements in modern arrangements and thus permits the establishment of a richer architectural vocabulary.

In harmony with their architecture, Simone Kosremelli Architects design interiors that are extremely simple but carefully detailed, always with a hint from the past, combined with very modern materials or attitudes.

As urban planners, their main concern is the respect for the social fabric and the physical continuum. In all their endeavours, Simone Kosremelli Architects believe that they have to create a link between the past, the present and the future. Their work should merge and not disturb the existing fabric and it should accommodate for the future.

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Cottage, RL-Jiyeh
Maha Nasrallah

1960 born in Beirut
1978–1983 studies at the American University of Beirut
1983–1985 worked für Oger Liban in Beirut
1985–1993 worked for different companies in Lebanon, Egypt and Canada (Montreal)
1993–1998 Senior Architect for LACECO in Beirut
1998 independent architect and start of the private office in Beirut
2003–2004 part-time lecturer at the American University in Beirut, Design Studios and Regional Architecture

Maha Nasrallah Architect (RL)

After a long experience on large scale projects in office practice, Maha Nasrallah started out her own office with a focus on design. The aim is to be able to develop an architectural language that responds to the local needs and regional characteristics while using a contemporary vocabulary.

Many of the projects they worked on are low budget private projects and rural development projects for NGO’s and local municipalities.

In 2002 they won a closed competition organized by Solidere, for the design of a new residential project in the Wadi Abu Jmil area, in Down Town Beirut. The project is under way.

Owner

Maha Nasrallah

Projects

Wadi Abu Jmil residential project, Beirut 2004
World War II Museum and Park, Khiam 2004

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Desert House, Egypt
032  |  Summery of the projects
The International Bathroom of the Future

The starting point for the work of Jørgen Bach consists of three basic needs that bathing should meet: hygiene, washing and relaxation. The places where these actions take place are spatially separate. The fixtures and fittings in the rooms take second place to and simultaneously emphasize their central feature – water, the omnipresent element.
The International Bathroom of the Future

I have taken my point of departure in the private bathroom and have listed the three basic human needs that must be fulfilled in the modern bathroom:

1. Relaxation
2. Washing
3. Hygiene

These three needs can only be fulfilled if water is available, and my visit to Lebanon as well as my studies of Middle East bathing traditions opened my eyes to the various ways in which water can be used. I felt that water must be used in the modern bathroom in the way that it can be felt, heard, and smelled – so that we are reminded that water is an indispensable resource for mankind. In my proposal for the international bathroom of the future, I have emphasised the division of the bathroom into three sections so that the three basic needs can be fulfilled separately. There is water in all three rooms and the design of washbasins, fittings, floors and drains to ensure that the user gains the optimum experience of water.
The design is based on a division of bathing into three separate aspects: relaxation/well-being, cleaning and hygiene.
Water, the right temperature, sunshine and light: they make the bathroom into a place where you can completely feel at ease.
The main aspect of the design is the sensual perception of water. The architecture of the room and the design of the fixtures and fittings are also matched to this sensual experience.
In ancient Roman times, bathing culture was an important component of everyday life. Nowadays, things are somewhat different: time is money, and the only ritual integrated in the course of daily events becomes a luxury.
Personal privacy is guaranteed by the spatial and acoustic separation of the toilet area and bathing zone.
The bathing space is characterized by a generous tub with individually adjustable hot and cold water.
A central space with a square ground plan serves as the changing area and for initial cleaning. The fittings are puristic: stone benches with washbasins recessed into them. Thick walls separate it from the toilet. On the right, there is the shower and relaxation area.
The shower and relaxation area is equipped with a shower in the middle and a stone bench into which a washbasin is recessed. All the surfaces, which are made of stone, are preheated before use. In this room as well, the wet element is deployed in a variety of ways: a flat basin filled with water and let into the floor encloses the space.
Making do to do less

Gilles Desèvedavy precedes his work with a fundamental appeal. The central idea is the rational and conscious use of water as a resource. This maxim can also be applied to the private living area. Compact bathroom modules form the hamam and bathroom, which can be created in different sizes.
making do to do less

We are here in Beirut to think about the use of water in private homes. Beirut is a city in which a conflict announced 30 years ago eventually came into being and, as a city, it is also suitable as an illustration of another conflict that will occur in the future.

A minority of the earth’s population is consuming a growing share of the drinking water that is available. In 2003, there were conflicts in Africa between people and apes, whereby the dispute concerned access to drinking water. Sometimes, there is a minority of people on this planet who not only use water but also change it. Under the pretence of using and cleaning the water, what they actually do is to modify the natural circuit of water without knowing the precise consequences of their actions. When they purify the water, it loses minerals, thus becoming neutral and less enriched.

In addition to the conflict between man and nature, there are signs of a conflict between different groups of people: a conflict between nations, which enjoy unrestricted access to water and have the capability of modifying it, and the nations, which have no direct access to water and which are dependent on what is left over and, above all, on the condition of this water. Whether in the south or the north, in “marble” or “wood”, collectively or individually, the privileged nations must find a solution to this impending conflict before it encompasses the entire world.
We have witnessed – for instance in Indochina – how an army of poor, badly equipped but highly motivated people can defeat the privileged, solely through determination and the belief in a cause – especially where existential questions are concerned.

However unusual it may sound, both a visit to a disco and a visit to a historical monument can equally inspire us to come up with an idea for a particular topic. If this is to be the common slogan of the next three workshop days, part of the answer can be as follows:

The privileged future nations of the earth will be able to have all the water they need without any risk but only on condition that they leave it in its original condition, i.e. NOT modified and, at the same time, clean. All the existing water should be of benefit to the privileged and non-privileged alike as well as to all the fauna and flora.

