


# Gamar Markarian

New York

## CONTACT

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## SKILLS

**Design Process:** Design Research (R&D and IRD), Project Management, Group Facilitation, Critical Re-framing, Systems Thinking, Diagramming, Storytelling

**Hard Skills:** Communication and Graphic Design, Videography, Photography, Drawing, Sketching

**Computer Skills:** Proficient in Adobe Suite (Photoshop, Illustrator, InDesign, Adobe Premiere, After Effects), AVID, MS office, Smartsheets, AutoCAD

**Languages:** Fluent in English, Arabic, Armenian and proficient in Spanish and French

## EDUCATION

**Documentary Media Studies** - Graduation film "Work" represented The New School at BAM Cinematek student showcase in Brooklyn, NY.

**The New School** - School of Public Engagement, New York.

**MS in Design and Urban Ecologies** (with focus on Design Strategies and Media Studies) Graduated with Honors.

**Parsons, School of Design Strategoes, The New School for Design**, New York.

**MS in Urban Design**

**American University of Beirut**, Faculty of Engineering and Architecture, Lebanon.

**B.S. in Landscape Design and Eco-Management and Diploma of Ingénieur Agricole.**

**American University of Beirut**, Faculty of Agricultural and Food Sciences, Lebanon.

# DESIGN STRATEGIST

- I am a creative strategist and a curious researcher with a diverse background in planning, landscape/architecture, sustainable development, media production, and communications. I have strong leadership, management and design skills with **18 years of professional experience** in private, non-profit, and education sectors.
- My career path has allowed me to be an excellent team player particularly in interdisciplinary settings, and an empathetic teacher offering my students the time and attention that each one of them deserves.

## WORK EXPERIENCE

### Senior Design Strategist

#### Indigo Slate (A Zensar Company)

July 2022 - present

- . Direct multi-team digital transformation projects across industries (Healthcare, Insurance, etc..) using the design thinking methodology
- . Collaborate on sustainable business transformation efforts across industries with the Human experience innovation team (HXI).

### Design Strategist

#### Citizen Planning Institute, Philadelphia

Sept.2021 -June 2022

- . Designed and prototyped CPI in a box: a toolbox that helps citizens become planners and provide capacity building for their communities.
- . The box is currently being tested by the alumni of the institutes program.

### Design Strategist

#### Mural Arts Philadelphia, Department of Environmental Justice

Sept.2016 - December 2022

- . Designed games, workshops and creative strategies as facilitators of community building, community participation and co-design.
- . Developed and carried out community engagement plans, and lead participatory design sessions. I have completed more than 50 sessions to date with up to 200+ local community members and representatives and organization.

My work at Mural Arts has (amongst others) resulted in:

- Attracting more funding to pursue similar work.
- The complete transformation of four schoolyards around Philadelphia that elicit literacy through play, all the while representing the neighbors that are part of these community schools.
- Strengthening community ties within 4 major neighborhoods in Philly, for a more just and inclusive future for their living environments.
- Training 15+ community members across Philadelphia to become community design leaders to spearhead future neighborhood transformations.
- Publishing 2 case studies of socially engaged art practice and collaborative design as a resource and inspiration for design practitioners.
- Launching of the Climate Justice Initiative: using the power of public art to tell stories about the causes, effects, and solutions to the climate crisis.

### Design Strategist & Media Designer

#### Healthy Materials Lab, Parsons, NY

Nov. 2014 - Sept. 2018

- . Designed communication tools, information graphics and systems maps.
- . Performed fieldwork, qualitative, primary and secondary research. Wrote and designed case studies for best practices in housing and healthy material industries.
- . Filmed and recorded interviews with key experts from across disciplines. Produced short video clips for communication, outreach and online courses.
- . Transformed the research into a healthier product database and educational resources ultimately creating an online certificate program, symposiums and demonstration projects.

### Co-founder & Lead Landscape Architect

#### Atelier Hamra, Lebanon

Private Landscape Design studio in Beirut Lebanon.

June 2006 - current

- . Co-founded and managed the studio with Architect Maha Issa, architect from 2006 to 2014. Currently, acting as advisor and thought partner to the studio.
- . Designed and managed more than 30 landscape architecture projects from concept inception to final product, including conducting client meetings, and supervising project sites.
- . Managed a team of 5+ designers in landscape, architecture, and engineering, and partnered with botanists and ecologists when necessary.

## TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Jan. 2016 - Present

### The New School, Parsons School of Design - New York

Private art and design college located in Lower Manhattan.

#### Part Time Faculty

. Business Design and Planning (PUDM 3365)

> Introduce system dynamics in the context of sustainable design of the operations of a business. Analyze sourcing materials, resource allocation and post-production impacts as elements that contribute to the overall economic, social, and environmental footprint of a product or service. Apply the insights and methodologies gained in the course by developing operational plans that propose innovative and sustainable alternatives to familiar business practices

. Integrative Research and Development (IRD) (PSDS 3100)

> Experiment with various approaches to the integration of design and research methodologies. In a semester-long project that spans planning, research, implementation and testing, students will experience the unfolding of the design process, with special attention given to the use of iteration and prototyping as a means to generate knowledge and/or innovative solutions.

