

Rona Meyuchas-Koblenz to bring '**Designers in the Middle**' - the critically acclaimed discussion project - to **Global Design Forum** at the **Victoria & Albert Museum** during **London Design Festival** on Friday 22 September 2017, 14:30 - 15:30

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From left: Nada Debs, Rami Tareef, Rona Meyuchas-Koblenz, Suzanne Trocmé

As part of **London Design Festival 2017** Talk's Programme, **Rona Meyuchas-Koblenz**, founder and creative director of Kukka, will present the panel discussion '**Designers in the Middle**' that examines the experience of designing in or from the Middle East at the **Global Design Forum** on **Friday 22 September 2017 14:30 - 15.30** at **The Victoria & Albert Museum**, London.

**Designers in the Middle** was originally curated by the Design Museum London in 2016 during London Design Festival, to great acclaim, and was followed earlier this year by the organisers at ICFF Exhibition in New York and has been selected by the organisers at London Design Festival to participate at the Global Design Forum at the V&A Museum during this year's Festival.

Chaired by Suzanne Trocmé, Editor at Large for Wallpaper\*, Rona will be joined by an expert panel, including designer **Nada Debs** and **Rami Tareef** to explore how the region's craft, heritage, daily life and industrial reality affect the work and lives of its designers.

*"I approach 'Designers in the Middle' from two angles that interest me the most. Firstly, designers operating in and from the Middle East and secondly, designers who find themselves in the middle between the manufacturing and the political constrains.*

*The content of 'Designers in the Middle' is not political at all. That is also one of the reasons why the word 'East' is not mentioned after the word 'Middle'. What interests me is to bring out the person/designer behind its work.*

*I am hoping you will find the beauty behind it."*

*- Rona Meyuchas Koblenz, Designers in the Middle, Founder*

Global Design Forum is a week-long celebration of design and what it can do. A layer cake of talks, discussions and workshops the Forum lifts the lid on the most innovative thinking in the world of design today.

Be inspired by the pioneers that are changing the way we design and live. Refresh your thinking and reboot your understanding of the power and potential of design as a force for good.

For more information about the The Global Design Forum at the V&A Museum or to book your ticket to the event, visit:

<http://www.globaldesignforum.com/>

For more information about 'Designers in the Middle', visit:

<https://www.designersinthemiddle.com>

<https://www.facebook.com/designersinthemiddle/>

For more information or to view Kukka's full product portfolio, please visit

[www.kukka.co.uk](http://www.kukka.co.uk)

[www.kukkastudio.co.uk](http://www.kukkastudio.co.uk)

For all press queries please contact David Ryan [david@kukka.co.uk](mailto:david@kukka.co.uk).

**ENDS**

## **Notes to Editors**

### **About Kukka**

Established in 2010, Kukka™ is a British design house founded by designer Rona Meyuchas-Koblenz. The products are made from sustainable materials and cultural behaviors; these are taken into account during the design process; Kukka admire craftsmanship, aesthetics, and functionality.

All this is reflected throughout the production, technology methods, minimising of materials and components used for both products and packaging.

The products are designed and made from actual day-to-day living experiences; as we observe, listen, feel as well as innovate, any Kukka™ product with confidence.

### **About Rona Meyuchas-Koblenz**

Born in Tel-Aviv, internationally acclaimed and designer, graduated in 1999 with a Master degree from the Scuola politecnica di design in Milan. Rona has started her career where she worked in

different design consultancies in Milan and then moved to London where she worked in Isometrix lighting and design.