From the highest mountains to the waves of the ocean, privileged people are able to use and make use of water everywhere in the world. But they also bear the responsibility of protecting it and making it available to others in its original condition. Thus the bathroom and its environment will become a means for achieving this goal and a tool of future world peace.
People change the natural circulation of water. And, in the process, water itself is modified in a number of different ways.
Water should be available to everyone in the same pure form.
Only a small, privileged part of the earth’s population has unrestricted access to water – and thus the freedom to use it and exploit it in their interests in a huge variety of ways.
It was clear to the workshop participants that water as a resource is an extremely valuable good that must be protected and made available to all people without restrictions.
But everywhere in the world, how water is seen and valued varies – depending on its existence and availability.

In all regions – from the mountains to the oceans – people make use of water for their own benefit and well-being.
Used water must also be utilized carefully. Once cleaned and filtered, it can be returned to the natural circuit so that people and nature can both profit at the same time.
Not everyone has the luck to own their own bathroom or even their own hamam ... Two proposals for a compact, serially manufactured “bathroom” are shown here: a “bathing block” with washbasin, tap and shower, and also a “bath table”, i.e. a combination of bathing block and two basins recessed into a table.

The bathing block element is an industrially manufactured, high-tech piece of furniture. Very important: a special sensor is provided for monitoring the water quality.
The bathroom as a social place

Yasmine Mahmoudieh’s bathroom concept translates elements of traditional hamam culture into a modern context. Sensual experience was the starting point for designing the room and selecting the materials. This is very apparent from the fittings for the bathtub; it has a gel cushion covering the entire bottom of the tub.
The bathroom as a social place

The idea is to transfer – in a very practical and emotional approach – the sensations and benefits of the traditional hamam into modern bathroom culture by mixing both old and new elements as well as creating bathrooms that are more meditative, and social spaces where family members can have relaxation and fun together.

Through the use of natural materials the sensual experience of the hamam is brought into modern, “cool” designed bathroom interiors. The surface of the bathroom is made out of the same material. Though it stretches over different levels, the material is seamlessly connected. Thereby the single space is transformed into a multifunctional space that includes all areas of the bathroom shower, bathtub, relaxation and rest area.

In the eight shaped bathtub you can have a bath and your children can participate playing with water and fountains on different levels. The integration of waterplays and fountains is fascinating for them and provides fun as well as relaxation through the produced sound. Therefore the bathroom becomes a centre point in family life.

The bathtub is the central element of modern bathing culture – it provides space and relaxation through its horizontal position. Innovations like an organic, heatable, body-fitting bathtub with a gel
inlay or an ergonomic formed bathtub bring more comfort to the existing standard products – the end of back or neck pain. Last but not least, the consumption of water is also reduced in this new generation of bathbubs!

The second level of the bathtub includes a water filled swale. Together with the bowl it can either be used to have a traditional hamam or to have a bath for your baby next to you.

Another central element of the concept is the implementation of all five senses (haptics, sound, vision, smell and taste) by the means of lighting, proportions and materials. Scent dispensers and speaker elements support the experience.
In line with present-day requirements, traditional bathing culture is transferred into a modern context. The room is multi-functional and has as its central point a large figure-8-shaped bathtub. Quiet zones and other fixtures are grouped around the tub.
The walls of the modern hamam are made of stone, and water features upgrade the room additionally. In the middle, the ceiling is open as in a Roman atrium. Rain thus becomes a natural shower experience.
Different levels also allow children to make themselves comfortable in the tub. Points of light are mounted on the ceiling, evocative of a starlit sky.
A cupola with intermittent, natural and artificial sources of light presents an experience similar to that of a traditional hamam.
The hamam experience is intended to address all the five senses. In Yasmine Mahmoudieh’s design, indirect light as well as natural materials and surfaces such as sandstone play a central role in this respect.
Old and new elements of a hamam are used simultaneously, for example an old ceramic bowl for scooping up water and modern simple tap fittings made of steel.
The bathtub has an ergonomic shape but also has a gel cushion which adapts itself to the shape of the body. This promises a high degree of relaxation both for the body and soul.
The washbasin: A simple bowl is used for scooping up water out of a small hollow with an overflow into the larger tub. Where the head rests, the material is soft and the transitions are round and flowing. The floor: here, the bather can have a massage while a bed of gravel flatters the feet.
**Brume de Plaisir**

A clear separation of private and functional use as a wellness area is envisaged by Suzette Ricciotti in her interpretation. Taking a bath thus becomes primarily a social experience and the bathroom becomes a place where human interaction can flourish.
**Brume de Plaisir**

Water is the origin of the world. It is also one of the main questions of the future: It is essential for life but threatened. Water is the symbol of two elements: life and purity. We drink to live and we are washed from sin by water. Nowadays, these two relationships with water occur in little sinks or in dark rooms with no natural light. Looking at bathrooms, we can separate two levels of activities linked with water: washing yourself to be clean, as a functional activity, and feeling the pleasure brought by water.

The designed project gets efficient by separating private space from common space. The connection between bedroom and common water room is made through a private pathway. In the latter you get any functions that you used to have in old bathrooms and restrooms, but each element is designed to be as simple as possible and to take as little place as possible. The pathway is a small room designed with an automatic shower and a standing restroom. Everything is made to save space and easy to clean. It is a very useful place. People can enter it and return to the bedrooms while keeping private. But from this space you can also directly enter a larger common room, which is not just a functional room but also a real water room designed for pleasure and enjoyment. You can stay here for a long time and meet others of the house or invite friends and so on. It is a place where anyone can enjoy oil and take pleasure from water. Here you can get many kinds of water; steam or liquid, cool or waving, hot or fresh.
In the designed water room, you can either sit or lay down, and change positions as often as you want, just as if you were standing in any other room. It becomes a complete room for enjoying water and no longer a little dark box difficult to clean as old bathrooms used to be. Now you have a large space with adapted temperature, innovative materials such as Ductal©, a French fiber high-level concrete. This special concrete allows very thin walls or balconies, which would take as little space as possible. This room can be more or less underground so that one can get a feeling of protection and at the same time, an opening relationship to light and nature. To sum up, the key qualities of this project would be: space, temperature, materials, comfort and adaptability.

