Tents on RWU Campus Will Focus Attention on Syrian Refugee Camps in Lebanon

Edward Fitzpatrick
Roger Williams University

Follow this and additional works at: https://docs.rwu.edu/weekatroger_featured_news

Recommended Citation
https://docs.rwu.edu/weekatroger_featured_news/407

This News Article is brought to you for free and open access by the The Week at Roger at DOCS@RWU. It has been accepted for inclusion in Featured News Story by an authorized administrator of DOCS@RWU. For more information, please contact mwu@rwu.edu.
Tents on RWU Campus Will Focus Attention on Syrian Refugee Camps in Lebanon

Architecture graduate student Amelia Tayeh proposes redesigning refugee camps to make them more humane, better for children

December 7, 2018  |  By Edward Fitzpatrick

BRISTOL, R.I. – Eight tents will soon appear in the heart of Roger Williams University’s Bristol campus as part of an architecture student’s graduate thesis, which draws attention to the 1.1 million refugees who have fled to Lebanon since the Syrian Civil War began in 2011.

The tents will stand outside RWU’s School of Architecture, Art and Historic Preservation from Dec. 9-16, providing a visual representation of the refugee camps that graduate student Amelia Tayeh would like to redesign to create more humane environments.

People will be able to enter four of the tents to listen to a documentary about Syrian refugees, see montages capturing the hardships of refugee camps, and read statistics detailing the scope of the refugee crisis and the toll it is taking on displaced families. The term “refugee” will be displayed on the sides of four other tents in languages including English, Arabic, French and Spanish.

“The two aspects – awareness and architecture – are equally important,” said Tayeh, who grew up in West Bridgewater, Mass., and who spends part of each year in Lebanon, where her father was born. “I hope to create awareness and empathy for the people in need. The architecture side involves challenging the United Nations standard for refugee camps to provide community areas and space for children to play – to introduce playgrounds, gyms, schools, hospitals and community centers so they can live in a way that is not so hostile.”

Tayeh has proposed a “more humane design” for a hypothetical refugee camp that could hold more than 100,000 people at an unofficial border crossing between Syria and Lebanon, near the Bekaa Valley. Also, as part of the project, she is collecting bottle caps to donate to an organization in Lebanon that will help buy wheelchairs for children in need.

Tayeh is undertaking the project, titled “Until We Return,” as part of the Graduate Thesis Design Studio, with Professor of Architecture Julian Bonder as her thesis adviser.
“An architectural thesis involves taking a position and testing the concept through space and design,” Bonder said. “Amelia’s work stems from a profound understanding that architecture can serve to further human rights in the world. We celebrate and support wholeheartedly her intentions and approach.”

Public conversations about the issues raised by the installation will take place on campus next week, at times to be determined.

ACADEMICS  SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE, ART, & HISTORIC PRESERVATION