Rona's professional experience in design and manufacturing motivated her to create products under her own label, Kukka Studio. The first collection was released in Milan during Salone del Mobile 2007 at Spazio Romeo Gigli, the following year she was approached by the British embassy in Milan to exhibit selected products at The Galleria d'Arte moderna in Milan, an exhibition curated by Sir Paul Smith and Moroso. Few years later kukka brand was founded under Rona's direction and as head of design; their products are sold worldwide, kukka's clients varies from Architects, interior designers, private clients, retailers such as Conran, Paul Smith, La Rinascente, Selfridges, De Padova

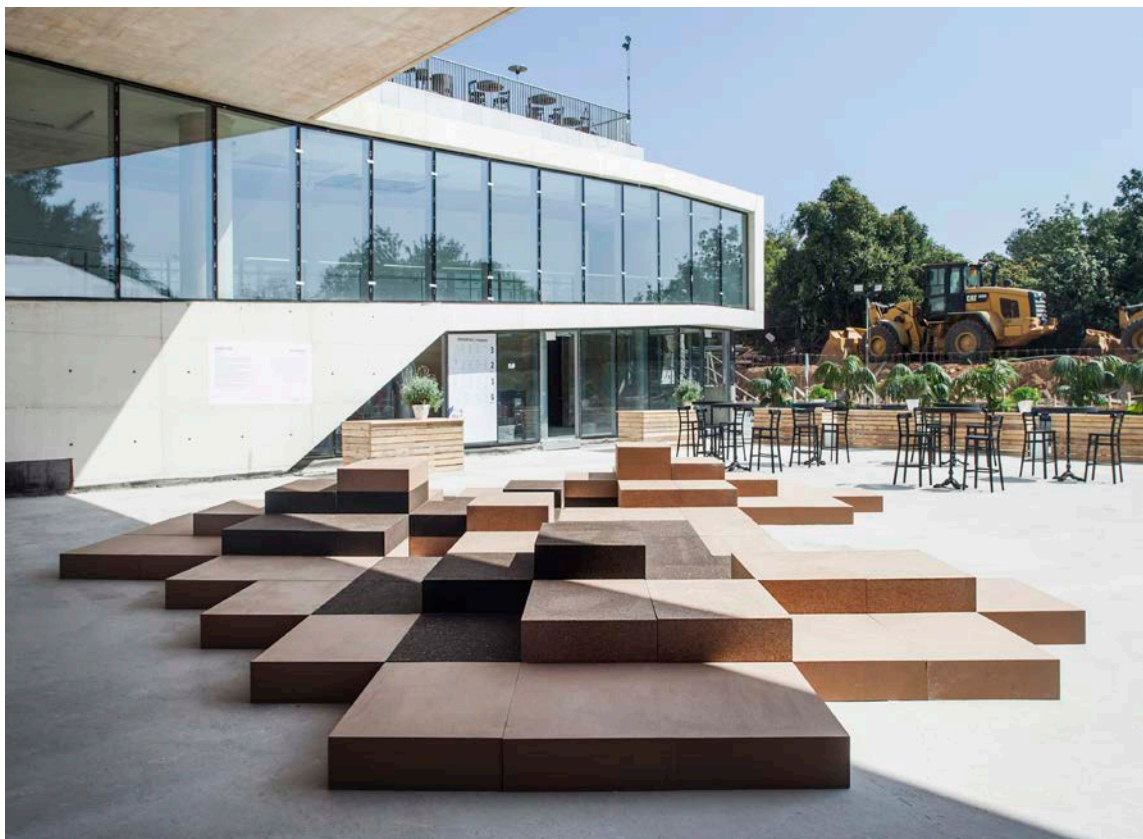
The minimalist approach and "honest" design is recognized with Rona's style. Rona's latest bespoke project, 'Project 34' in conjunction with Caesarstone which was unveiled, to great critical acclaim, at Tent London during LDF and then "Spectra", in 2016 with Frame magazine during Milan Salone del Mobile.

The studio, underpinned by creative stimulation, specializes in experimenting with materials, manufacturing methods and technology.

In summer 2016 Alexander Von Vegesack, founder and curator of Vitra museum, invited Rona to tutor a week long workshop at Boisbuchet in collaboration with Amorim Cork.

In April 2017, Rona was commissioned by The British Council to create a seating area installation, spread across a large area within the Steinhardt Museum of Natural History, Tel Aviv. Rona again collaborated with Amorim to create the project 'Blocks' using cork .

Rona is also a visiting lecturer, a writer and the founder/presenter of Designers in the Middle.