Relationship between man and water is not a closed question. This project shows that something like a shared water place can be built to establish relationships between people.
Before and after: The illustration on the left shows the usual situation. Each bedroom has its own bathroom and there is no community of the dwelling's occupants. The illustration on the right demonstrates the idea: the bathroom becomes a shared centre and meeting point. The toilets and the showers are located in the four connecting corridors.
The connecting space is kept as small as possible. The shower functions as a corridor shower, where the hair can stay dry.
Taking a shower is assigned to the private part of the bathroom. From here, it is possible to enter further into the shared bathing area or retreat into the sleeping area.
The toilet is also arranged in the space between the sleeping area and the bathroom. A sliding door is used here to save space.
An underground private bathroom? The hamam could also be dug into the ground, with the aim of creating a meditative and relaxing atmosphere.
The computer simulations illustrate various spatial impressions of the central bathroom area. The central point is the shared tub. Four access points, arranged in the shape of a windmill, are the only openings.
From narrow to wide: the picture shows the view from a functional room into the central area.
The material quality of the walls, floor and ceiling is kept cool. Nothing distracts from the experience of the room and water.
Ego-Zone

In Sonja Wright’s design, the multifaceted nature of how water is experienced is the central motif. Her “Ego-Zone” provides the most varied of seating and lying positions in which water can be experienced with all the senses – a source of well-being for both the body and the mind.
Bathing – the immersion of the body in water, the earth’s most precious element, but also equally important – the immersion of light. In terms of water, the application or use, together with the resulting effect has many different guises:

- still water offering calm and relaxation;
- surface application like water droplets providing the means of massage and indulgence;
- and water as a force serving to stimulate body and mind.

Equally with the application of light it is possible to vary the intensity and spectrum according to the mood.

The initial aim evolves a space capable of providing the flexibility of the different utilisation of water and light as elements in their own right and also combined. The studies resulted in a cube 3.00 x 3.00 x 3.00 meters, christened the “Ego-Zone”.

The “Zone” is composed of a pool, shower, footbath, platform and hot stove all centered around a fountain as a symbol of purity and luxury of the earth’s most precious element.
The arrangement of the various components allows individualistic use:
– the waveform pool offering differing seating/laying positions;
– the heated platform adjecting to a window where the light source can be varied in colour and intesity;
– an area of the platform associating with floating or dripping water for gentle massage;
– a sitting stone next to a small basin and under a shower roof for energising massage;
– and the central fountain which can be utilised as a wash basin or simply serves as a spring source to fill the footbath.

The development of this concept resulted in a consolidation of the components and the integration of a dome feature in the spirit of the hamam.

This feature incorporates the water and light aspects and emphasises a focal point central to the ritual of bathing as an individual as well as a social activity.
In the ground plan, the central position of the spring is apparent, around which the various seating and lying surfaces of the “Ego-Zone” are grouped.
The room is split into different levels which allow individual seating and lying positions, thus creating the largest possible area in which to experience taking a bath.
The room can be lit with natural or artificial light. This magnifies the intensity and variety of the bathing experience even more.
A curtain of water drops spatially demarcates the “Ego-Zone” and, at the same time, can be used for a health-promoting massage.
Of course, the “Ego-Zone” can also be used as a simple steam bath – depending on the personal mood of the people using the facility.
The “Ego-Zone” promises a sensual experience thanks to its elaborate interaction of space, water, light and material. The aim is to create a place where especially water can be experienced with all the senses as the basic element of life.
The Portable Hamam

For Ana Corberó, it was important to design a transportable hamam, which not only secures a place for itself in society as a luxury article but can also be provided as a vitally important shelter in crisis areas.
The Portable Hamam

At first, the idea for this project came about thanks to being an outsider and therefore able to synthesize what I saw as missing among all the other entries. Filling in gaps is easier because others have already built and worked enough, to make the gaps manifest. I also have to point out that portability, at least move-ability has always been one of my pet obsessions. Some of this interest, like all kinds of tent-like dwellings or other mobile homes, is based on vernacular to very high-tech architecture, and some is based on my own design, like bolted-together steel furniture or the multi-media traveling show “See for Yourself”. So the “portable” idea was a natural vein for me to follow.

Lastly, the themes of the AquaTektur Symposium were “Hamams and the Global World”, and, for me, addressing the issue of a “Global World” seems to imply making usage of something given, available to anyone on the globe, not only in geographic terms, but also socially and economically. Therefore, the Portable Hamam can be seen not only as a luxury gadget for some people in the rich world, but also as a welcome interpretation of a necessity in places were dwellings and social spaces are merely a refuge for survival.

The structure of the Portable Hamam is based on the principle of the cavernous bodies in the male anatomy: By this device nature allows the filling in of “caverns” with blood so that the penis
can become rigid and erect. In the case of the Portable Hamam, the cavernous bodies are filled with hot water so that they lift and create the structure of the hamam. I imagine the water can be heated as it fills the cavernous ribs by passing through tubes containing electric coils – much like a water kettle.

