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The initial confused response to our Youth Ideas Competition has encouraged us to reassess a fundamental question that was raised when Medina was set up: How can the magazine effectively disseminate ideas? The challenge has proven much larger than one of straightforward transmission. There have been certain problems with translating text—not words themselves, but concept—to our local readership, whether in English or Arabic.

Certain terms and phrases, used by architects trained where technology and design advancements have been in a state of continuous evolution in the modern age, have no simple equivalent in Arabic. In effect, translations of articles on these design advancements require full technical explanations as well as outlines of their ideas and historical provenance.

Architectural projects like the Blur Building, featured in this issue, emerge out of a progression in design approaches related to a changing view of architecture. The building’s form is not defined by concrete and steel, but is an interactive space that interferes delineate and then experience itself. Context and place are no longer the driving force behind design. Meanwhile, the language used to describe the “virtual” quality of this building has evolved along with technological developments.

The difficulties of translating new and foreign ideas is exaggerated by this year’s Youth Ideas Competition. The focus this time is on the integration of information technology, which has left everyone struggling for words to describe how this new field of development interfaces with architecture and urban planning—this all in addition to the usual language and conceptual barriers already present.

How can we most effectively bridge the cultural/academic/professional/linguistic divide and transmit current concepts? Medina continues to explore this issue through the publication of projects that push boundaries and reconfigure the way we move and relate to our environment. To enhance the impact of this effort, we ask our readers to actively question our explanations.

Yasmeen M. Siddiqui

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**Editorial Board**
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**Contributors**
Ashraf M. Salama, Simon Froehling, Lissa Desbarats, Hassan Khan, Tarek S. Al Ansary,  
Robert Fleck

**Photography**
Claude Stemmelin, William Conroy

**Public Relations Manager**
Wessam Abou El Ela

**Sales & Marketing Director**
Robert Youssif

**Sales Manager**
Ashraf Thabet

**Marketing Executive**
Lamia Abdal Hamid

**Chief Accountant**
Gamal Abdal Hady

**Medina Magazine**

**Agent in Egypt:**

- **Main Office**
  2 Farouk Tharwat St.  
  Ard El Golf, Heliopolis  
  Phone 419-9835, 419-6243  
  Fax 419-6243  
  e-mail: medina@intouch.com

- **Sales & Marketing**
  32 Zahraa St., Dokki, Giza  
  Phone 336-0100, 337-4565, 748-5421  
  Fax 749-0194  
  Email satgolf@link.com.eg

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