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ANIS SEMLALI

Associate Professor in Interior Design and Architecture

Nationality: Canadian
UAE Golden Visa

Associate Professor with 22 years in design education, specializing in sustainable design pedagogy, accreditation leadership, and computational design methods. Recognized expert in guiding programs through rigorous international accreditation processes—successfully led NAAB initial and continuing accreditation for architecture and coordinated CAA reviews for architecture and interior design.

Research centers on integrating circular economy principles, biomimicry, and parametric design tools into architectural education, preparing students for regenerative design practice. Published author of books and peer-reviewed articles on digital heritage, sustainable design education, and computational approaches to architecture.

Combines North American academic training (Ph.D. and M.Sc., Université de Montréal) with 15+ years of Gulf region experience. Bilingual in English and French with professional Arabic proficiency. Active in professional practice through founding two design consultancies.

Education

Ph.D. in Technological and IT Innovations Université de Montréal, Faculty of Planning, Canada Graduated 2010
UAE Ministry of Education Recognition: 2017 2024166215-1687202

HDR – Habilitation à Diriger des Recherches (Post-doctoral qualification authorizing doctoral supervision and research leadership) University of Manouba, Tunisia Awarded 2018

M.Sc. in Computer-Aided Design and Modeling Université de Montréal, Faculty of Planning, Canada Graduated 2002

Bachelor of Art in Interior Design Higher Institute of Fine Arts of Tunis, Tunisia Graduated 1998

Academic Appointments

American University of Ras Al Khaimah (AURAK)

Associate Professor, Department of Architecture, College of Engineering August 2019 – Present

Accreditation Leadership: Core member and leader of accreditation initiatives ensuring programs meet rigorous international standards:

- NAAB Accreditation Taskforce Leader – Guided the Bachelor of Architecture program through initial accreditation (achieved Spring 2023) and managed continuing accreditation visits and documentation (Fall 2024, Spring 2025, Fall 2025, Spring 2026)
- CAA Accreditation Coordinator – Led preparation for Commission for Academic Accreditation review of Bachelor of Art in Interior Design and Bachelor of Architecture programs (2020 and 2025)
- Developed self-study reports, coordinated faculty contributions, prepared evidence portfolios, and facilitated site visits

Teaching Portfolio: Deliver courses across design studios, digital methods, and technical subjects:

- Design Studios: Interior Design Studios I, II, III, and Graduation Studio; Architectural Design Studios at intermediate and advanced levels
- Digital and Computational Design: Parametric Design and Smart Architecture—teaching Grasshopper, Dynamo, and algorithmic approaches to form-finding and environmental optimization
- Technical Courses: Lighting Design and Technology; Furniture Design and Detailing; Materials and Finishes for Interiors; Construction Drawings
- Digital Media: Digital Media for Interiors—CAD, visualization, and presentation techniques

Program Leadership and Administration: Program Coordinator, Bachelor of Art in Interior Design (2021–2023) – Managed curriculum delivery, faculty coordination, student advising, and assessment cycles

- Curriculum Committee Chair (2020–2022) – Led comprehensive curriculum review and revision for architecture and interior design programs
- University Senate Member (2023–2024) – Contributed to institution-wide academic policy development
- University Curriculum Committee Member (2021–2023) – Reviewed and approved new courses and program modifications across colleges

Graduate and Thesis Supervision

Doctoral Supervision (Chair):

- Rani Gharbi – "Process of Reconstitution of Afro-Roman Domestic Spaces in Tunisia: The House of Laberii," High School of Sciences and Technologies of Design, University of Manouba. Successfully defended June 2022.

Master's Thesis Supervision:

- Aicha Jaouani – "Technological Innovation in Habitat: Between the Search for Comfort and Socio-Cultural Issues"
- Fidaa Chaari – "Design Management and the Challenges of Workspace Organization"
- Wiem Sfar – "Addressing the Psychological Dimension in Museum Space Design: Toward Optimizing the Visitor Experience"
- Inès Cherif – "The Techno-Organic Approach to the Design Process: The Funicular Model"

Undergraduate Thesis Supervision:

- Supervised 30+ undergraduate thesis projects in interior design focusing on sustainability, user experience, and computational methods

Gulf University, Kingdom of Bahrain

Associate Professor, Department of Interior Design Engineering, College of Engineering September 2018 – July 2019