The inner skin of the hamam lets this heat penetrate the hamam space itself. This would be some kind of very tough plastic that is totally hygienic and easy to maintain. The outdoor skin of the Portable Hamam is an elastic isolating material (for example Thinsulate) that protects the hot water temperature of the hamam walls from the outdoor temperature. The floor is also insulated so that it remains warm. Inside the hamam there is the traditional water spout, seating space, and, in the turkish style of hamam, a rest area large enough to lie in.

The relaxing area of the Portable Hamam is an attached Mongolian yurt structure, which may be heated easily if necessary. The felt covering the yurt structure (aluminum, steel or wood slats) insulates from the elements and muffles noise to create the necessary peaceful transitional space essential to the hamam experience. The doors between the hamam itself and the transitional relaxation area are hanging layers of moisture proof plastic on the hamam side and insulating felt on the relaxation side. The doors of the relaxing area to the outside, which are also the main entrance doors of the Portable Hamam, are felt hangings with an outdoor rain proof overlay. These hangings are weighed at the bottom and attachable to the rigid structure of the yurt in case of external high winds.

The Portable Hamam should ideally exist in three sizes: a small one for individual use that can be shared with one person, a medium one that can be used for small groups and a large one for larger groups. Obviously, the small and medium Portable Hamams are luxury gadgets. The small ones can inhabit a private garden, terrace or garage, and the medium ones can be rented out for parties or get-togethers. The large Portable Hamam however, can have a larger spectrum of use. It can enliven conventions, raves, and village fairs for the affluent; but, perhaps more interestingly: it can also provide a needed space, in which blends the useful and the pleasurable, in stressful and challenged environments such as relief posts in refugee or emergency camps.
The Portable Hamam is not supposed to be used only as a luxury article but also as emergency accommodation for people who urgently need it.
In this design, the resting area of the hamam has the form of a Mongolian yurt. A transparent plastic cupola makes it possible to illuminate the interior with natural light.
The yurt can be erected and taken down quickly and easily thanks to the cross structure of the construction. The surface of the insulated vinyl floor can be kept hygienically clean. On the inside, suspended layers of water-repellent plastic are coated with insulating felt on the side facing the interior and serve as doors. The outer doors are made in a similar way.
The structure of the hamam is based on the swelling bodily function of male anatomy. The “swelling bodies” in the lower area of the hamam are filled with hot water to give them their final shape. The upper ones are filled with hot air. The heat is emitted into the interior. Heat-insulating elastic material is fitted on the outside.
Transparent plastic cylinders are recessed into the cupola of the hamam. These allow daylight to enter the interior, creating a diffuse light effect.
On the inside of the Portable Hamam, there is the traditional water basin in the middle. Along the wall of the tent, there are seats and a resting zone for lying down.
There are three possible sizes for the Portable Hamam. Here, pictures of the family hamam and the one-man hamam are shown.
The large version of the Portable Hamam could also be used in crisis regions as emergency accommodation, a nursing station or refugee camp.
Hamam at Home

Integration of a family hamam in an existing room layout is a central feature of the design created by Nabil Gholam and Aram Yeretzian. This concept is based on the use of alternative energy sources. The concept is applied and explained on the basis of an average sized example of the space used.
Hamam at Home

Concept: Tired of your small cramped bathrooms and do you have a bedroom to spare? The H@H provides a solution to create a family hamam. This module/pod that can easily integrate into the existing house, apartment or villa by recycling an existing bedroom.

Although the process is a bit messy at first, it is worth the hassle because the “lost” bedroom is not lost, not even as a bedroom. The pre-requisites required in order to achieve this personalized hamam are:

Space: a normal bedroom of generous size ideally paired with en-suite bathroom and loggia. Obviously, if the unit is larger, is on two levels or on the roof, more architectural freedom is obtained. Consequently, this leads to more interesting spatial configurations. A lot more flexibility in terms of layout, volume and light can be achieved if it is a stand along pod, as can be found in a villa-garden, etc.

Water: a conventional source of bathroom plumbing should be available, i.e. cold and hot water supply. For added comfort we have accounted for a WC in the “tepid room” where one undresses. We also propose to re-circulate hot water for the piping in the hamam walls and under-floor heating. Cold water can be re-used for plants’ irrigation and as drainage for the WC.
Light: Carefully studied natural light will achieve the best spatial and spiritual setting. If it is not available, then artificial light or a mixture of indirect, dimmable, filtered and screened light can be proposed to render interesting settings.

Materials: A range of noble materials such as stone, marble, wood, concrete, alabaster, etc. will be used in to order to enhance the tactile sense. Electric heating, temperature as well as lighting control can be replaced by alternative energy sources such as solar lighting, solar water heating, candles and possibly a fireplace. Other passive strategies such as natural ventilation and night cooling can provide a pleasing, comforting effect.

For the intent of this workshop, we choose to test the concept on the most basic bedroom/bathroom/loggia arrangement in an apartment. The following sketches illustrate the options and possibilities that are investigated.
Numerous considerations and ideas about space, water, light and materials were applied to the design of a hamam concept, which can be integrated in an average sized one-room apartment with bathroom.
The hand sketches document the stages in which the architects approached their goal. In the end, a hamam, a resting and washing area, is to be capable of being integrated in an existing apartment with a loggia.
The envisaged materials are, for example, marble, alabaster, wood and stone. In addition, re-use of the warm and cold wastewater and the use of alternative energies are taken into consideration.
When you enter the apartment, the changing room is on the left-hand side and, behind it, there is the hamam. In the last third of the room, there is a rest area with a view of and access to the loggia.
Natural light can enter the room through the glass front and an alabaster surface. The result is a pleasing spatial light effect.
The original function as bedroom has not been lost in the new concept. The seating surfaces in the rest area can be used for sleeping at any time.
An interesting scenery is created by the light installations which are integrated in the domed ceiling of the hamam and are composed of direct and diffuse dimmable LEDs.
In order to test the effect of backlit natural stones and to reconsider the proportions of how the space is divided up, fixtures were arranged by Ana Corberó.
Modern Tradition

