

LAU magazine

VOLUME 12 | issue n° 3 | Fall 2010

& ALUMNI BULLETIN

LAU celebrates NEASC accreditation

Lebanese Folk Art Survives

Valued Tradition

Power of Theater

Politics on stage

Art Renaissance

A new wave of artists in Beirut

Fashion Forward

Local designers drive industry

Many Faces of Art and Design



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New at LAU



Many Faces of Art and Design

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Commencement 2010



MUN Global Village 2010

Wherever You Go

LAU Magazine is your platform to share photos and news about yourself, your family and your friends. We encourage you to update us on your professional and personal activities and achievements—from wherever you are!



Help Tell Our History

We welcome news from alumni, friends, supporters and current and former faculty and staff representing all the university's current and former schools and colleges. Submit your stories and photos for inclusion in LAU's online and print publications.

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Design Studio level VII
end of semester exhibition



Corrections for LAU Magazine, Volume 12, Issue 2, Summer 2010

In Faculty on the Move (page 32) please note that Dr. Bassel Salloukh has been promoted to associate professor.

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Joseph G. Jabbara

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From the President's Desk

Dear Friends,

Lebanon has always had a strong community of creatives and intellectuals, and despite the challenges the country has faced over the past decades, the artistic tradition continues to thrive here, where glamour and fashion have always been in vogue. Whenever I travel, whether it is in the Middle East or throughout the rest of the world, people always remark about the creativity and ingenuity of the Lebanese.

In good times and bad, Lebanese people have proven adept at expressing themselves and communicating a variety of emotions to the world. In addition to its fashion shows, clubs and concerts, which now garner global attention, Lebanon has also become a hotbed for various forms of art and theater. Lebanese artists have traveled the world to show their works, appearing in galleries, exhibitions and festivals across Europe and the United States. Filmmaking in Lebanon has also seen burgeoning success, with global audiences now increasingly exposed to the energy and vitality of our cinema. Theatergoers in Lebanon support a long-established drama tradition in this country, and are exposed to the many layers of joy and struggle that permeate the daily lives of people in this country.

Besides demonstrating Lebanon's cultural prowess, all forms of art practiced here today also speak to the region's desires and concerns. Theater can provide its audience members with much more than a good time; it can also offer an education, as well as a commentary, on the controversial issues of the day. A painting can sear a lasting image of joy or sorrow into our minds, or it can offer a blueprint for a better future. In a world where too many people are prevented from saying what they believe, a singer's powerful verses or an actor's expressions can give them a voice. Because of this, anyone who produces a work of art holds an incredible amount of power in his or her hands. What he or she produces will stand at the cultural vanguard of the Middle East.

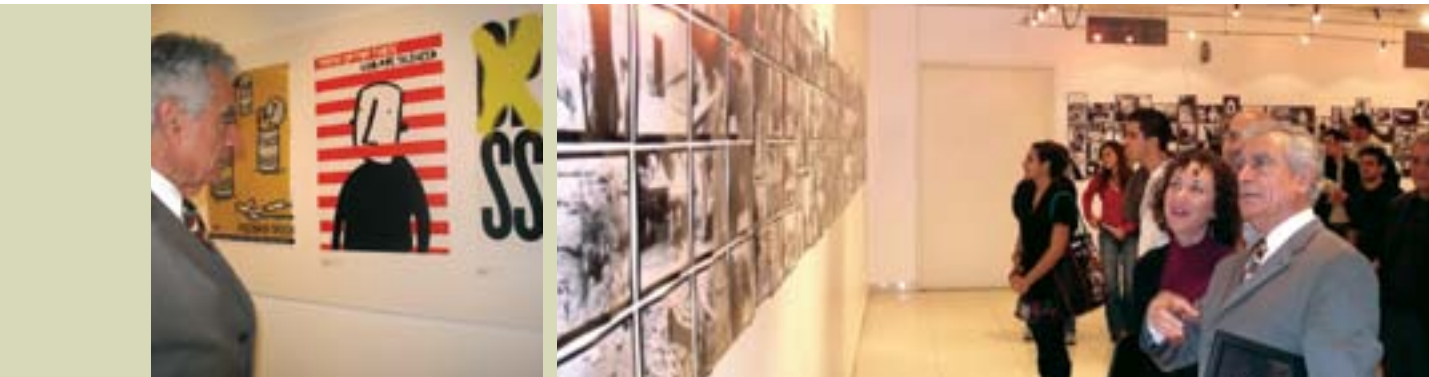
At LAU, we have always taken great pride in the arts and in their power to help audiences learn about and understand the world. As a university conceived in the true liberal arts tradition, we take this role very seriously. Nurturing the creativity of our students and faculty, and exposing it to our community, is extremely important to us.

Enjoy what LAU and Lebanon have to offer and, as always, on behalf of the entire LAU community, thank you for your support.

Sincerely,



Joseph G. Jabbara
President



Dr. Jabbara examines work at the Poster for Tomorrow exhibition (left) and photography exhibition (right) at LAU



(from left to right)
Provost Abdallah Sfêir,
Dr. Barbara Brittingham
and President Joseph Jabbra

LAU

GRANTED ACCREDITATION BY

NEASC

By LAU Staff

The Lebanese American University was granted accreditation by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) on May 13, 2010, after years of intense work and a transformative process involving the entire community—faculty, staff, students, administration, the Board of Trustees and the Board of International Advisors.

A visiting team from NEASC's Commission on Institutions of Higher Education last visited LAU in November 2009. On April 15, 2010, the commission recommended to the NEASC Board of Trustees that LAU be granted accreditation for five years.

The commission's recommendation was approved on May 13 and communicated to the university.

The accomplishment was celebrated on June 17 as a new beginning rather than a culmination for LAU.

At that celebration on the Beirut campus, LAU President Joseph G. Jabbra said, "The accreditation process was very arduous, but it involved, informed, and excited the entire university community."

He was referring to the four years leading up to accreditation, during which LAU engaged into an intense self-evaluation vis-à-vis 11 standards related to academic programs, faculty, students, resources, and much more.

The process put the university on a track of constant self-improvement, a crucial factor in the agency's decision to grant it full accreditation for five years.

"The decision was based not only on the fact that LAU met the standards for accreditation, but also that it will continue to meet those standards," said Dr. Barbara Brittingham, Director of the NEASC Commission of Institutions of Higher Education.

"Once we did that, and people could see that it was possible, we really started to drive forward."

—Elie Badr, LAU Assistant Provost for Academic Programs

Through its Commission on Institutions of Higher Education, NEASC accredits some of the most highly regarded colleges and universities in the New England region of the United States, as well as several universities outside the country.

"It can be safely said that America's best universities are as good as they are largely because they know how to take advantage of opportunities to improve," said Brittingham.



“The accreditation process was very arduous, but it involved, informed, and excited the entire university community.”

—Joseph G. Jabbra, LAU President

Director of the NEASC Commission on Institutions of Higher Education Dr. Barbara Brittingham delivers a speech at the ceremony

“Like LAU, [such universities] take positive advantage of accreditation as an opportunity to examine themselves in light of the Commission’s standards, to gain the feedback of their peers, and to improve what they do,” she said.

Lebanese Minister of Education Hassan Mneimneh considered it a great accomplishment for Lebanon.

“I congratulate LAU for this pioneering achievement,” he said, adding that he was “proud and extremely pleased” about the Lebanese people, the higher education sector, and LAU in particular, for their exemplary pursuit of excellence.

