

## The story behind D&AD's Pencil for a tree initiative

Find out how D&AD Pencil winners are impacting life in Beirut



The Beirut RiverLess Forest: trees and shrubs first planted in 2019 (left) and fifteen months after planting (right)

All D&AD Pencils are made in the UK from sustainable, FSC-certified wood stocks, but did you know we're also working in partnership with D&AD Future Impact winner Adib Dada to plant a tree for every Pencil awarded? The & Forest is an innovative afforestation project located in the Chiyah region of Beirut, rewilding dense urban areas into lush native forests and providing green spaces for the local community to thrive.

Using the Miyawaki technique of afforestation, the trees and shrubs will be biodiverse and sequester 30 times more CO2 and pollution. "We are providing an opportunity for [Lebanese] municipalities and their community to partake in reclaiming degraded urban spaces – literally ripping out concrete and asphalt – and turning them into thriving ecosystems," Dada says.

### **"This will provide a haven for wildlife, help in reducing temperatures in the city, and allow for stormwater to infiltrate the ground and recharge aquifers"**

The work will have a massive positive impact on the environment around Chiyah, Beirut. "This will provide a haven for wildlife, help in reducing temperatures in the city, and allow for stormwater to infiltrate the ground and recharge aquifers," explains Dada. "Importantly, the forest becomes completely self-sufficient in less than three years, requiring no water nor maintenance after that initial period."

Rita Tawil of the Chiyah Municipality adds "I think the trees will be very helpful because they will replace the hot asphalt and shade the park, which will have a positive impact on the park and for those who come to walk."

Local children are also invited to participate, with events such as a 'compost tea'. "Because it's the kids' right to have a good and clean environment," says Maria Tufunkji, Community Mobiliser at himaya, a Lebanese non-profit working in the child protection sector since 2008.



The first phase of 'The & Forest' began in November 2021 and is located in the Chiyah area of Beirut

theOtherDada founder Adib Dada won a Future Impact Pencil in 2019 for his work on [Beirut's RiverLESS Forest](#). Now called theOtherForest, the project addresses the deterioration of the polluted Beirut River and its negative impact on the surrounding communities and environment by planting saplings near the river.

As part of the Impact programme, in which winners are offered 12 months of mentorship and training to support the development of their work, Dada worked with mentors Deborah Aiden, Global Strategy & Design Leader for Principle and Adaptive Organisations and Marsha Meredith, VP Creative Director at Cowboy, to develop the project. The goal was to redefine the vision and mission of theOtherForest.

### **"I worked with Deborah on defining my added value and impact, beyond just the technical aspects of my work"**

"Marsha insisted on building brand awareness and the importance of storytelling, especially given the fact that my work had so much rich content to be shared that could easily become overwhelming," says Dada. "She helped me define a clear structure and streamline our brand and approach," he says, adding, "I worked with Deborah on defining my added value and impact, beyond just the technical aspects of my work. She helped me understand where I can affect meaningful change."

After seeing the progress that Adib's team was making on the programme, and in order to further support the great work they are doing in Lebanon, D&AD decided to fund the planting of a tree for every Pencil presented at the D&AD Awards. This planting programme will work towards reclaiming around 700 sqm of urban space, and rewilding it into native forests for public access.

Next up, Dada is looking to introduce afforestation in other cities such as Riyadh and Cairo. He says, "The urban scale is massive, water is very scarce, and their vision is bold and clearly recognizes urban greening as an essential element of their new urban vision and improved livability," adding, "I believe our approach can restore their degraded urban lands into thriving ecosystems instead, bringing value to both humans and other organisms."

### **"I believe our approach can restore their degraded urban lands into thriving ecosystems instead"**

*The [D&AD Impact Programme](#) is open to anyone shortlisted in the Future Impact category. The 12-month programme offers mentorship, training and visibility to support project owners with the ideation, launch and early growth of their work. Successful entrants will also have the opportunity to apply for a grant from the D&AD Impact Fund. The [D&AD Awards 2022](#), including the Future Impact category, will be open for entries in November 2021.*

## **Things To Do**

Subscribe to D&AD news, insights and inspiration