An intensive analysis of the origins of the hamam and the history of bathing culture in the Middle East lay behind Ahmet Igdirligil’s desire to design a bathroom which combines the traditional with the modern. This private bathroom performs more than its usual functions and is intended to be a room for relaxation, reflection and communication.
Modern Tradition

Through history, the cultures of bathing have all differed from one another. According to both the period in history and geographical region, bathing was undertaken under running waters, outdoors or in structures built especially for washing. The principle elements of all these were water and health. Gradually over time, religion, spiritual significance and ritual ceremonies also became affiliated with centres for bathing.

Our focus is upon washing rituals of the Orient and how those rituals have become affiliated with the hamam. We know today that Hellenistic and Roman influences contributed to the hamam as we know it now. The origin of the hamam goes back to the Roman baths, which in turn is affiliated with traditions reaching from Phoenicia and Carthage.

The hamam is intrinsically understood to refer to bathing with hot water through sweating. In fact, the etymology of the word indicates that “hamam” means “to make hot” and “to make wet”. There are also Roman and Hellenistic speech references which are found in the traditions of Arab hamams and some of those proverbs are still found in Turkish hamam traditions today.

Since the second half of the 19th century, human relations with water have focused on hygiene and health, as a result of the process following modernity that is rooted in Europe. Individual bathing
has since been squeezed into the bathroom space in the form of bathtubs and showers, and with the addition of functions like washbasins and water closets, has been reduced to cleansing.

With the changes in social and economic relations, the bathroom has turned into a space for cleaning oneself in private.

Thus, we are faced today with the phenomenon of cleansing in the most economical way possible, devoid of social relations, rituals and symbols. What I mean by “economy” here is economy in terms of energy, water, space and time. We see that the spaces that are formed for bathing are, similarly, designed to be the smallest, the least illuminated ones with the lowest ceilings, and which can be heated in the easiest possible way.

Recently, more emphasis has been placed on the phenomenon of bathing and more attention has been paid to environmental qualities such as view, lighting and relations with nature in the design of individual bathing spaces.

There are also examples of bathrooms that are even smaller, more compact and more economical that further isolate the individual.

We have discovered throughout history that facilities for both individual and social bathing have been found, suggesting that both these forms of bathing carry importance.

As an architect, I often find myself designing large bathing facilities and my challenge is to change the individual bathroom by employing elements taken from history. Thus, I used the opportunity presented by the AquaTektur Workshop 3 to illustrate the historic development of bathing culture in the Mediterranean area to ensure that it is more comprehensible. The following illustrations not only show the centuries-old history of bathing but also the influence of modern Mediterranean cultures on each other and on the development of the Turkish hamam.

In the second part of the project, I approached the topic from the practical side. Starting with the widespread monofunctional bathroom of today, I designed an alternative bathroom for the Hotel Albergo in Beirut, where we stayed during the workshop. My design works with more than just the purpose-oriented function of water - my architecture also relates to its symbolic values.
The hamam mainly developed in the Mediterranean area and survived three epochs of civilization. It first became popular in Roman bathing culture.
HISTORICAL EVOLUTION OF BATH & SPA

500 0 500 1000

PHONICIAN CARTAGEN

HELLENISTIC GREEKS

ROMAN EMPIRE

BYZANTINE EMPIRE

CHRISTIAN

ARAB- ISLAM

OTTO EMPIRE

EUROPEAN- MODERNE

HEALTH- BOOYCARE
The different rituals of the hamam influenced each other mutually in the course of the centuries, irrespective of place and religion. In this way, the ceremonies associated with bathing became more and more detailed.
The existing bathroom in the Hotel Albergo in Beirut meets all international standards and has little in common with the traditional hamam, except for the selection of materials.
GLASS OPENING TO THE BEDROOM

MORE ACCESS TO THE "DAYLIGHT"

MORE VIEW SPACE

WATER STONE POOL TO RELAX

RUNNING WATER (SYMBOL + SOUND)
ON THE WALL

LIGHTS - ARE SMALL AND ADJUSTABLE
CANDLE LIGHT IF YOU NEED RELAX

WATER AS WELCOME (SYMBOL)
The aim is to endow the room with the atmosphere of a modern yet traditional hamam in order to reintroduce the centuries-old ritual of bathing in a new form.
The Hamam for 4

The design of the “Hamam for 4” by Simone Kosremelli makes use of features of the traditional procedures of the public hamam, thus making it possible to reanimate these historical bathing habits. A room full of tradition thus becomes a social event again.
The Hamam for 4

Revisiting the bathing experience: Since Roman times, bathing used to take place in public spaces for the simple reason, that most individual homes did not have running water facilities. It is only in the 20th century, with the introduction of the proper infrastructures, that at first bathrooms become part of the individual homes, as one bathroom for all the members of the family usually coupled with the kitchen area, and later on, as one bathroom en suite with almost every bedroom in the house.

Similarly, the 20th century witnessed the creation of beaches: opening up to mass consumption, nudity and promiscuousness became generally accepted. Therefore, the bathing experience is the field of two opposite tendencies: On the one side, total individualization of the bath with the multiplication of bathrooms within the private realm of the housing unit and on the other side, the socialization of the bathing experience with the creation of beaches and large swimming pools.