- Delivered core curriculum including Interior Design Studios, CAD and Parametric Design, and History of Interior Design
- Supervised undergraduate thesis projects
- Contributed to Interior Design Engineering program accreditation documentation and self-study preparation
- Developed new course proposals and interdisciplinary curriculum initiatives
- Participated in institutional accreditation process

High School of Sciences and Technologies of Design, Tunisia

Associate Professor and Department Director High School of Sciences and Technologies of Design September 2006 – August 2019

Administrative Leadership

- Directed academic department serving Interior Design, Graphic Design, and Industrial Design programs
- Oversaw faculty recruitment, evaluation, and development
- Managed curriculum development and assessment for 9 undergraduate programs and 4 graduates programs
- Led departmental strategic planning and resource allocation
- Coordinated with university administration on accreditation and quality assurance

Research Leadership

- Co-directed European Union-funded Tempus Program project: "Design and Sustainable Development for Local Handicrafts" (2014–2017)—multi-institutional initiative across European and North African partners
- Established research collaborations with international institutions on heritage conservation and sustainable craft design

Teaching

- Design studios, digital design methods, design theory and history
- Supervised numerous undergraduate and graduate thesis projects

Université de Montréal, Canada

Lecturer, Faculty of Planning September 2002 – June 2006

- taught courses in computer-aided design and digital modeling
- taught Industrial design studios
- taught Interior design courses

Research

Research Statement

My research investigates how computational design tools, circular economy frameworks, and biomimetic principles can transform sustainability education in architecture and interior design. I am interested in moving students and

practitioners beyond compliance-based sustainability toward genuinely regenerative design thinking to create built environments that restore rather than merely minimize harm

Current work explores three interconnected themes:

1. Sustainable Design Pedagogy: Developing teaching methods that embed lifecycle thinking, material circularity, and environmental performance analysis into design studio culture from the earliest stages of education
2. Computational Tools for Environmental Design: Integrating BIM, parametric modeling, and environmental simulation (particularly Ladybug for climate analysis and LCA) into design workflows to enable evidence-based decision-making
3. Biomimicry and Regenerative Design: Applying biological principles and parametric thinking to generate architectural solutions that respond to and enhance their environmental context

Funded Research Projects

- Principal Investigator "Electrical Self-Reliance and Architectural Harmony" AURAK Funded Research Grant | 2023–2024 Investigated integration of photovoltaic and renewable energy systems within existing architectural contexts, developing design guidelines for self-reliant buildings that maintain aesthetic harmony with their surroundings.
- Co-Coordinator "Design and Sustainable Development for Local Handicrafts" European Union Tempus Program | 2014–2017 multi-institutional project (€500K+) across European and North African partners focused on sustainable materials, traditional craft preservation, and design innovation. Coordinated curriculum development and research activities across partner institutions.
- Team Member "Lighting Conditions in Work and Study Environments and Impact on User Performance and Wellbeing" AURAK Seed Grant | 2024–2025 Investigating relationships between lighting design parameters and occupant productivity, comfort, and psychological wellbeing in educational and workplace settings.
- Co-coordinator of the Project (2014-2017) "Design and sustainable development for local handicrafts", Partners: University of Florence - ESSTED ISBAS – ISAMG-Polytechnic de Turin – University of Barcelona – Escola, Funded by European Union –Tempus Program
- Team member (In charge of the innovation development) (2014-2016) "Strategy design: experiment, innovate, optimize. Creation of a platform for the promotion of education and implementation of employability optimization schemes », Funded by Tunisian Ministry de High Education and scientific research
- Team member (2013-2014) "Architectural heritage in Tunisia :Preserving and enhancement » Project under the Tunisian German Transformation Partnership, Funded by the Goethe-Institute
- Junior Researcher (2005) "Project Restitution: Contribution of computer resources to the validation of architectural restitution hypotheses in the field of built heritage », Funded by Canadian Council for research in Human Sciences (Research Council in Human science - CANADA)
- Junior Researcher (2002-2004) "Karnak Project: Archaeological and Computer Reconstruction Methods: Modeling Karnak Temples in Egypt », Funded by Canadian Council for research in Human Sciences (Research Council in Human science - CANADA)
- Junior Researcher (2001-2003) "Project Nouvelle-France: Reflection and practical demonstration of the possibilities offered by computer modeling in the understanding of the know-how of the builders of New France », Funded by Canadian Fonds for the Training of Researchers and Aid to Research (FCAR)

