Fish by Design
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Can a fish swim out of water? The logical answer is no, but I will try to convince you otherwise. Anyway, since when has design been defined by sole logic? If it wasn’t for the creative ability of designers, innovation would remain at a standstill. The world of design is vast, more than any one person has experienced. With added experiences the possibilities of innovation are endless.

The world of design is built up from people’s interactions with different cultures. I have been able to experience my own life through travel and living in different countries. That different perspective is what led me into design. I am Palestinian, born in America and I have an understanding of what it’s like to live surrounded by design in its most optimal uses. The order and application of design in America are so different than what I saw while I lived in Palestine. Palestine is an occupied country, and the restrictions put forth by the occupation forces design to innovate in new ways. Utilizing every inch of space and creating buildings that soar to the sky, because space is limited. Imagine sharing a room with your four siblings. There is no point in complaining, in fact, many are lucky to have the luxury of a home. The conversation shifts to how you are going to apply materials, finishes, and furniture into such a small space so that every occupant feels comfortable and safe.

I lived in Palestine for five years, it is the place I call home, but I moved back to the United States to pursue my education. Seeing the way people have to adapt their lives around war and conflict pushed me into design. The way people experience life in contrast to what I knew from living in America taught me that circumstances wield innovation. I took every experience I learned in Palestine and molded it into my passion for design. When you take a person’s perception of the world you can push the design envelope. Every person with a diverse background has stories that can influence design in the most extraordinary way. As designers we have a responsibility to listen to the community we are involved in; because that is what will guide us.

I was lost when I came to the United States, I was a fish swimming out of water. It became clear to me that yes, a fish can swim out of water. If it couldn’t, if I didn’t, it would not be possible to see the true capacity design has on impacting life. I never wanted to become anything other than what I am. If I am fish, I will remain a fish, and I will not conform to design norms and standards. My diverse background makes me who I am. Through my identity, and my passion and love for creating space it’s clear that diversity and innovation are interrelated. I am a fish out of water, the question is: are you willing to become one?