“LAU will never be the same from now on because we have this framework for excellence that will guide our steps.”

—Abdallah Sfeir, LAU Provost

LAU began seeking accreditation in 2005 and received candidacy status in 2007. At that time, a first team of NEASC representatives visited the university and reported back to the commission, which made a number of recommendations to be implemented before LAU had a chance to obtain full accreditation. A steering committee was then formed at LAU to oversee the implementation of those recommendations.

One of the steering committee’s early challenges was to “convince people that receiving accreditation was an achievable goal,” as Dr. Elie Badr, Assistant Provost for Academic Programs and Co-Chair of the Steering Committee, explained in an interview.

“Once we did that, and people could see that it was possible, we really started to drive forward,” said Badr.

The work proceeded at a remarkable pace. While NEASC allows institutions to take up to five years in their progress to accreditation, LAU reached the goal in less than half that time.

“We’re celebrating what we have learned institutionally and at the personal level,” said LAU Provost Dr. Abdallah Sfeir, chair of the steering committee.

“We have learned the power to see ourselves without any filters. I think this is really LAU’s major accomplishment,” he said.

“LAU will never be the same from now on because we have this framework for excellence that will guide our steps,” he added.

Brittingham reminded the audience that LAU attained accreditation on an accelerated schedule, which she attributed to Jabbra’s “vision and leadership,” Sfeir’s “determination and sensitivity” and Badr’s “dedication and hard work.”

“You’ve used this opportunity presented by accreditation to strengthen the institution, and for that as well, congratulations,” she said.

In a message of congratulations to LAU, Dr Dennis Holtshneider, President of De Paul University and head of the NEASC visiting team wrote:

“The visiting team was delighted to find the facilities, the faculty and staff and the sheer momentum of LAU’s progress. But what most touched us was our conversation with the students. They had extraordinary pride in their school and in being LAU students. They spoke of LAU as a safe place where they came to know one another, understand one another, and hopefully one day build a nation as united as their university. Our hearts were truly touched by that. LAU is an important university for Lebanon, for the Middle East, and a model for the world.”

“The decision was based not only on the fact that LAU met the standards for accreditation, but also that it will continue to meet those standards.”

—Barbara Brittingham, Director, NEASC Commission on Institutions of Higher Education

How Tradition Never Dies – The Survival of Lebanese Folk Art

By Matthew Mosley



Nada Debs designs

Adib al-Gharib stands on a terrace outside his workshop, looking at the vista spread below. The flank of a hill forested with olive trees plunges down to a plain, stretched out in front and dotted with streams and ponds. On either side, other ridges are visible, thicketed with Lebanon's characteristic cotton-candy pine trees. The phrase "heaven on earth" springs to mind.

Gharib lives in the village of Rashaya al-Foukhar, near Marjayoun. "Foukhar" is the Arabic word for pottery. According to Gharib, the area has been known as a pottery center from as far back as the time of Jesus.

The characteristic bulbous shapes and exuberant patterns of Rashaya pottery are visible all around the small village. Almost every house seems to have a selection of pots and utensils lying around outside, while jug-adorned signs point the way for visitors hunting down outlets. In spite of these healthy signs, however, all is not well with Rashaya al-Foukhar's venerable pottery trade.

"Before the [civil] war, there were more than 30 factories," said Gharib. "Now there are only two."

One of the few remaining pottery workshops in the area, Gharib's is a modest operation. A small, unshowy space contains a selection of jugs, pans and bowls, the designs and shapes. The simple, elegant forms are adorned with dots and spirals in shades of brown, orange and white.

It's clear that people don't drop by too often. Gharib supplements his earnings with a variety of other activities, pressing olive oil, brewing arak and rendering soap. Gharib's land, in fact, provides the majority of his income. He produces pots only in the summer months.

"We used to send pottery up to Beirut, and it was exported around the world," Gharib recounted, looking back to Rashaya al-Foukhar's heyday. "Now we mostly sell to people who live in the surrounding areas."

"Every single part of the world has some special form of design, like a trademark; These crafts are a part of that place and that place only."

—Mona Jabbour, LAU professor

Despite his industriousness, Gharib is no longer a young man, and the future of his craft is uncertain. All his children have moved away to larger towns and cities for work or education.

"You think my son is going to quit his studies in engineering to become a potter?" he asked. "No way."

So what will become of Gharib's workshop? The potter spreads his hands in a gesture of uncertainty. However idyllic his life might seem, there appear to be no obvious successors to his age-old trade.

Northeast of Rashaya al-Foukhar is the small town of Sarafand, around 15 kilometers south of Sidon on the coastal road. Once known as Sarepta, Sarafand was founded as a Phoenician city. The town was also once a hub of pottery-making activity. But a number of artisans in Sarafand practiced another art: glass-blowing.

A visit to the Khalife family's glass-blowing shop gives an idea of the ethereal creations that originally brought fame to the town.



The village of Rashaya al-Foukhar is known for its pottery

Shelves upon shelves decorated with elegant glass objects – oil lamps, bowls, beads, cups and plates — line the walls. Overhead, a thicket of baubles of different shapes and sizes hang from ribbons in a magical display.

Shades of pink, yellow, blue, green and purple lend the Khalifes' showroom a fantastical air. "The blue and the green glass are natural colors," explained Nisrene Khalife, who looks after the shop. "The other colors are painted on."

The Khalifes are the last family plying the glass-blowing trade in Sarafand and, according to Nisrene, the only family using traditional glass-blowing techniques in Lebanon. Hussein Khalife, her father, runs the business, while her brothers have learned the technique and help their father produce the glassware.

The physically onerous nature of glass-blowing makes it an unattractive choice for many. "No one likes to do it because it's so hard," sighed Nisrene Khalife. "Many people have asked to learn, but then they can't handle the heat."

On top of the physical trials endured by glass-blowers, the craft itself doesn't come cheap. The furnace in which the glass is melted must be heated for around 24 hours to reach the required temperatures of upwards of 1,000 degrees Celsius. With the rising costs of fuel, this means the furnace has running costs of around \$500 per day.

These days, the Khalifes' furnace is fired up only about once every two or three months.

Sarafand glassware has a wider circulation than Rashaya pottery: The rainbow colors of the Khalifes' baubles or candle-holders can often be spotted in the boutiques and high-end artisanats of Beirut. Still, it's a far cry from the 1960s, when the family's wares were touted at international craft fairs and their workshop was a regular stop for cash-rich tourists.

According to Henri Zoughaib, director of LAU's Center for Lebanese Heritage, the pattern of decline exemplified by Rashaya's pottery and Sarafand's glassware is symptomatic of traditional arts and crafts.

"These trades no longer have a good income," Zoughaib explained. "The products don't sell much, and there is less and less desire from young people to work in these fields."

Mona Jabbour, an artist who has taught in LAU's fine arts department for the past 18 years, believes that this tradition of village artisans is worth preserving. According to her, these crafts are part of Lebanon's distinctive aesthetic. 🍷



Nada Debs designs

“Every single part of the world has some special form of design, like a trademark,” she said. “These crafts are a part of that place and that place only. In the north [of Lebanon], for example, they are known for their work with bronze and copper. These objects have a functional purpose, but have become beautiful.”

What is to be the fate of the folk arts of the region? Is extinction inevitable for the ancient arts represented by Gharib and the Khalifes?