*Blocks at Fresh Paint Art Fair by Rona Meyuchas-Koblentz, Kukka Studio / Image credit Yoav Gurin*

## About Nada Debs

Nada Debs is a Lebanese designer living and working in Beirut. Her work spans scale and discipline: from product and furniture design to one-off commissions across craft, art, fashion and interiors. What ties her work together is her ability to distil culture and craftsmanship to create pieces of emotional resonance. Nada grew up in Japan, studied design at Rhode Island School of Design in the United States and has spent significant periods of time living and travelling the world, finding connections between different cultures. There is something of each of her experiences in all of her work. In essence, she captures the power of the human hand to tell stories that touch the heart. She calls her approach: hand made, heart made.

Nada believes in the importance of human stories. She places value on connections - to places, to others and to our own identity within the wider world. She is fascinated by the role of the human hand to tell stories and to evoke a sense of belonging. She describes her belief in craft as a feeling that goes beyond geography, language and culture. Geometry is an important tool for Nada, representing complex philosophies with intricate, simple beauty. She uses materials to tell tactile stories, sometimes in pure and surprising forms, and sometimes with intriguing combinations and juxtapositions. What connects her work is a belief in the power of design to cross time and border and touch us on a primal level. She believes not just in form and function, but in feeling too.

Nada brings her philosophy to life in a number of ways. Her experience as a designer gives her the language to understand how things are made and how they can be made special. She has a hands on, human approach, understanding that good relationships and a collaborative attitude are the key to achieving good results. She brings passion to process; she combines ideas, skills and techniques together from her travels, to form a unique cultural exchange. Her mission is more than simply the nostalgic preservation of time-honoured traditions, it is to translate the traditional into something energetic and alive.



'Land of the Rising Sun', Studio Nada Debs

## About Rami Tareef

Industrial designer and design lecturer Rami Tareef, who hails from a Druze family line that has lived in Northern Israel for over 500 years, graduated from the Department of Industrial Design at Bezalel Academy of Art and Design, Israel and the ZHDK, Zurich School of Arts. In 2014 he completed a Master in Industrial Design at the Bezalel Academy.

A culture researcher seeking to formulate a new and fresh dialogue of the fascinating intercultural encounter between east and west. He explores the limits of the current discourse between craft and design, new and old, traditions and technology towards progressivism. An experimental craftsman who works on preserving traditional crafts through design.



*'Megaphone', Designer Rami Tareef / Image credit Yaeli Gabriely*

## About Suzanne Trocmé

London born and educated, Suzanne Trocmé spent many years in New York and Paris and has written on the subjects of art, fashion, music, interiors and architecture for a variety of publications including The New York Times Magazine, Architectural Digest, House & Garden, The Telegraph, Interior Design (European Editor) and Wallpaper\* (Editor-at-Large).

Apart from her contributions to print journalism, Trocmé began writing books following the birth of her first two sons and is the author of many publications which include Influential Interiors (Clarkson Potter), Retro Home (Rizzoli), Fabric (Mitchell Beazley), The New Moderns (Stewart, Tabori, Chang), Attention to Detail (Stewart, Tabori, Chang) and Cool Homes in Hot Places (HarperCollins).

Trocmé herself has received awards for her journalism and books including the American Fabric and Fiction Award, usually awarded for fiction, for her nonfiction work Influential Interiors. An expert in her chosen world of architecture and design, the author is often called upon to judge competitions. She has also presented radio programs in New York on WBAI and television in the UK with Granada, the BBC and Channel 4 television.

Trocmé in 2014 curated Middle East Revealed, a showcase of Middle Eastern contemporary design during London's Design Festival and a second elaborated exhibition in Milan in 2015 before developing the international and inaugural Dubai Design Week with the Art Dubai Group. In 2017 she co-curated the first Sub Saharan contemporary design exhibition Africa by Design to be held in Africa, which launched in Accra, Ghana on the date of their 60th independence. The exhibition will travel through Europe and the Middle East.

Trocmé lives in London with her four sons.

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