SOMETHING FANTASTIC
IT WILL TELL STORIES

IT WILL BE ELEGANT

IT WILL BE ARCADIAN

IT WILL BE DENSE

NOT EVERYTHING WILL BE ALIGNED

IT WILL BE PAINTED

IT WILL BE HEAVY

IT WILL BE AS IT ALWAYS WAS
IT WILL BE ELEGANT
Wallpaper, Café Bauer on Unter den Linden 1877

IT WILL BE ARCADIAN
IT WILL BE DENSE
Late 17th century bread closet, Frankonia
IT WILL BE HEAVY
IT WILL BE AS IT ALWAYS WAS
Housing Cairo – The Informal Answer

Edited by Marc Angélil,
Charlotte Malterre-Barthes and Something Fantastic
in collaboration with CLUSTER

ETH Zurich
MAS Urban Design

Ruby Press
Fig. 2: Ard el-Lewa of the 1970s (after the Cadastral Plan)
The first urban development appears along the train tracks.

Fig. 3: Ard el-Lewa in 2015.
with people’s values and do not fulfill their wants and needs. All people, inside and outside government, learn how to best make use of it; the neo-vernacular ‘fusion’ in urban growth, in governance, in daily life.” —Dina Shohayeb

“Officially, informality includes practices and conditions taking place outside the state’s regulatory framework. But I personally find it important to distinguish between three definitions of informality. The first is the ‘non-condition’ (not formal), i.e. the structural opposite of formal, which is close to the above, rather reductionist definition. It is based on a political-economic framework of decentralized practice, as is apparent in informal urban development and informal economy, and as repeatedly occurs throughout urban history whenever the centralized power gets weakened, such as the medievalization of Roman cities. It could be abstracted as A being the opposite of B (both locked in a binary structure, and thus mutually constitutive).

The second approach is embedded in an anthropological interpretation of informality as an anti-structure: a processual condition that defies concretization, farming, and thus definition. Similar to rituals, oral history and vernacular traditions, informality is more fluid and experiential, rather than structural and representational. It could be abstracted into A is the negation of B (defying the very structural opposition).

A third definition views informality as the blurred boundaries between formal and informal, and is thus slippery and rather mystical. Informality is thus not a position of either-or, but one of both-and. In that sense, it may better be exemplified as the grey zone, the spectrum of negotiation and contestation, rather than being on one end of this binary. An abstract formulation would then be: A = A+B.” —Omar Nagati
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—Omar Nagati
Housing Cairo: The Informal Response

**Case Studies Comparative**

**Function**
- Under construction
- Productive
- Commercial
- Residential

**Surface for:**
- Distribution: 5,6%
- Shafts: 2,8%
- Window/floor ratio: 8,9%

**Unit Size**
- 77 Sq m
- 95 Sq m
- 127 Sq m

**Abdullah’s Building**
- 73 Sq m

**Hamdy’s Building**
- 66 Sq m

**Mahmoud Kadry’s Building**
- 110 Sq m

**Hana’s Building**
- 92 Sq m

**Hag Gad’s Building**
- 62 Sq m

**The Informal Response: Ard El-Lewa**

**Surface for:**
- Distribution: 13,5%
- Shafts: 1,5%
- Window/floor ratio: 9,4%

**Surface for:**
- Distribution: 5,6%
- Shafts: 3,0%
- Window/floor ratio: 11,1%

**Surface for:**
- Distribution: 5,6%
- Shafts: 7,5%
- Window/floor ratio: 9,7%

**Surface for:**
- Distribution: 5,1%
- Shafts: 2,8%
- Window/floor ratio: 8,9%

**Surface for:**
- Distribution: 5,6%
- Shafts: 3,7%
- Window/floor ratio: 9,7%

**Surface for:**
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**Surface for:**
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**Unit Size**
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Housing Cairo, The Informal Response, Ruby Press, forthcoming 2016
The circulation path spirals up following the building’s growth, and determining the arrangement of each floor.

When two buildings are built adjacently, the staircases are combined into a continuous circulation space.

The total volume of staircases and shafts is redistributed along the four facades.
The modified archetype, once duplicated, can trigger a large-scale transformation.
Flamish Pilot Project, Communal Housing Outside of Antwerp
Flamish Pilot Project, Communal Housing Outside of Antwerp
Flamish Pilot Project, Communal Housing Outside of Antwerp
Flamish Pilot Project, Communal Housing Outside of Antwerp
Competition for the Museum of the 20th Century, Berlin
MAKING HEIMAT.
GERMANY,
ARRIVAL COUNTRY

THE ARRIVAL CITY NEEDS THE GROUND FLOOR

DAM DEUTSCHES ARCHITEKTURMUSEUM
SOMETHING FANTASTIC
makingheimat.de

BERLIN, NEUKÖLLN: SHOP OF AN ENTREPRENEUR WITH TURKISH ORIGIN
DAM DEUTSCHES ARCHITEKTURMUSEUM
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Campaign: German Pavilion La Biennale 2016
Pendant Lamp, Something Fantastic and New Tendency, 2015
Stage for Theater Performances in the Common Ralm
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SOMETHING FANTASTIC