There are signs of hope. A renewed international interest in the art and culture of the Arab world has been translated, in some cases, into a rejuvenation of its traditional crafts. The furniture and accessories from the stable of designer Nada Debs, for instance, provide examples of traditional techniques that have been given a new, and commercially successful, lease on life.

“These trades no longer have a good income, the products don’t sell much, and there is less and less desire from young people to work in these fields.”

—Henry Zgheib, director of LAU’s Center for Lebanese Heritage

Operating out of two showrooms in Beirut’s exclusive Saifi Village quarter, Debs produces distinctive modern furniture using age-old techniques of inlay and marquetry, which are characteristic of this part of the world.

“You need to have fresh thinking to give these crafts another life,” said Caline Chidiac, who looks after public relations for Debs. Such originality is on bountiful display in Debs’ showroom, which, with its minimal layout and stylish concept, is as far from the dusty chaos of the average artisanat as it’s possible to get.

“The traditional techniques of inlay are absolutely beautiful, but the furniture always looks the same,” said Debs. “I wanted to use them in a contemporary context.”

Debs, who grew up in Japan, was able to cast an outsider’s eye on the traditional crafts of her native region, using them in the context of cutting-edge design. The resulting blend is utterly distinctive.

“It’s difficult to find skilled people,” she explained. “Once they’ve been trained, craftsmen usually want to set up their own businesses, however small. Often, we have to give our staff extra training.”

With her artisans, Debs has developed new techniques and new settings for the traditional techniques. She has pioneered the use of resin with marquetry in mother-of-pearl or tin, producing mirrors surrounded by the geometry characteristic of Islamic art, in a distinctly contemporary setting.

Debs’ business is continually expanding and her designs are hugely successful, as popular in New York and Rome as they are in Dubai and Beirut. Her success means that these techniques of inlay and marquetry are unlikely to disappear anytime soon. With any luck, the craft traditions of villages like Rashaya al-Foukhar and Sarafand will see a renewed surge of interest before long. 🏠



The Khalife family of Sarafand still practices glass-blowing



LAU Honors Leader of Qatar with Honorary Doctorate in Humane Letters

By LAU Staff

LAU bestowed upon His Excellency the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Qatar Sheikh Hamad Bin Jassim Bin Jabr Al-Thani an Honorary Doctorate Degree in Humane Letters, on April 28, 2010.

A crowd of members of Lebanon's Council of Ministers, members of parliament, diplomatic corps, as well as faculty, students, staff and friends of LAU attended the event, held at the BIEL Pavillon hall in Beirut.

LAU faculty from both the Beirut and Byblos campuses marched in caps and gowns in honor of the convocation ceremony. Their participation was a symbol of their pride and support for the university's decision to bestow the degree upon the inspiring regional leader.

Provost Dr. Abdallah Sfeir opened the ceremony by thanking the crowd gathered to honor the Qatari leader, "who has set an example to follow on how to bring people together to resolve their disputes through dialogue and the power of argument."

In his speech, LAU President Dr. Joseph Jabbra stated: "We are gathered here to celebrate and honor a great man who has always taken life at the flood levels. ... He is endowed with a decisive personality, an innate ability for mediation, and unshakeable loyalty and commitment to the state of Qatar."

The Qatari leader expressed his appreciation to LAU for awarding him the honorary doctorate, in a speech in which he praised Lebanon's role in knowledge production and the dissemination of culture through its institutions. He said, "You have proved to the world that knowledge is an effective tool in promoting communication and the holding of dialogues, conflict resolution and introduction of the concept of a harmonious national work."

At the end of the convocation, the fanfare offered by the internal security forces played the LAU Alma Mater, which was followed by the recessional of the faculty.



LAU Bestows Honorary Doctorate upon His Royal Highness Prince Alwaleed

By LAU Staff

LAU bestowed an Honorary Doctorate Degree in Humane Letters upon His Royal Highness Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal Bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, at LAU Beirut on June 24, during a ceremony that shed light on his years of charitable contributions to organizations and academic institutions around the world, including LAU.

The honorary degree was awarded in recognition of HRH Prince Alwaleed's major contributions "to understanding and dialogue among civilizations, among the religions of this globe, to helping the poor, and supporting noble causes and charities," said Dr. Joseph Jabbra, LAU president, during his opening remarks.

Upon receiving his honorary doctorate, HRH Prince Alwaleed said: "After 9/11, Islam and Arabs in general became under attack, so I decided to use the world of academia to try to bridge the gap between both communities — Islam and Christianity, West and East, and more importantly, between the United States and the Arab world."

At LAU, the Alwaleed Bin Talal Humanitarian Foundation established a partnership with the university's Model United Nations (MUN) program in 2008, which led to the program's "exponential growth," according to Elie Samia, the MUN program director, who is also the Byblos Guidance Office director.

Established in 2005, the program gathers thousands of high school students from across Lebanon for a series of training sessions, to teach them negotiation and conflict-resolution skills and prepare them for the annual MUN high school conference at LAU each spring.

During the ceremony, current and former participants of the LAU MUN program spoke of their achievements and successes over the years, particularly during the international United Nations Association–USA Model UN Conference, held in New York from May 13–15, where five high schoolers from the program took home six awards.



*Honorary Degree Recipient : Lebanese-American physician
Pr. Philip Salem, director Cancer Research at the Cancer
Center of St. Luke's Episcopal Hospital in Texas, USA*



LAU Comme



*Honorary Degree Recipient : Dr. Mohammad Sammak,
secretary-general of the Christian-Muslim Committee
for Dialogue*



1,563 LAU students graduated from both campuses this year



*Honorary Degree Recipient : His Excellency
Amr Moussa, secretary-general of the
League of Arab States*

ncement 2010



*Honorary Degree Recipient : Rev. Dr. Riad Jarjour,
general secretary of the Arab Group for
Muslim-Christian Dialogue*



Theater in Lebanon

Politics has always had a presence
onstage in Lebanon

By Marc AbiZeid

LAU Major production In the Heart of the Heart of Another Body

Politics are often ridiculed as being nothing more than theatrical spectacles. Perhaps not quite so incidentally, theater too tends to delve into politics, sometimes explicitly and other times more subtly.

"There is no such thing as non-political theater," said Nagy Souraty, a theater instructor in the Department of Communication Arts at LAU who is in charge of many of the university's major productions. "Stating that a play is not political is a political statement by itself," he added.

Even theater productions that appear to be non-politicized on the surface, or whose aims are oriented toward non-political purposes, always contain a potential to stir political and social change.

Souraty pointed to a late 19th-century Norwegian play titled "A Doll's House." In the play, the wife, after an argument with her husband, leaves home and slams the door behind her. The scene caused a firestorm in Europe because of the woman's defiance, but sparked a change in attitudes across the continent.

"They burned theaters in Europe because a woman dared to turn her back on her husband and slam the door," Souraty said. "Sometimes the impact of plays like that are much stronger than the ones that declare themselves overtly political, because they provoke change."

Needless to say, theater productions in Lebanon are no exception. Decades of political chaos and social unrest offer Lebanon's theater producers a range of realities to scorn, satirize and challenge.

Transformation during the civil war

Peter Shebay'a, an AUB theater instructor who began teaching at the university well before the civil war started in 1975, explained that Lebanese theater prior to the war maintained a strong focus on overtly political themes—for instance, by incorporating specific issues such as the plight of Palestinian refugees or other concerns associated with the political atmosphere of the time.

He recalled a German anti-war production performed at LAU just before the civil war, entitled "Mother Courage and Her Children." Written during World War II, it took a critical look at how war and religion are exploited for business purposes.