The hamams that are found within the boundary of the Ottoman Empire (Turkey, Eastern Europe, North Africa and the Middle East) are still functioning and are used by a minority. However, they were rediscovered by the Occidental tourist as a pleasurable bathing experience.
The proposal of the “Hamam for 4” addresses the issue of bathing in a common sharing space divided into zones with various activities: undressing, steam bathing, scrubbing, massaging, rinsing, drying, dressing, relaxing, etc. Bathing becomes a slow process and a shared experience rather than a quick, compulsory individual gesture; members of one family, friends could bath together, help each other by mutually scrubbing and massaging, share a light meal or drink within the hamam space.

This new approach of the bathing experience brings back the conviviality of the early Roman bath within the realm of the private sphere of the individual home. Thus, the Western world can rediscover its ancient bathing habits that still survive in the Eastern world.
A visit to a hamam contributes to physical and mental relaxation and recovery. Here, a schematic diagram of passage through a hamam is illustrated.
Preconditions such as the requirements and the useable areas of the rooms and the necessary installations for a private hamam were reconsidered and are listed here in tabular form.
NEEDED FOR A HAMMAM

PHYSICAL NEED

NEED TO RELAX
NEED TO GET TOGETHER
NEED TO SOCIALIZE
NEED TO WASH & TO GET WASHED
NEED TO MASSAGE & TO GET MASSAGED

ACCESSORIES

THE HAMMAM BOX COMPOSED OF TWO SUPERPOSED BOXES LINKED BY A HANDLE.
THE UPPER BOX IS A DEPOSIT BOX FOR ALL VALUABLES AND COULD BE LOCKED.
THE LOWER BOX IS A CONTAINER FOR THE HAMMAM PARAPHERNALIA AND HAS A PERFORATED BOTTOM.

SPACE

A SPACE 5m x 5m x 3m x 3m for a Hammam for 4 that can be located:
A) IN THE BASEMENT OR ON THE ROOF OF AN EXISTING BUILDING TO BE USED BY ITS RESIDENTS.
B) IN AN UNUSED ROOM OF AN EXISTING APARTMENT OR PENTHOUSE.
C) IN AN UNUSED ROOM OF AN EXISTING INDIVIDUAL HOUSE.
D) IN AN ADDED ROOM TO AN EXISTING INDIVIDUAL HOUSE

TECHNICAL INSTALLATIONS

WATER SOURCE
DRAINAGE
ELECTRICAL PANEL BOARD
WATER HEATER
STEAM MACHINE
SELF-CLEANING EQUIPMENT

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30°C 30°C 30°C 25°C

COMPARTMENTS FOR CLOTHS
COMPARTMENTS FOR DRESSING
COMPARTMENTS FOR TOILETTY
COMPARTMENTS FOR CLOTHS
COMPARTMENTS FOR PHONE
COMPARTMENTS FOR WATCH JEWELRY
COMPARTMENTS FOR LAUGUISH
COMPARTMENTS FOR CLOTHS
COMPARTMENTS FOR WATCH JEWELRY
COMPARTMENTS FOR CLOTHS
COMPARTMENTS FOR LAUGUISH
COMPARTMENTS FOR CLOTHS
COMPARTMENTS FOR WATCH JEWELRY

Simone Kosremelli/Simone Kosremelli Architects
The square ground plan of the design is divided into five areas: main hall, steam room, scrubbing and washing room, massage room and the central hall. Here, an octagonal domed ceiling is suspended, whose light installations illuminate the inside diffusely.
The individual functional areas which are passed through during the hamam procedure were projected into the design and are listed here in chronological order:
I. Main hall: Undressing and preparation.
II. Steam bath: Relaxation and sweating.
III. The scrubbing/washing room has floor heating and wash basins and is lit up diffusely by the light installation in the domed ceiling.

IV. Massage room: After washing and scrubbing, the well heated massage room is visited. Here, there are two height-adjustable massage benches.
V. In the centre of the hamam, there is a small, bubbling water source where the guest can refresh himself. This area also has diffuse lighting.

VI. Back in the main room, the visitor gets dressed while at the same time having the opportunity to drink a cup of coffee or tea.
Private Hamam – Experience for everyone?

There are different reasons for the slow disappearance of the traditional public hammam. Only the integration of the hamam into a private apartment can save this traditional bathing culture. With this goal in mind, the architect Maha Nasrallah designed a hamam for everyone.
Private Hamam – Experience for everyone?

In Lebanon, the traditional public hamam culture is clearly forgotten. Very few structures are still preserved and even less are actually functional. Hygiene, or rather the lack of it, could be one of the major factors in the slow disappearance of this local bathing tradition, which explains why the introduction of the European private bathing culture took over so widely. Socially the public hamam has been replaced by the SPA while the private bathroom imports all its elements from the European model.

Could the loss of the local bathing tradition be reversible? Could there be an U-turn, a return to the richness of the local bathing tradition while preserving the health and hygiene characteristics of today’s requirements? And by doing so, could we bring the public hamam experience, which is open to all social classes and religions, into the private individual house? By becoming private, can it preserve its non-restrictive characteristic and remain affordable? In the traditional examples of the private hamam use (reference the Beit Eddine Palace) we see, that when the hamam is for private use it is only found in Palaces, because the space, water and heating requirements are too important. While the public hamam brings different people together, can the private hamam bring family members together?

The following exercise tries to answer some of these questions by proposing a space based on the hamam sequence (1-Undressing and relaxing: Apodyterium, 2-washing and warming up: Tepida-
rium, and 3-the hot bath: Calderium), a space that is respectful to the environment and yet could fit in an apartment.

Environment/water: First we separate the “bathing” function from the toilet function. This allows us to recover the waste water from the bathing, filter it, recycle it and use it again, saving on water.