- Junior Researcher (1999-2000) “Project GI2000 - Parks Canada: Historical evolution of the site and the disinfection building at Grosse Île », Funded by Parcs Canada

Publications

Authored and Edited Books

Semlali, A. (2017). *Le Patrimoine à l'ère du numérique: État et Perspectives* [Heritage in the Digital Age: State and Perspectives]. Centre de Publications Universitaires, 227 pages. ISBN 978-9973-37-939-9

Nasreddine, B., Semlali, A., Zreik, K., & Rattrout, A. (Eds.). (2018). *Cultural Heritage Information Design*. Proceedings of the 3rd Hyperheritage International Seminar. Les Editions de l'ESSTED, 212 pages. ISBN 978-9938-99-280-9

Collective Authors. (2015). *Me3marouNa – Le patrimoine architectural en Tunisie* (Architectural Heritage in Tunisia: Preserving and Enhancement). CERES Editions, 200 pages. ISBN 978-9973-19-780-1

Peer-Reviewed Journal Articles and Book Chapters

- Semlali A., Tamzini S. and Cazacova, L. (2026) “**Sustainable Design Reuse: Integrating Biomimicry and Parametric Thinking in Architectural Education**”, Submitted to Biomimetics, Special Issue: Advances in Computational Methods for Biomechanics and Biomimetics. (DOI: <https://doi.org/10.20944/preprints202605.0701.v1>) (under final review).
 - Elmenghaw, F.M., Cazacova, L.L., Semlali, A.S. (2026). **Circular Economy and Sustainable Materials in Campus Construction: Case Study of Campus Development at American University of Ras Al Khaimah**. In: Tunio, M.N., Sánchez, A., Harrison, C. (eds) Leadership, Innovation, and Responsibility in Global Business. BLE 2024. Advances in Science, Technology & Innovation. Springer, Cham. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-98211-8_25
 - Semlali A (2025) **Action Based Approach to Archaeological Reconstruction Projects: Case of the Karnak Temple in Egypt**, Journal of Civil Engineering and Architecture 19 (2025) 27-35 doi: 10.17265/1934-7359/2025.01.004
 - Cazacova, L., & Semlali, A. (2025) «**Building performance simulation as educational tool for energy efficient design**», Journal of Law and Sustainable Development, 13(8), e4495. (DOI:10.55908/sdgs.v13i8.4495)
- Cazacova, L., Semlali A. (2023) “**From Theory to Practice–Interior Design Education for More Sustainable Future**”, From Theory to Practice–Interior Design Education for More Sustainable Future, WSEAS Transactions on Environment and Development, vol. 19, pp. 1276-1283, 2023, DOI:10.37394/232015.2023.19.115
- Semlali, Anis (2023), “**From Restitution to Transmission: the place of digital technology**”, Proceedings of the “4th Hyperheritage International Seminar”, Cultural Heritage Information International Seminar: Smart Heritage, Arab American University - Jenin, Palestine, Published by EUROPIA productions pp: 51-70, ISBN 979-10-90094-69-7

Tamzini S. and Semlali A. (2023) « **Design of cultural policies and local heritage practices in Tunisia** », Proceedings of the 3rd edition of the Intersections of Design conference: Design in democracy. Editions Design∩Société, pp. 78-106, <https://graphism.fr/le-design- dans-la-democratie/>.

Cazacova, L., Semlali A (2023) “**Pandemic reflections on interior design education pandemic reflections on interior design education**” 9th International Conference on New Trends in Architecture and Interior Design - 9th ICNTAD’23, · May 20, 2023

Semlali, A., Sediadi, E. and Abuhantash T. (2021) “**Enhancing students’ creativity using Biomimetic parametric design approach**”, in Atlantis press, Advances in Social Science, Education and Humanities Research, volume 671, pp:252-257, IWeDA 2021.

Sediadi, E. and Semlali, A. (2021) “**Digital Architecture – The Best Practice in Student’s Design Studio Works**”, ”, in Atlantis press, Advances in Social Science, Education and Humanities Research, volume 671, pp:114-118, IWeDA 2021.