"There is no such thing as non-political theater, stating that a play is not political is a political statement by itself,"

—Nagy Souraty, LAU professor

"I always feel like we ushered in the war because the war really was very much along those lines," explained Shebay'a.

During the war, Souraty said, theater performances continued to thrive in Lebanon, despite the challenges they faced. He recalled an instance when an actor was kidnapped the day before he was to perform in a major production at LAU, forcing the directors into frenzied efforts to liberate him before the play.

Perhaps the most significant trend to hit theater during the war was the popularization of *chansonnier* – a form of political satire that used superficial humor and thus allowed people to blow off some steam and forget for a moment about the frightening situation outside the theater doors.



The play *Seven Jewish Children* is performed outdoors at LAU for World Theatre Day

Along the same lines, Souraty added, a second type of comedic theater called vaudeville — or slapstick humor — flourished during the war and had the primary purpose of making people laugh.

But following the country's 15 years of turmoil, a significant shift occurred in the theatrical scene, away from directly addressing specific issues toward presenting politics and humanity through a more general and big-picture lens.

The country's playwrights and directors emerged from the war with a habit of scrutinizing human psychological tendencies and taking on broad issues of power and behavior, while seldom engaging in the black-and-white or hero-and-villain spectacles that dominated theater before the war.

Several factors may be responsible for the shift, although Shebay'a described it as being a "natural reaction" to the immense and inescapable impact that the civil war had on society in Lebanon. He warned that the internalization going on in theater can be dangerous if it delves too deeply.

"There's always a tension between the inner reality and the social, environmental and political realities. They are both a part of our humanity, and they should both be part of serious theater, but achieving the balance is what the greatest theater has always done," Shebay'a said. He pointed to classic Greek tragedies as well as to Shakespeare's plays, which, he said, offered a blend of "psychological richness" while at the same time connecting the events to people's everyday lives and to their social and political landscapes.

Power to influence

Some artists credit theater as having an unrivaled power, among all other artforms, to influence minds through its eclectic combinations of music, imagery, poetry, technology and direct interaction with audiences.

"Theater mixes all these elements to create a kind of complete form of art," said Riad Halwani, an administrator at Beirut's Monnot Theater who has worked in a wide variety of art scenes, including photography, film, music and creative publications, before moving into theater.

While theater may not reach the same number of people as other artforms such as music and film, which can be mass-distributed over the internet and into computers and telephones, its impact on its audience can be much deeper, because of the intimate interaction between actors and theatergoers. 🧐

LAU major production *Utopia*LAU Major production *In the Heart of the Heart of Another body*

"Why do politicians running for office go out and meet a group of people?" Souraty asked. "Because they know that the impact that they can have when they are there in person is [more profound] than what they can have on TV — even though on TV they can reach millions."

With that power, theater artists for centuries have been using the stage as a tool to call for political and social change, to create awareness of certain issues and, sometimes, to disseminate propaganda.

One of the most well-known and original theater artists to use the stage for political purposes was the late Augusto Boal, a Brazilian politician and theater director who staged what became known as "forum theater," a technique that effectively allows the audience to run the show.

During plays, audience members can stop the act whenever they feel a character is being mistreated or oppressed, and redirect the outcome of the scene. Audience members can even take to the stage and play the actors themselves, allowing them to feel the satisfaction of talking back to a boss, landlord or other oppressive authority.

"People leave the theater feeling more empowered," said Raffi Feghali, an improvisation actor and founder of a new improv troupe in Lebanon called Live Lactic Culture (or Laban in Arabic). He said he has been influenced by the technique and plans to use it in Lebanon as a democratic medium for citizens to realize their potential.

"I think that improv is the strongest and most important component that should exist for forum theater," he said. "They feel that, 'Hey, if I can do it onstage, I can do it in real life.'"

Censorship

"When you talk about political theater in Lebanon, you also have to talk about censorship," Souraty said. He explained how, throughout history, governments around the world have instituted censorship of theater when they feared the power and impact it might have on politics.

In Lebanon, the law forces theater directors to submit all theater scripts to General Security under the Interior Ministry, and even to perform their plays in front of security officials, to receive approval before the plays can be performed publicly — a process Souraty described as "humiliating."

"[Censorship] was really a horrible thing in the communist world at one point under Stalin; That could be a part of what's happening in Lebanon, although I hope not."

—Peter Shebaya, AUB professor





Major production *The Blind*

The texts are edited by censors to remove references to the president, army, religion and sexuality. Occasionally some works are banned completely.

Following the war, the government took the process a step further by encouraging theater artists to practice a form of self-censorship.

"We pretend to be a free country and have freedom of speech, but in the early 1990s something called auto-censorship was established, which is the most scary thing that can happen to artists," Souraty said.

Once a play is approved, the censors arbitrarily visit performances to ensure that the law is being respected.

But when it comes to improvised theater, which by definition can't be approved by censors since they work without scripts, Feghali said he and his actors have no choice but to break the law.

"What I am doing now with improvised theater is illegal because of the censorship law," he explained. Feghali said he will keep performing until the authorities shut him down. And at that point, he plans to use the occasion to build a coalition of activists, civil society groups and artists to challenge the law.

"This is the epitome of political activism," he added.

However, theater artists have found ways to maneuver around the law by holding "open rehearsals" or coming up with other creative methods, such as performing on the streets.

And while nearly all players in the theater scene oppose censorship, there are others who say they have come to terms with the law.

"In the beginning, I refused to accept this [censorship law]. I'm not an artist, but if I put myself in their shoes, I would be offended," Halwani said. "Who are they to judge?"

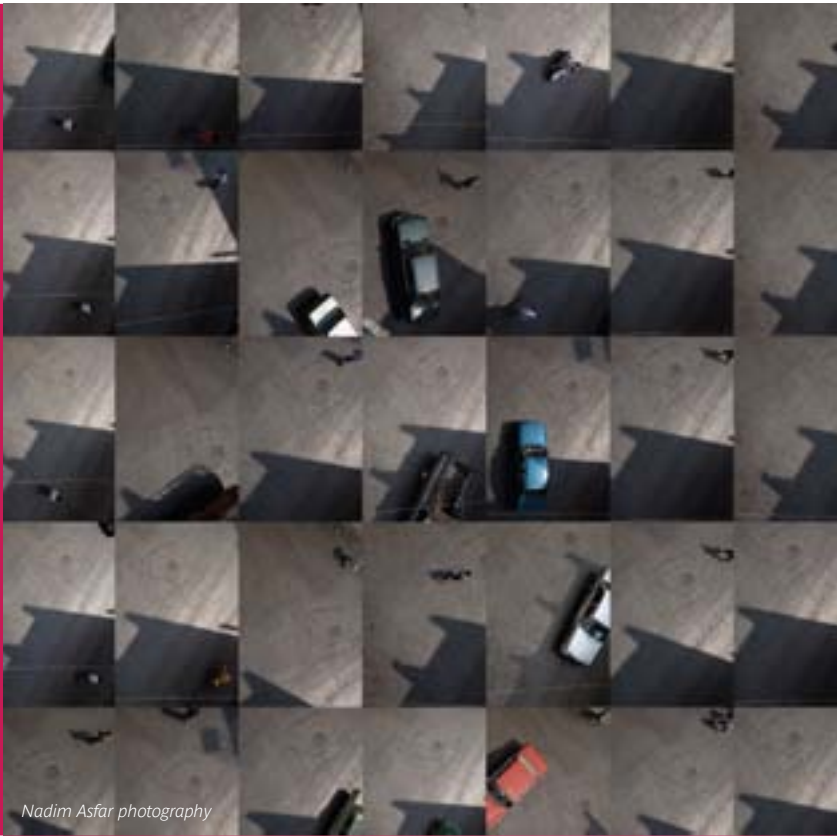
"But when you understand that you are in Lebanon and how the administration [in Lebanon] works, it's not that bad," he added. He noted that in his experience over the past four years of administering the Monnot Theater, the censors have never banned a production, and usually do no more than make minor changes to some references in theater scripts dealing with religion, politics and sex.

