

MOVERS AND SHAKERS

Words Rayane Abou Jaoude

Photography Marco Pinarelli

It's about looking ahead and seeing the possibilities, overcoming the hurdles and taking things to the next level. It's revolutionary advancements in technology, virtual reality, art, architecture and aerospace design, and we're more than ready for it. A Mag speaks to some of Lebanon's greatest innovators and forward-thinkers, to shed light on their creations and how they're making a difference.



KARIM NADER

ARCHITECT, TEACHER AND YOGI

Architect Karim Nader dreams big. He founded Karim Nader Studio in 2016, and his work, from Villa Kali in Mounsef and Tahan Villa in Jounieh to the reinvention of an abandoned sugar-refining factory in Zalka and Amaret Chalhoub, shows the designer to be a passionate, engaged and responsible individual. His next project, Immeuble de l'Union, is the much-awaited renovation of the 1952 building by Lucien Cavro and Antoun Tabet near Sanayeh in Beirut. Where does he hope to be in 10 years? "Doing a few meaningful projects. Meaning happens when your work touches the lives of others."

What keeps you motivated?

Passion, possibility, creativity within our contemporary chaos

Something you're looking forward to in the future

A more harmonious and peaceful global living, like everyone I guess

The most challenging thing about your job

Having to constantly explain in words the unnamable experience of architecture

What's the funniest thing that has happened to you recently?

Not a single thing, but quite often I burst out laughing at my clients' mood swings

The best place to eat in Beirut

At home with a few friends



LEBNAN AND ARZ NADER

CO-FOUNDERS OF GAME COOKS

Brothers Lebanon and Arz Nader are co-founders of Game Cooks, a mobile game application that covers puzzles, action and arcade games, and which has recently entered the world of virtual reality and experiences. Lebanon has been working with mobile applications, games and systems development for the last 10 years, and has extensive experience in lottery and betting solutions and mobile technology. Arz has worked in the digital entertainment industry, and now builds the studio's portfolio of mobile games. Where do they unwind after work? They love quaint Spanish bistro Ortega in Badaro.

What keeps you motivated?

LN: Creating a game that makes people happy

AN: I am a hardcore gamer by nature, meaning that the passion for gaming itself is a huge part of my daily motivation

Something you're looking forward to in the future

LN: Scaling up Game Cooks internationally

AN: Creating a game title that would bring the gaming community together

The most challenging thing about your job

LN: Nothing is hard about my job. I am surrounded by the best team there is. I am super relaxed!

AN: The most challenging part is the ideation process itself, since we need to innovate and appeal in times where everything that might occur to you is already made

What's the funniest thing that has happened to you recently?

LN: I was invited to dinner at a seafood place, but I don't eat seafood. I ate a whole lot of bread and was hiding the seafood dishes under the table

AN: I met someone that I'd heard about from a coworker without knowing his name or how he looks like in a random street in San Francisco, and he eventually joined our Game Cooks development team in Lebanon

Fast-forward 10 years. Where do you hope to be?

LN: Wherever life takes me

AN: I would love to see Game Cooks being recognized as one of the biggest Triple A Studios in the world

DOREEN TOUTIKIAN

DESIGNER, RESEARCHER AND SOCIAL ENTREPRENEUR

Doreen Toutikian, founding director of Beirut Design Week, has a lot on her plate: she's also the co-founder and president of the board of MENA Design Research Center and the co-founder of LOOP. Her book, Design Education in the Middle East, was awarded the Cologne Design Prize in 2010. Currently based between Beirut and Athens, Toutikian has been an educator, mentor, advisor to global networks and member of the Young Cultural Innovators of the British Council, among other things. What keeps her going? "My love for life and adventure, for discovery of new things, for learning, developing new curiosities and accomplishing more goals for as long as I am alive."

Something you're looking forward to in the future

Becoming a good drummer and playing live for an audience

The most challenging thing about your job

Understanding and managing the expectations of people, building trust and encouraging people to think of the greater good of the community rather than the self

What's the funniest thing that has happened to you recently?

I was in my flat in Athens making sushi, and my boyfriend and I had invited friends over. One of his friends asks me about the ingredients, and I explain the different fish you can use and vegetables. He says, "This is awesome, next time I will bring Nectarilia with me," and I go, "Oh yeah sure, we can add anything to the rolls! Is it a fruit?" He says, "No, it's my girlfriend."