Abbes N., Blibech O., Feki A. and Semlali A. (2019) **The digital design environment: essays on a new economy of the project document**. Proceedings of the 21st International Symposium on the Digital Document (CIDE21), Europa production, pp: 69-8

Communications

Elmenghaw F., Cazacova L., Semlali A, (2024) « **Circular Economy and Sustainable Materials in Campus Construction: Case Study of Campus Developments at American University of Ras Al Khaimah** », International conference on « Buisines management, Entrepreneurship and sustainable circular economy », IEREK, Scopus indexed.

GHRABI R., Semlali A., 2024. **Etude des processus de restitution virtuelle des demeures afro-romaines en Tunisie** (Study of the virtual restitution processes of Afro-Roman dwellings in Tunisia). International Colloquium: Meeting El Jem 2024: Heritage Cities, Urban Landscape, Historical Development, and Local Development

Cazacova L, Semlali A, 2024. **From Theory to Practice – Interior Design Education for More Sustainable Future**. INASE- EEED 2023 (The 15th International Conference on Energy, Environment, Ecosystems and Development), Athens, Greece, December 26-28, 2023 – virtual participation

Semlali, A. (2022) “**Parametric tool as a means of non-intentional ideation.**” 01Design.12 12th International Conference on Design Sciences & Technology: Unintentional design, Hammamet, Tunisia, October 13-15, 2022

Semlali, A. and Abbes, N. (2022) “**Architectural design studio learning outcomes at the age of covid 19: updating or redesigning**” in the international symposium “Pedagogy in the international digital age: Obstacles and challenges”, Djerba, Tunisia

Abbes Naoufel, Blibech Omar, Feki Ameni and Semlali Anis (2019) “ **The Digital Design Environment: Essays on a New Economy of the Project Document** », 21st International Symposium on the Digital Document (CIDE21), Djerba, 4-6 April 2019

Semlali, A (2017) “**From Restitution to Transmission: the place of digital technology**” 4th Hyperheritage International Seminar: Smart Heritage, 2-5 May, 2017, Arab American University - Jenin, Palestine

Semlali, A(2016) « **Computer Tools for restitution in monumental archaeology: Case of the Karnak Temple** », Colloque « l’architecture à l’ère du numérique », Université des Sciences et de la Technologie d’Oran, Faculté d’architecture et de génie civile, Oran, Algérie

Semlali, A (2015) **La Modélisation du Savoir-faire: Un moyen pour préserver le patrimoine ?** 2nd Hyperheritage International Seminar”, Cultural Heritage Information Design, 3-4 Avril, 2015 | Kerkena, Tunisia

Service to the Profession

Scientific and Editorial Contributions

- Scientific Advisory Committee Member, ASCAAD (Arab Society for Computer Aided Architectural Design) Conferences – 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024
- Scientific Committee Member, Hyperheritage International Symposiums – 2018, 2023
- Peer Reviewer for international design and architecture journals and conferences

University Service (Summary)

- University Senate Member- AURAK- 2023–2024
- University Curriculum Committee AURAK- 2021–2023
- Curriculum Committee Chair AURAK- 2020–2025
- Program Coordinator, BAID AURAK- 2021–2023
- Dean- University of Manouba-2014-2018

Technical Proficiency

- BIM and Environmental Analysis Revit, ArchiCAD, Ladybug (environmental analysis and LCA computation)
- Parametric and Computational Design Grasshopper, Dynamo, algorithmic design methods
- CAD and Visualization AutoCAD, Rhino, SketchUp, Adobe Creative Suite (Photoshop, Illustrator, InDesign)
- AI and Generative Tools Midjourney, ControlNet, Stable Diffusion—applied to conceptual design exploration
- Programming Languages Python, Lisp, Scheme, Java

Professional Practice

Founder and Principal Designer Deco-3P | Interior Design and Housing Development Tunis, Tunisia | 2012–2015

- Led interior design projects for residential and commercial clients
- Managed housing development projects from concept through construction
- Coordinated with architects, contractors, and craftspeople

Founder and Principal Designer ARTICHOW | Interior Design Studio Tunis, Tunisia | 2006–2010

- Established and operated boutique interior design practice
- Delivered residential and hospitality interior projects
- Developed client relationships and project management systems
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Professional Development

Ongoing engagement with emerging technologies and pedagogical approaches:

- Advanced training in AI-driven design tools (Midjourney, ControlNet, Stable Diffusion)
- Computational design workshops (Grasshopper, evolutionary algorithms, environmental computation)
- Transformative Learning certification (QEDEX, 2023)—three-module program on implementing transformative pedagogy in higher education