Still, the overwhelming consensus among theater artists is to oppose the censorship law, expressing alarm that the country's artistic talents are being squelched by a government that may be following in the footsteps of authoritarian regimes — in a region where censorship is much more strict than in Lebanon.

"[Censorship] was really a horrible thing in the communist world at one point under Stalin, who stifled so many great potential artists by a lack of freedom," Shebay'a said. "That could be a part of what's happening in Lebanon, although I hope not." 🍷



Photos of *Mother Courage and Her Children*, performed at LAU before Lebanon's civil war



Nadim Asfar photography



Beirut Art Center

Contemporary Art Renaissance



A new wave of artists and styles is putting life back into a long-established art tradition in Beirut.

By Brooke Anderson

Beirut Art Center bookstore

From the fine art galleries of Ashrafieh and Hamra to the modern art spaces in the Lebanese capital's industrial zones, Beirut is once again setting the trends for the region.

"The art scene in Lebanon seems to be very active and alive — with new faces and new trends. The Lebanese public is being exposed to many different things, which is enriching to our cultural experience and bringing new dimensions to art appreciation," said Chaouki Chamoun, LAU fine arts professor in the School of Architecture and Design.

Over the past couple of years, close to 10 galleries have opened in Beirut. Some of them in the long-established, trendy districts, while others have blazed trails by opening art spaces in the city's industrial areas. These new galleries, as well as the older ones, are experimenting with new ways of presenting art, from photography to videos to installations. The result has been a reawakening of modern and contemporary art.

Just five years ago, it was almost unheard of to sell photography as an art in Lebanon. Today, some photographic art is being sold for more than traditional paintings.

Compared to classical artforms, "photography is still hard to sell. We need to have people understand why it's not just pressing a button or clicking, and why it can be the same price or sometimes higher than other [forms] that supposedly require more effort," said Joy Mardini, manager at Espace Kettaneh Kunigk. "When a gallery insists on having a photography exhibition several times a year, then people come and ask about it. When they see there is an intellectual approach, then they are interested. Now they're starting to understand."

"The boom is starting again in Lebanon, and it is helping artists go back to their brushes and palettes. When the city is booming, everything goes with it."

—Rached Bohsali, LAU professor

Nadim Asfar, a Beirut-based photographer said, "I think until recently, photography was linked to information and war and was a reflection of reality, and people were afraid of images in the Middle East. Before [photography was an art], it was a hobby. Now it's becoming more part of the art market, because people are starting to understand what it can bring."

When past meets present

There is no doubt that Lebanon's art scene is experiencing new life, with galleries mushrooming all over Beirut, and with Lebanese artists sought-after at prominent international galleries and auction houses such as Christie's and Sotheby's. All the buzz over Lebanese art also comes at a time when art is flourishing throughout the region. There are now more than 60 art galleries in Dubai and 20 in Beirut—and in the Old City of Damascus, at least five traditional and historical Arab houses have been converted into galleries. In 2006, Christie's opened a showroom in Dubai, which is now an established hub for buyers of regional art.

However, as far as the Lebanese art scene is concerned, Bassam

Geitani, lecturer at the school of Architecture and Design, said he is worried about the trend toward conceptual art, especially with its emergence before the public is educated about the medium. "You need a lot of background to do conceptual art. It's what's behind the image," he said. "Living in Europe or the United States has allowed some artists to develop their personalities, and it shows in their art. But sometimes it's just copying someone who has lived abroad — and that doesn't mean anything."

Despite certain emerging trends, many Lebanese artists, such as Jean Marc Nahas, refuse to change their style. Nahas, a painter based in Gemmayze, has a distinct style of sketches and paintings reminiscent of classical cartoons. He typically paints in series, and he often depicts men and women wearing traditional Arab or Ottoman clothing and showing extreme joy or sorrow.

"I don't want the market to influence my work," he said. From what he can see, "art is something people understand or they don't," and it has very little to do with the market or trends.

A diamond in the rough

The current Lebanese art scene, in all its variety and vitality, is in some ways still emerging from the previous few decades. "In the 1960s, Lebanon was a hub for art. But for the next 20 to 30 years, it was living in the dark ages because of the [civil] war," Chamoun noted, but added that this is not necessarily a bad thing. "If you look at the renaissance in Western art after World War II, we see that war is not always a killer of art, but a springboard."

"Lebanon is coming out of the ashes," Chamoun said, "and is being reborn from the dreams that were buried under the ashes."

Indeed, Beirut's flourishing art scene comes at a time of economic and political stability as well as a record influx of tourists. A city renowned for its nightlife and restaurants is now gaining a more serious reputation as an important destination for art connoisseurs.

"If the galleries are promoted well and they have interesting exhibits during peak season, then they could help in attracting tourists, especially if they're coming to Lebanon for the culture," said Dina Sleiman, head of travel agencies at the Ministry of Tourism. 🍷



Espace Kettaneh Kunigk



Beirut Art Center

Still, one remaining issue is that Lebanon, or for that matter the Middle East, has never had a national gallery for modern or contemporary art.

For now, Beirut's private galleries have taken on the role of bringing art to the public. In some cases, private galleries have essentially acted as non-profits, lending support to new artists who wouldn't otherwise have the opportunity to promote their work on their own. Kettaneh, for example, allocates space for some artists to exhibit free of charge.

Beirut Art Center, a gallery located in the industrial area of Corniche al Nahr, has also been successful in filling this void.

“I don’t want the market to influence my work, art is something people understand or they don’t.”

—Jean Marc Nahas, painter

The spacious, minimalist building offers archives and installations on video and regularly hosts educational workshops. Its founders, Lamia Joreige and Sandra Dagher, wanted to create a space that could expose the public to art and at the same time give new artists a platform to display their work.

“There were no funds for emerging artists when I started,” explained Joreige, an artist whose paintings were recently selected for exhibition at the Tate Modern gallery in London. “Because of the war, it was difficult for people to think about art as a priority, and it was difficult to find philanthropists.”

“Lebanon is coming out of the ashes and is being reborn from the dreams that were buried under the ashes.”

—Chaouki Chamoun, LAU professor

Rached Bohsali, chair of Arts and Foundation Studies at the School of Architecture and Design, said Lebanese art has experienced many distinct periods that have ultimately been linked to political volatility in the country. In Lebanon, he noted, interest in art “stagnated a little” after the assassination of Rafik Hariri, but, he added, “things are moving again, slowly but surely.”

With this current cultural renaissance, Lebanon once again appears to be setting the standard in the Middle East for new artforms, new ideas and new voices.

“I think galleries in Lebanon have always been the home of the arts in the absence of museums,” Chamoun said. “They are always up-to-date in showing mainstream and avant-garde art. To my judgment, some of the art galleries in Lebanon are as important as any art galleries in the world.”