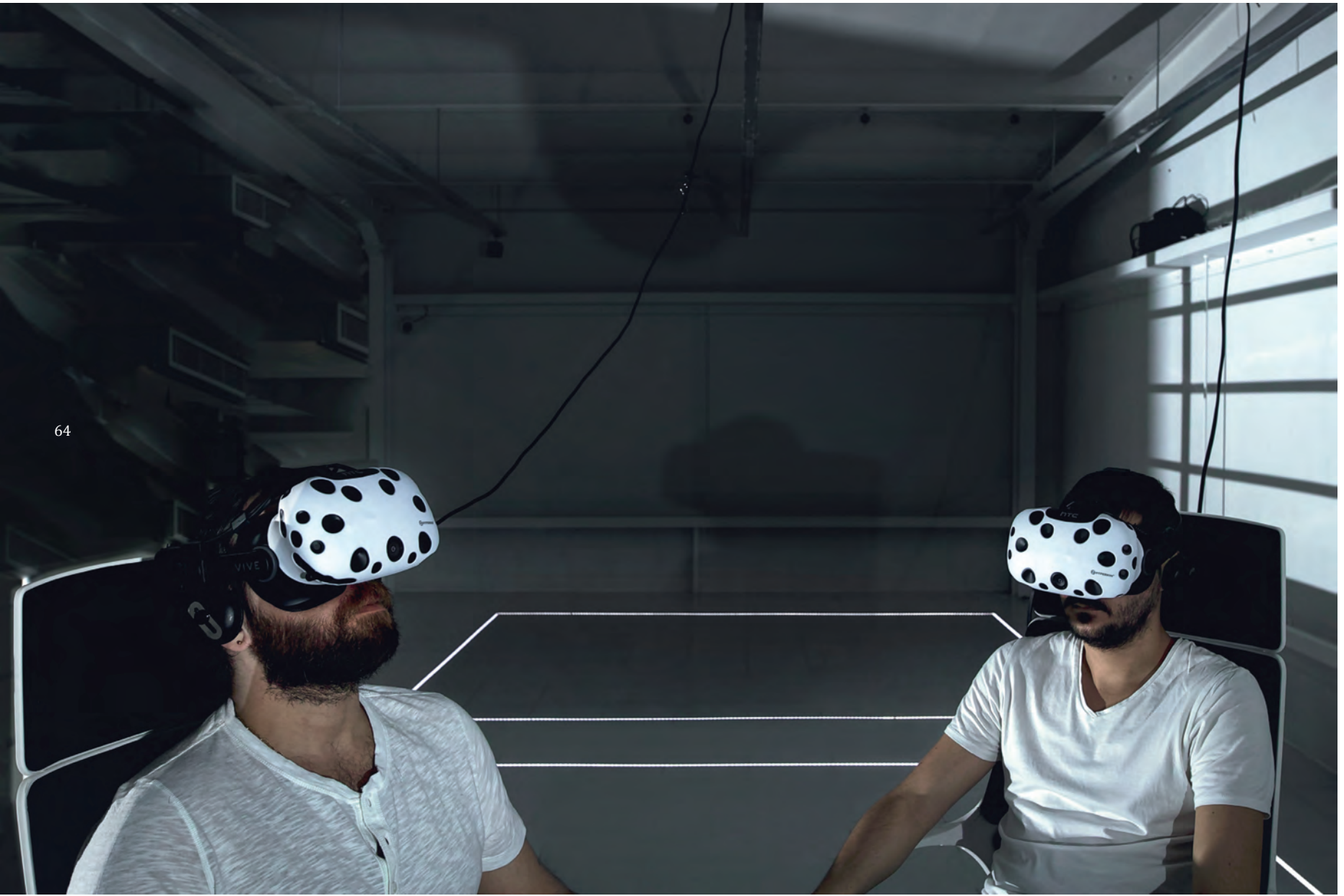
The best place to eat in Beirut

Makhlouf in Dora or Barbar Hamra for *shawarma*, Enab in Mar Mikhael for *fattet batenjen*, Tsunami in Ashrafieh for sushi and Badguer in Bourj Hammoud for *mante*

Fast-forward 10 years. Where do you hope to be?

On a Greek island, on a beach, under a tree, in a hammock, with a bottle of Sailor Jerry, lime and an ice bucket





LAURENT SAAD AND KARIM CHAMS EDDINE

IMAGE MAKER AND MANAGING PRODUCER AT BIGBANG STUDIOS

Laurent Saad and Karim Chams Eddine are some of the minds behind Bigbang Studios, Lebanon's first production house and cinema dedicated to creating virtual reality (VR) content for and from the Middle East and North Africa. Saad is (among other things) the chief creative officer at Cinemoz, a platform dedicated to the production and distribution of digital content, and Chams Eddine, who spends most of his time inside a VR headset, is a video editor and music composer. Where's their favorite place to eat in the city? "Marinella. Best homey Italian food in Lebanon," says Saad. For Chams Eddine, it's his girlfriend's kitchen, "hands down."

What keeps you motivated?

LS: My constant drive to do better

KC: I find "motivation" to be quite elusive, but what keeps me going is that I wholeheartedly enjoy all the things I do in life

Something you're looking forward to in the future

LS: Teleportation

KC: A more streamlined availability of all the headsets and content. I am ultimately looking for VR/AR to reach the tipping point and truly become the norm

The most challenging thing about your job

LS: Finding ways to always stay relevant and creative without repeating myself – coming up with new ideas all the time

KC: VR has little to no standard yet. Sometimes you envision that a concept will be awesome, then you try it inside VR, and it is terrible. It's a hectic trial-and-error process

What's the funniest thing that has happened to you recently?