. Research and Development Methods (R&D) (PSDS 2100)

> Introduction to the nature of design research and design methodologies. Conducting research outside the classroom and engaging users and experts to share their perspectives on research and design. Learn how to map out research findings and to envision and articulate design driven interventions.

. Information Visualization (PUDM 2700)

> A project-based course introducing information theory and the various means of visually representing the world with the intention of uncovering hidden realities and effects.

#### Teaching Assistant

. Design and Urban Ecologies Studio 2 (PGUD 5190)

Nov. 2018

### TUMO Center for Creative Technologies - Armenia

Free of charge digital media learning center for teens in Yerevan, Armenia

#### Guest Teacher and Workshop Leader

. Teach methodologies of visual anthropology and observational documentary.

. Explore the visual medium as a form of urban research and investigation.

. Film and edit short place films.

Sept. 2018

### ALBA University of Balamand, Lebanon

Lebanese Academy of Fine Arts within Balamand university in Beirut Lebanon.

#### Guest Lecturer and Workshop Leader

. Bachelor of Product Design - how to research and bring

Spring 2016 - Fall 2009

### American University of Beirut, Lebanon

Private institution of higher learning in Beirut Lebanon.

**Lecturer** in the Department of Landscape Design and Ecosystem Management

. Ecological Landscape Design Studio II (LDEM 228)

. Ecological Landscape Design Studio I (LDEM 204)

. Final Landscape Design Studio I (LDEM 241) .

Landscape Design Studio II (LDEM 216)

## WORKSHOPS + PRESENTATIONS

2020-2022

### Presentation of socially engaged art practice and collaborative design for a more just future.

I have been asked to present the creative approaches and methodologies that I have designed by many organizations and institutions including:

. CHILE Speaker Series. Cal Poly Pomona, California

. Finding Joy through Playful Learning Virtual Conference

. Northeast Creative Placemaking Leadership Summit, virtual conference

. Art of Activism: Can Art Help Save the Planet? Talk series at Mural Arts Philadelphia

. Erie Arts and Culture, Erie Pennsylvania

. Friends Select School, Philadelphia

. The Art of Sustainability Symposium by Mural Arts Philadelphia and Lindy Institute at Drexel University

. Parsons, The New School for Design, New York

. University of Ljubljana, Slovenia

. American University of Beirut, Lebanon

. Universidade do Vale Do Rio Dos Sinos, Brazil

Sept. 2018

### BAM Cinematek student showcase.

My short documentary entitled "Work" was selected to screened at the 1st annual BAM Film School Shorts program.

June 2018

### Workshop leader at Fearless Cities:

North America Regional Municipalist Summit New York City.

July 2017

### Design Resource at the Affordable Housing Design Leadership Institute ADHLI 2017 by Enterprise Community

June 2017

### Selected panelist at the symposium Postcards from the Anthropocene:

Unsettling the Geopolitics of Representation at the University of Edinburgh, School of Architecture and Landscape Architecture.

July 2016

### Selected Panelist at [Autonoma] An international conference on urban autonomy and the collective city at Omassis Cultural Center Athens, Greece.

Sept. 2014

### Co-founder of HubUP: Hub for Urban Practices.

A space for students and practitioners to challenge and disturb normalized urban processes.

Sept. 2012

### DPU SummerLab at Porto Fluviale Rome, The Bartlett UCL. Rome - Occupation City:

Redefining the piazza of squat occupied Porto Fluviale into a more inclusive open public space. (Participant)

Sept. 2011

### Urban Design Workshop BTU Cottbus.

"Old Town New" Case study area: Cottbus at the Marien-Church / Old Bus Station, Germany. Elaborating urban design solutions for the challenges of the development of the inner city area. (Participant)

July 2011

### Amman Lab Columbia GSAPP. Public space workshop: a rapid exchange in search of emergent issues concerning contemporary public space in the Middle East. (Participant)



LIKE  
*wild poppies,*  
I WILL RESEED MYSELF

**GROWING UP,**  
my mother and I would go to the pine forest near our house every weekend in the spring and summer. Knives and bags in hand, we would go on a treasure hunt of wild greens and native flowers.

On such days, our house would be filled with flowers and smells as if we transported the forest back home with us. I built an intimate relationship with the land and learned to deeply appreciate nature; to be able to communicate with it.

**BEIRUT HAS ALWAYS HAD A**  
bustling public life but mostly on the streets, sidewalks and alleys. The city hardly had any public parks so I was bound to come across someone I knew appropriating a public space in a way or another. There always was an immense sense of community. I always loved it and wanted to contribute to it!

**I AM AN OBSERVER.**  
My eyes and my mind like to glean things and moments as I live my day to day. That is why I never wanted to focus on a siloed profession.

I wanted to know how everything is interconnected; like a world that is an enormous web, where answers showed up in unexpected places.

**STORYTELLING BECAME MY LANGUAGE OF COMMUNICATION.**  
The only way I could convey my observations, thoughts, and insights was through visual stories that would break down complex ideas. I already knew how to draw and diagram, so I decided to carry a video camera and explore the world through it, too.

**BEING FAR FROM MY HOME**  
and far from my land, cooking food is how I practice and keep culture. In a world of constant cultural erasure, building my relationship with "our" food is my way of keeping the traditions of my family and my people alive.