In Bohsali's view, the surge of interest in Lebanese art is linked to the booming cultural interest in Lebanon as a place and destination. He said, “The boom is starting again in Lebanon, and it is helping artists go back to their brushes and palettes. When the city is booming, everything goes with it.” 🎨

Donor Profiles

Fouad Omais

When relatives join efforts to honour a loved one....

By LAU Staff



Rooted in boundless compassion, the love between siblings often knows no limits. In an act of generosity that bears testimony to the deep ties of siblinghood, a generous gift was recently given to LAU in honour of alumna Dr. Najla Atiyah by her sister Hilda Atiyah and her brother-in-law, the prominent entrepreneur Fouad Omais.

In November 2008, Omais, who is regarded as one of the pioneers in the plastic industry, joined his wife in honoring Atiyah by generously contributing toward the Dr. Najla W. Atiyah Conference Room at LAU. The conference room was a gift from Atiyah's other sister, LAU alumna Mouniba Atiyah, and was presented to LAU in honor of Najla Atiyah's lifelong commitment to education.

Although neither Omais nor his wife are LAU alumni, the importance of family encouraged them to make a gift to the university by upgrading the conference room into a smart classroom. This involved a generous donation that was invested in state-of-the-art video and audio teaching and communication technologies, including an interactive whiteboard and a high-definition video-conferencing system.

The Omais' timely contribution reflects the way in which not only alumni, but also donors with a variety of links to LAU, enhance the university's commitment to improving the quality and relevance of education with tools suited to new generations of learners and teachers.

Kamil Saredidine

Annual Scholarship Grant supports needy students

By LAU Staff



Kamil Saredidine, managing director of the Abu Dhabi-based Saredidine Trading Establishment (STE) and the Beirut-based Royal Homes real estate company, has been making donations to support education for more than two decades. Since 1996, Saredidine has generously contributed toward the General Scholarship Fund at LAU.

In October 2009, the self-made Lebanese businessman established the Kamil Saredidine Annual Scholarship Grant at LAU. The grant pledges \$50,000 annually to an unlimited number of students who are studying in a variety of disciplines at the university and are in need of financial support.

The ethics that underpin Saredidine's commitment to education are reflected in the family-based values of his business, which are described on the company's website as "honesty, dedication and loyalty." Perhaps it is such values that led STE to win several prestigious prizes, including the Casalgrande Padana and the Twyford and Marazzi awards.

Saredidine's exemplary display of dedication and commitment in many fields, his achievements in the business world, and his philanthropic spirit have inspired him to contribute to quality performance in education by offering generous financial support to LAU students.

By sharing the fruits of his accomplishments, Saredidine is allowing his own success story to enable the success of others.



Lebanon's Fashion Revival

In fashion-obsessed Lebanon, local designers are changing the industry

By Olga Habre

Cream boutique in Saifi Village, Beirut

Beirut has always been known as the fashion capital of the Middle East, but voices from within Lebanon's fashion industry are warning that with growing competition from outside and little help from the inside, the industry may never reach its full potential.

Over the years, Lebanese fashion has gained international recognition and won the support of red carpet celebrities, thanks to designers like Elie Saab, who shot to fame when actress Halle Berry wore his dress Oscars ceremony in 2002. Since the Lebanese civil war, many other local talents have also come to the fore and are competing with top foreign brands.

LAU business professor Dr. Hasan Naja explained, "Marketing-wise, the high-end Lebanese designers have built good brands; they are major targets outside Lebanon."

However, the vast majority of Lebanese designers, as well as the country's emerging crop of local boutiques and design factories, will have a hard time succeeding over the long term if the fashion industry does not become more unified, experts note.

"To have fashion on an international scale in Lebanon, we need to create a brand that says: This is Lebanese fashion."

—Walid Touma, LAU professor and director of the UEO

"The fashion industry in Lebanon is a testimony to our creative strength," explained Walid Touma, professor and director of the University Enterprise Office at LAU. However, he said, Lebanon's designers need to create and cement a Lebanese fashion brand that can compete with those of Europe and the U.S.: "To have fashion on an international scale in Lebanon, we need to create a brand that says, 'This is Lebanese fashion.'"

"We need to brand our designers; we need to set a standard in quality and taste. Lebanese designers aren't bonding. They are not fighting for the same higher cause," Touma pointed out.

The casual-wear market in Lebanon is currently dominated by international retail fashion giants such as Zara, said Touma, which offers thousands of designs, along with a complex infrastructure, large-scale manufacturing capabilities, and expert marketing. Naja added that companies such as Zara "compete with local products not necessarily in terms of quality, but all the factors together."

A little background

During the Lebanese civil war, many local designers went abroad seeking better opportunities, and many are now moving back after getting exposure, according to Dr. George K. Najjar, dean of the School of Business at the American University of Beirut, who wrote a detailed report about Lebanon's fashion industry, entitled "Creative Industries in Lebanon: Full Report 2007."

Over the past 10 years, Lebanon has increasingly gained international recognition in haute couture for its "Orientalized luxury." The Najjar report pointed out that at least 40 haute couture fashion houses in Lebanon—many of them popular with clients from the Arab world and the Gulf—provide around 40 percent of the haute couture exports.

According to Naja, the private sector worldwide has maintained its demand for luxury even throughout the recession. He noted that premium products are primarily about image and status, and people are continually willing to pay for those symbols. "Buying luxury is not a physiological, functional need but a need of self-actualization," he explained.

Still, despite Lebanese designers' good reputations and growth potential, and despite the inherent market for their products, there is no strong organizational body overseeing and supporting the country's fashion industry.

In addition to becoming more unified, the fashion industry must expand beyond haute couture into ready-to-wear and possibly children and men's clothing, according to Najjar's report. But ready-to-wear can be difficult for local designers to enter, as there is a great deal of competition from fashion chains.

Elie Saab is pioneering this movement: He recently entered the ready-to-wear market, although in his case he was able to do so after making it big in haute couture and getting the necessary marketing for his brand.

A slice of a massive pie

Joelle Hachem, an LAU graduate and an economics lecturer at the School of Business, runs Marcelle, a boutique in Beirut that her mother opened almost 30 years ago. Marcelle carries high-end European designers. She said the decision to carry top European labels was made by her mother when the boutique first opened on Abdel Wahab Street during the civil war, because at the time Lebanese designers were limited, and not high-end. 🍷





Boutique Marcelle in Achrafieh, Beirut



Designer Johnny Farah in his shop in Saifi Village, Beirut

“Local production wasn’t considered good quality or a good brand” when the store opened, she explained.

Now customers are demanding lower prices, said Hachem, and with the introduction of American-style department stores and international chains, store owners have to be more innovative in their marketing and products.

Nonetheless, Hachem is hopeful. “The economy is growing this year. The fashion industry is booming,” she said.

But many say the growth opportunities for designers in Lebanon are still somewhat limited. Angela Mahseredjian, an LAU graduate student in the School of Business, helps her father, Jack, run a family-owned factory and retail boutique called Cigarette, which opened in 1990 in the Bourj Hammoud area of Beirut. She designs Western-inspired trendy clothes with her father, who started working in the industry as a high-end men’s tailor but switched to women’s casual wear and opened a factory in 1976.

The store has stayed in business for 20 years due to its low prices and word-of-mouth marketing. “The young generation likes to change their wardrobes often, but also have a budget. The shop’s prices allow them to have both,” Jack Mahseredjian said.