Climate: In Lebanon the sun is out and warm most days of the year. We try to make use of the sun by introducing a solarium, which integrates the outside to the inside. The solarium is an outdoor terrace, midway between the Calderium and the Apodyterium, oriented south to allow the “sun bathe”.

Materials: The used materials echo the ones that are found in the traditional hamam (marble on the floor and for the seats), with the introduction of a new material for the solarium: wood for the deck and the sun drying platform.

Light/privacy: The major difference with the traditional hamam is, that the proposed design opens up to the outside with large glass openings (protected visually by a mobile wooden fence, adaptable to the changing sun ray angles) while its traditional counterpart gradually closes in: First you enter a transitional space which still has some high openings in the dome, then you move into the more enclosed spaces, that only allow diffused natural light through bottled glass openings. These domed spaces are replaced in the design proposal by an artificial lighting within a suspended domed ceiling.

Finally, we try to reduce these spaces to the minimum possible area: We start with three basic modules (3.60 x 3.60 meters), two modules for the indoor functions of undressing, pre-washing, steam room and bathing, and one module for the outdoor function of sun bathing. Then we reduce the whole space and try to fit it all in one of these 3.60 x 3.60 modules. This “compact” solution is itself made out of three basic modules (two indoor and one outdoor) but now each module is 1.80 x 1.80 meters only.

In this private hamam some of the traditional bathing rituals are brought back: the important element of movement through space to go from one function to another; the importance of sharing the bath with other people, in this case other family members; and the joy of mixing hot and cold water in a large container and then pouring it on the body with a scoop. For some other characteristics, like the time factor which helps you unwind and relax, it remains the individual’s initiative to make good use of.
The hamam is a public place for all people. It follows the old tradition with its characteristic division into three separate spaces: Apodyterium (undressing room), Tepidarium (warm room) and Caldarium (the hot bath).
For some decades now, the public hamam has been increasingly displaced by a private bathing culture, mainly with a western influence. Can all the advantages of a public hamam be transposed into the private area?
The traditional public hamam is finding its way into private houses. In the process, sun, water and privacy are especially important. But such a hamam must be affordable for all people and not just the better-off classes.
In the old hamams that are still in their original condition, there are many beautiful details that have been retained from the past history of bathing culture, mixed with contemporary elements.
The starting point for the first step in the design process is a module, 3.60 x 3.60 meters in size, which is developed into a private hamam. The three modules are structured according to the three stations of a traditional hamam.
Optimization of the ground plan results in a more compact solution which is thus easier to integrate in an individual ground plan for an apartment. Nevertheless, all the elements of a traditional hamam are still present.
The third step minimizes the area again to half the grid pattern, i.e. 1.80 x 1.80 meters. The cost of such a private “compact” hamam is low and thus affordable for the “smaller wallet” as well.
The Beit Eddine hamam in Tripolis provides its visitors with another hamam of the traditional kind. The rooms in which the employees pamper their “bathers” extrude the patina of a time that is far back in the past but nevertheless still present.
The development of Turkish baths cannot be considered without reference to the history of bathing culture in the Mediterranean area. Over a period of thousands of years, important civilizations, archaeological digs and research turn up evidence of highly developed bathing cultures. The latter did not disappear with the decline of its civilization but survived in other nations, spreading out into different regions. A tradition of bathing does not develop quickly. It takes hundreds of years until the individual aspects of a specific bathing culture become apparent and visible in the form of bathing facilities and the architects who pioneered them.

The oldest bathing facilities with a heated water system can be traced back to the Mycenaean period (1800–1600 B.C.). Artifacts found from the Hellenic period go back to 500 B.C. Nevertheless, up to the time of ancient Rome, we have no precise information on the circumstances and customs of bathing. We also have no knowledge of whether the Romans developed their hot baths as a result of Carthaginian influence and whether the Carthaginians were influenced in turn by Phoenician bathing culture, an explanation which seems to be quite plausible. Whichever theory is true, the Romans possessed a highly developed bathing culture, which can be verified by complex bathing facilities and customs which were passed on from one generation to the next.
Roman baths had a mainly social significance, being an important social meeting place for the people. They did not perform a religious or spiritual function but were only for purposes of personal hygiene and health. So they preferred to build baths where mineral springs were to be found.

In the Byzantine period (400–1500 A.D.), the meaning of bathing changed fundamentally. Bathing came to have less of a bodily-oriented, healing or hygienic function. Instead, water became a component of religious ceremonies such as baptism or other Christian rituals. A new typology of bathing came into being: the “balneo sacra” or later the “baptisterium”. The baths were smaller than the Roman ones and also had fewer rooms.

When Islam originated (around 700 B.C.) in the Arabian cultures, the first hamams (around 900 B.C.) were gradually established in regions where the last Roman spas were still in use at the same time. Diverse Turkish peoples, who pushed into the Arabian area from Asia, gradually converted to Islam and migrated west towards Anatolia and built their own baths for the first time (around 1070 A.D.). These were considerably different in some details to Arabian baths. The immersion tubs of Arabian baths, which had been inherited from Roman baths, disappeared. The Turks also built elevated seats into the washrooms, constructed central sweating pedestals in the main
washroom and reduced the number of rooms to three: the sogukluk (entrance hall, changing room and rest area), the iliklik (semi-heated or transitional room) and the sicaklik (hot or main bathing room). By contrast, the Roman baths had up to eleven different areas, the Arabian ones up to five, and all of them were connected to each other with various through passageways.