LS: Nothing funny ever happens to me – I am too serious

KC: The daily interactions with my niece Riri and my cat Louise. It's a show that never repeats itself

Fast-forward 10 years. Where do you hope to be?

LS: Somewhere, continuing this strange, unpredictable adventure

KC: Celebrating the 10-year anniversary of you asking me this question

AMAR A. ZAHR AND NATHALIE ACKAWI

FOUNDER AND PARTNER OF BEIRUT ART RESIDENCY AND CO-FOUNDERS OF CUB GALLERY

Superwomen Amar A. Zahr and Nathalie Ackawi head Beirut Art Residency, an independent artist-run residency hosting both regional and international artists to develop and exhibit their work. They also run CUB Gallery, a unique exhibition space dedicated to promoting young students and fresh graduates in the arts. Having majored and worked in the arts, both women are passionate about Beirut's cultural scene and hope to see the city turn into a hub for artistic exchange, residencies and art.

What keeps you motivated?

AZ: Setting unrealistic goals (that often feel insane!) and getting as close to them as possible

NA: A challenge

The most challenging thing about your job

AZ: Needing to explain the role of art residencies in promoting cultural diplomacy, particularly to people from different industries

NA: Fundraising

What's the funniest thing that has happened to you recently?

AZ: Someone called me to book a table at the Beirut Art Residency. I'm still not sure what they thought we serve

NA: I met an albino kangaroo

The best place to eat in Beirut

AZ: Varouj, a little Armenian eatery in Bourj Hammoud. Great food but skip the kisses afterward!

NA: Varouj in Bourj Hammoud

Fast-forward 10 years. Where do you hope to be?

AZ: Hopefully in a position to make bigger cultural contributions to Lebanon

NA: I'd be lacking imagination if I knew



FOUAD FATTAL

CO-FOUNDER AND CEO AT KRIMSTON

Passionate about innovation and building technology with a tangible value, Fouad Fattal kicked off his career as project manager of a workflow solution dedicated to advertising agencies. He then established his first firm, Distimania, which specializes in the distribution of innovative IT accessories. Looking to expand further, he co-founded Krimston, a hardware company about to mass produce its very first product, TWO, the first dual SIM case for iPhones. Fattal is looking forward to making a difference in the world. "Life is too short, the only way to extend it is by leaving a mark," he says.

What keeps you motivated?

Ambition is the main driver behind my motivation. I always wanted to make it big! I would add challenge given the complexity of what we're doing and my passion toward tech

The most challenging thing about your job

Finding the right talents and advisors. Hardware research and development is not very common in our part of the world. The learning curve we had to go through in a very young ecosystem was extremely challenging, and still is

What's the funniest thing that has happened to you recently?

Attending a 60-minute meeting with the C level executives of one of the biggest telecom operators in the region while having a Hello Kitty sticker on my blazer carefully placed by my four-year old daughter

The best place to eat in Beirut

Not only because I am the proud son of its founder, but also because I love the food – definitely Boubouffe

Fast-forward 10 years. Where do you hope to be?

Besides embracing life and living it to its utmost extreme, running a successful fund that will give young talents and brilliant minds the proper chance to make an impact





RAFFI TCHAKERIAN

AEROSPACE DESIGNER

In 2008 Raffi Tchakerian started collaborating with Architecture and Vision (AV), a cutting-edge practice involved in art, space architecture, product and transportation design based in Italy. He's been teaching various university subjects since 2015, ranging from kinetic structures to aerospace architecture. He's also been involved in the creation of aerospace architecture courses at the American University of Beirut in the hope of creating aerospace-related research a department reality in the future. The most challenging thing about his job is pretty much everything, he says. "Designing for harsh environments, whether it's on earth or in space, is tricky, but extremely exciting."

What keeps you motivated?

Technology. "Playing" in the creative field, it's difficult to lose interest and motivation as there is so much you can do. It's our mission as designers to use these solutions and find new ways to improve our daily lives whether here on earth or in space

Something you're looking forward to in the future

The moment we obtain cheap and sustainable space access, the opportunities that we will have and the industries that will be created will literally be something out of this world

What's the funniest thing that has happened to you recently?

I was on a mission deep inside the Sahara Desert in the Siwa Oasis in Egypt with a group of students. In this oasis people used to build their homes with salt blocks. The place where we were staying was also built with the same technique. In the middle of the night I kept waking up because I felt salt all over the bed and had to clean it every time. One night I stayed up long enough to notice the students jumping around over my room, leading the salt particles to rain all over me. Definitely minus five for that!

The best place to eat in Beirut

Gavi

Fast-forward 10 years. Where do you hope to be?

In orbit around earth, inside a space resort gazing upon the planet and enjoying a cold space beer while floating in microgravity