The Mahseredjians sell merchandise to retail stores in the Gulf and Cyprus but are cautious about expanding further. Many clothing factories in Lebanon have closed down, Jack Mahseredjian said, explaining that many retailers now prefer to import cheaper goods from other countries. Jack complained that the government and banks in Lebanon are not assisting the local fashion industry with much support or loans.

A world of opportunity

In Lebanon, in 2009, imports for women’s fashion totaled approximately \$75.7 million, while exports totaled about \$5.8 million. This means that almost \$70 million of women’s fashion was imported for Lebanese consumption, representing a huge market for a country with roughly 4 million people. In a sense, this also means that Lebanese designers and labels have \$70 million worth of potential market share to tap into.

“Developing talent needs fashion inspiration. You have to appreciate what you have, but also take ideas from others.”

—Johnny Farah, designer

Lebanese bag and accessories designer Johnny Farah, who has worked in Europe and New York as a designer and with internationally revered fashion houses such as Donna Karan and Calvin Klein, thinks it’s important for aspiring designers to work or study abroad and then come back to their culture with new ideas. “It’s not good to get stuck in one society,” he said, adding that, “Developing talent needs fashion inspiration—to be outside. You have to appreciate what you have, but also take ideas from others.”



The LAU and AUB students who started the t-shirt company Charlie



Miri NJ Bags



Cigarette boutique in Bourj Hammoud, Beirut

New players on the block

New designers entering the fashion industry in Lebanon are trying to fill new niches in the market, taking an original approach in order to stand out from the crowd.

Two years ago Walid Touma's wife Rania started producing luxury accessories and prêt-à-porter under the company name Rawa, selling her designs at high-end Beirut boutiques Joseph Eid Femme and Silvana. She is currently at a strategic crossroads; her husband explained that she is defining the next steps, such as an online store that will be integrated with online chains worldwide—and a physical store afterwards.

At LAU's School of Business, Touma has worked with his MBA students on business plans to create innovative stores, as well as brands for Islamic neo-conservative clothing in the region. Throughout the spring 2010 semester Touma's students have also been studying the fashion industry from a policy perspective.

Last year, LAU sophomore in fine arts Shams Albadri started a label called Charlie with three friends from the American University of Beirut. Wanting to do something different and provocative using fashion, the young women created hand-made T-shirts, bracelets and other accessories, and regularly hold events promoting their merchandise. They target fellow students and young people whom Albadri described as "brave" enough to wear their edgy designs.

Two years ago, Miri Najarian, an LAU graduate in interior architecture, started the handbag label Miri NJ Bags as a side-job. As she continues to work in architecture and design, Najarian

is also trying to establish the company locally and in Dubai before implementing plans to expand. "I'm waiting to grow and establish myself before opening my own shop, but I'm happy for the moment selling my accessories in shops like Lime, Miss E, and Cream," she said.

"Buying luxury is not a physiological, functional need but a need of self-actualization."

—George K. Najjar, AUB professor

Najarian explained that her aim is to design bags that compete with international designers in terms quality, but that are original enough to lure customers looking for high-end creations to choose her products over those of established Western designers.

"I think the Lebanese really love to buy products made by Lebanese designers. Since products like mine target relatively high-end customers," said Najarian, "My customers can buy both — a Western brand and a Lebanese brand."

Ultimately, for ambitious local designers, she added, "There is plenty of demand." ■



Miri NJ Bags

CampusNotes

For more details about these LAU activities, visit the news section of www.lau.edu.lb

Inspiring Change

Raising funds for Haiti disaster

Students, faculty and staff contributed to several campaigns that took place on LAU's two campuses to raise funds for victims of the massive January 12 earthquake in Haiti. On January 21 and from March 1 to 2, Beirut-campus student clubs — in coordination with the Guidance Office — collected funds from passers-by. Students from the Byblos Campus Student Council, along with members of the LAU – Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI) Tomorrow's Leaders Scholarship Program, coordinated with the Byblos Guidance Office to organize a fundraiser February 19–27.



LAU NGO Fair

Nearly 70 NGOs participated in the first annual LAU NGO Fair on the Byblos campus May 21. Organized by the Byblos Guidance Office, the daylong event aimed at exposing students to the culture of community activism. NGO representatives engaged with students, encouraging them to volunteer and support causes ranging from human rights to environmental protection.

Seminar on climate change in Lebanon

On February 24, representatives from the government and civil society joined with academics to discuss the urgent need for Lebanon to address the issue of climate change, in a seminar organized by LAU's Department of Natural Sciences in Beirut. Presentations were given on the causes and dangerous effects of global warming, especially in Lebanon, and what can be done to combat this problem.



Making the case for a civil state

Representatives of various sectors in Lebanon gathered at LAU Byblos on March 26 for a full-day symposium to call for a civil state culture in the country. The event was organized by LAU's Humanities and Social Sciences Department in Byblos.



Armenian Genocide commemoration

The Armenian student clubs at LAU Byblos and Beirut held events on both campuses on April 21 and 23, respectively, to mark the 95th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide with presentations, traditional Armenian dances and music. Texts, photographs and posters were displayed on the campuses, to inform passers-by about the genocide committed by Ottoman Turkey.

Architecture and Design

Exhibition of Design Studio projects

Architecture students from different Design Studio courses showcased their end-of-semester projects in a series of exhibitions in February and March on both LAU campuses. Level V students' projects focused on the relation of architecture to structure. Level III students concentrated on theoretical aspects, while level VII students exhibited works related to urban design and architectural movements.





Traveling installation on urban environment

An international exhibition entitled "The Urban Environment: Mirror and Mediator of Radicalization?" was held April 1 – 16 at LAU Beirut. Organized by LAU's Urban Planning Institute and the Department of Architecture and Design, the exhibition presented the results of a research project at the University of Manchester, U.K., focusing on the relationship between the urban environment and sociopolitical conditions in cities with different types of conflict: Belfast, Beirut, Berlin and Amsterdam.

Arts, Culture and Literature



Islamic calligraphy lecture and exhibit

Renowned Iranian graphic designer and artist Masoud Nejabati lectured about "The Art of Islamic Calligraphy in Graphic Design," followed by the opening of an exhibition of his recent work at the Beirut campus on March 26. The exhibition, a part of the LAU Graphic Design Department's event series, lasted until March 31.

World Theater Day

LAU celebrated World Theater Day on March 26 with replays of two student plays ("Seven Jewish Children: A Play for Gaza" and "The Lesson") from earlier this year, along with one new student production ("Dangerous Angels"), and the presentation of a visiting production ("Nos Nseis," or "mini person"). The event, held on the Beirut campus, was organized by LAU's Communication Arts Department.



Arab writers celebrate literature at LAU

Thirty-nine distinguished writers under the age of 39 from across 14 Arab countries came to Beirut April 15 – 18, for the Beirut39 Festival. The event included a series of discussions at venues all over the city, including LAU Beirut, where several Beirut39 writers participated in five panel discussions on a variety of topics. Held as part of Beirut World Book Capital 2009, Beirut39 was organized by U.K.-based Hay Festival of Literature and the Arts in cooperation with the Lebanese Ministry of Culture and Casino du Liban. LAU was one of the event's sponsors.

On April 17, a separate group of Arab authors aged 19 and younger, chosen by a Beirut39-inspired project called Beirut19, also gathered at LAU for a conversation with some Beirut39 writers. The Beirut19 project was launched by the International Education Association in collaboration with Hay Festival.