Around the year 1300, the Turkish peoples or Turks reached the area around Bursa, where they encountered Byzantine baths, whose buildings they took over. They later had their own baths built by Byzantine master builders. As the Ottoman Empire expanded, they developed and changed the architecture. After the conquest of Byzantium (1453 A.D.) and the establishment of Constantinople as the capital, the Turks were richer and more powerful and built larger, more magnificent baths. The most famous and beautiful Turkish baths were erected in the 16th century. In places bordering the Ottoman Empire such as Cairo, Damascus and Budapest, in the Arabian countries, in the Balkans and in Greece, there are also baths which were created under Turkish rule and and the baths at Budapest are still in use today.

From the very beginning, the baths were a very important part of everyday life for the Turks. After the mosques, they were, for a long time, the only social meeting place for men as well as
women. Numerous ritual functions were also ascribed to them. Apart from religious washing, which was also important in the Arabian hamams, the Turks combined religious and social customs, which have survived until this day. Feasts have been and are still held traditionally in hamams — before marriages, before or after the birth of a child and to mark special occasions in life. Turkish baths have always been freely accessible to other religions. With the decline of the Ottoman Empire, hardly any new baths were being built and the number of baths decreased considerably.

When Orientalism became a popular movement in the 19th century, the first hamams also appeared in western metropolises — in Paris, London, Berlin, Vienna and New York. Even the Titanic had its own hamam. Of course, their religious and ritual meanings disappeared in favour of a leisure culture that was focused on pleasure. The hamam was somewhere to meet, to have fun, to get together with other people and to relax — a central aspect of bathing culture that is still valid today.

From the start of the 20th century until today, the West has seen the development of a tendency to take a bath every day. This was the result of economic and functional influences. Hygiene and health are the main aims and it appears that all the ritual associations of bathing have been
lost. Bathing is defined as an individual activity and is isolated in separate rooms. The private bathroom in a private house or apartment has been established in the West for almost a century. Nonetheless, a certain social aspect of public bathing has not only survived until today but has even prospered in the last two decades. One has only to think of mineral baths and health spas, baths for leisure time and sports.

In summary, it can be said that, in the last 2,000 years, the public rituals and functions of bathing have spread out without exception from the East to the West. It was only in the 20th century that a counter-movement started. Today, there are still traditional Turkish baths in Turkey but, due to tourism and the influence of western fashion, new types of bathing facility are being created in hotels and leisure centres which are very different to their historical models, both in respect of their architecture and their use. Therefore, it is important to remember the long history of social, religious and ritual customs of bathing culture and to combine them with the modern needs of today.
Water – Space – Person: New Standards in Bath Design

by Philippe Grohe
For Axor, the designer brand from Hansgrohe AG, AquaTektur represents fundamental architectural research at its very best. Because bath development is a process that constantly demands new concepts and solutions. After the democratisation process of the functional bath in the western world, further development has been observed, going from a purely functional bathroom area towards a well-being room and a living room, serving both as a place of retreat and as a kind of meeting place for the family. This is also reflected in the fact that architects are now according the bathroom more space. Moreover, the boundaries between living or sleeping area and bathroom are becoming less and less distinct. It is clear that people today need and look for a place of retreat from their hectic everyday lives, from pressure at work and the fast virtual world. The bath as an intimate space is predestined for this: however, this is not simply a growing need among people; it is one of the social challenges of the future. In order to find new, unconventional ideas for baths, the bathroom must first be abandoned. AquaTektur is one of the ways in which Axor is forging new paths in this direction.

Working together with the architects and interior designers at the AquaTektur workshops also follows the recognition that a suitable place in architecture should be accorded to the vital element water, as a precious and increasingly scarce resource, and that the bath should be constantly rethought. If we associate ourselves with the creative minds of leading architecture firms throughout the world, then it is precisely because the architects and interior designers can take the development of the bath further.

The use of water in buildings and constantly changing requirements in the bathroom require that we, as manufacturers of high-quality designer products for the bathroom, think in terms of complete spaces, of architectural dimensions, and do not only see the individual fittings. That is the one of the reasons why it is essential to seek the opinions of experts such as architects and interior designers, since in the end it is they who decide on the building environment of tomorrow. As innovation leaders in the sanitation industry, we are currently responsible for a whole range of inventions that represent the bath of the present. But beyond the development of individual products, today the relationship between water, space and the person requires serious debate.
The designer brand Axor, with its products, contributes significantly to the shaping of the building environment. Axor products are to be found in private baths, hotels and kitchens as well as in public baths, schools and toilets. From Berlin, New York and Shanghai to Sydney, Milan and Tokyo. Sensible and responsible exposure to water and design is therefore a significant part of the Axor brand philosophy.

A bathroom fitting, when viewed on an architectural scale, is a rather small part of a building. But just like a hand shower or a kitchen fitting, with daily use it will become a key product. It wants and needs to be touched, and it triggers an immediately tangible reaction that in many civilisations is linked to rituals and well-being. Users therefore often perceive the fitting more intensively than for example an inbuilt light fixture that seems to disappear into the picture on the ceiling.

However, we do not think of our products simply as complementing building technology, nor simply as high-quality fittings, showers and accessories. Rather, the Axor brand offers comprehensive and broadly diversified collections for individual baths. If possible bathrooms should not be thought of simply in terms of individual fittings or showers, but of furnishing an important living room. Using the visions of internationally renowned architects and designers, who, with Axor, apply their design philosophy for life to baths. For Axor, the focus of interest is the implementation of design and spatial concepts, which transcend functional aspects and style variations. The Axor collections, thanks to their high product versatility, can be used as an alphabet, with the individual letters combining to form entire words and interlinked sentences. It is in this sense that the successful Axor lines from designers such as Antonio Citterio, Philippe Starck and Phoenix Design “function”.
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