Arab popular culture conference

The "Arab Popular Culture and the Media" conference attracted more than 40 academics and researchers from around the world to LAU Beirut, April 21 – 23. Organized by The Institute for Media Training and Research and the Department of Communication Arts at LAU, the conference featured a number of panel sessions in which conference delegates presented research papers on various topics relating to Arab popular culture and the media in the world.



Arts, Culture and Literature

Major theater production

LAU's major spring theater production, "Kafka, His Father, the Boss, the Wolf, and the Pigs," was presented May 8–9 and 13–16 at LAU Beirut's Irwin Hall Theater. Dr. Lina Abyad, the play's director and an LAU assistant professor of theater, and Rachid Al Daif translated Franz Kafka's texts into Arabic for the purposes of the play. The theater production was organized by LAU's Department of Communication Arts.



Library Open House

During the second annual Library Open House on May 4, the LAU Libraries in Beirut and Byblos organized daylong activities to promote their services and resources through video games. Top video game companies gave presentations, and at stands set up on both campuses, library staff distributed informational materials, handed out freebies, and organized games and other activities.



Lecture on preservation of ancient churches in Lebanon

Dr. Ray Jabre Mouawad, LAU assistant professor of history, talked about her work on the study and restoration of medieval frescoes in Lebanese churches, during a brown-bag lecture on March 15 at LAU Beirut. She showed the audience before-and-after photos of frescoes that have been restored by the Association pour la Restauration et l'Etude des Fresques Médiévales du Liban (AREFML), which she heads.



Health-Care Education



Nursing Day at LAU

LAU's Alice Ramez Chagoury School of Nursing, which will open in fall 2010, invited high school students to learn about its B.S. in Nursing program during the "Nursing Day" events held on the Byblos and Beirut campuses on March 10 and 17, respectively. Approximately 250 students from more than 15 Lebanese high schools learned about the benefits of studying nursing at LAU from the school's founding dean, Dr. Nancy Hoffart, and its faculty, as well as nurses from LAU's University Medical Center – Rizk Hospital.

Challenges facing medical schools

On March 17, LAU's School of Medicine hosted 10 regional medical school deans and U.S. experts at LAU Byblos, in a discussion of the challenges and opportunities related to the development of medical programs in Lebanon and the Middle East. Experts from the United States and the Middle East gave presentations, followed by a panel discussion.



Medical school community visit

Twenty-five LAU medical students, along with faculty members and staff, visited community health centers in Byblos, March 18. The event was organized by medical faculty member Dr. Mona Haidar as part of the school's social medicine curriculum — which emphasizes that social, economic and political forces influence the occurrence and course of most diseases.

Science

Lecture on space exploration

Dr. Charles Elachi, director of NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory and chairperson of LAU's Board of Trustees, gave a presentation on "Recent Developments in Earth and Space Exploration" before an audience of students, academics, aspiring scientists and LAU community members at the Beirut campus, March 17. The presentation concluded with a video about the trials and tribulations of space launchings.



Molecular Biology Poster Conference

Thirteen biology graduate students exhibited the products of months of diligent research on a variety of topics, presenting the results on science posters during the third annual Molecular Biology Poster Conference at LAU Byblos, May 13. Organized by LAU's Department of Natural Sciences in Byblos, the event kicked off earlier that day with three seminars by prominent experts.

Sports at LAU

Barcelona sports fiesta

The 57-member sports delegation from LAU Byblos came home with several trophies following the Eurosade international university tournament in Barcelona, Spain, April 8–12. Both the women's and men's varsity basketball teams achieved first place; a student placed second in tennis; and the mixed women's and men's volleyball team came in third. The men's and women's futsal teams also participated.



LAU rugby team makes history

LAU's rugby team became the first in Lebanon's history to play a perfect season of the national rugby league championship, after beating the American University of Beirut on May 8 at the final in Bhamdoun. The Immortals, as the team has been nicknamed, won all 13 games this season. The team also broke its own record of winning six finals since it began competing in the league in 2003.

Focus on Women

Women in local governance

The participation of women in local governance was the focus of two symposiums held April 21 at LAU Byblos and April 23 at LAU Beirut. LAU's Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World, along with the National Commission for Lebanese Women (NCLW), organized the events as part of the national campaign to support female political engagement in local governance, which is supported by NCLW in collaboration with the Ministry of Social Affairs and other NGOs.



Training Centers

Family business seminars

From March 17 to 20 on the Byblos campus, LAU's Institute of Family and Entrepreneurial Business organized a series of events on managing family conflicts and building family business intelligence. On March 17, a daylong public conference — supported by the Indevco Group — featured a keynote address by Minister of Tourism Fadi Abboud, and presentations by several Lebanese business leaders. Two separate seminars followed on March 18 and March 19–20, each targeting a different group of business leaders, educators and government officials.



Educational technology workshops for teachers

Eighteen teachers from 10 public and private schools across Lebanon came back to LAU March 5–6 and 19–20 to finish a three-part series of Teacher Certification in Educational Technology workshops, aimed at helping them integrate technology in the classroom. Now in its third and final year, the program is run by LAU's Teacher Training Institute in partnership with Michigan State University. The series is being financed through a grant from Higher Education for Development (HED) under the Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI).

CPLA workshop

Dozens of educators from nine universities across the region participated in a workshop held at LAU Beirut March 22–23 to assess learning outcomes for students in various programs. The gathering was the third in a series of events focusing on program and learning assessment, organized by LAU's Center for Program and Learning Assessment (CPLA) and funded by the Ford Foundation.



LAU Cisco academy award

LAU's Cisco Academy Training Center received the 2009–2010 Best Outstanding Contribution Award from the Cisco Networking Academy, during a regional conference at LAU Byblos April 17–18. The center was chosen for the award from among more than 700 Cisco academies, spanning from Morocco to Afghanistan, that were nominated for any one of 11 awards.

LAU writing center opening

On May 12, LAU inaugurated its first writing center for students, headquartered at LAU Beirut's Nicol Hall in Room 206 and headed by founding director Dr. Rula Diab, LAU assistant professor of English. The center will go into full throttle next year, when more faculty members and graduate assistants will be on hand for hour-long one-on-one sessions with students.



Workshop for Iraqi journalists

LAU hosted 11 senior journalists from Northern Iraq for the first comprehensive journalism-training course of its kind in the region, held May 9–16 at the Beirut campus. The U.S. Embassy in Baghdad — which coordinated and sponsored the trip — chose LAU for its up-to-date facilities and The Institute for Media Training and Research (TIMTAR).

Shaping Leaders

Second class of Tomorrow's Leaders scholarship program

The second class of students from across the MENA region who are studying at LAU as part of the Tomorrow's Leaders (TL) Scholarship Program received a formal welcome to the university, in a reception on the Beirut campus, March 12. The 16 new students, in addition to the six second-year TL students, showed a short film they produced to highlight some of their recent accomplishments. During the event, the program's new website was also unveiled. The program is co-funded by LAU and the U.S. Department of State's Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI).



LAU students shine at World Model U.N. summit in Taiwan

LAU students Gloria Trad and Kamal Yakteen came back with two diplomacy awards from the 19th annual Harvard World Model United Nations (World MUN) conference, held March 14–18 in Taipei, Taiwan. Overall, 20 LAU students majoring in political science and economics from the Beirut and Byblos campuses took part in the event, which brought together more than 2,000 students from 50 countries. This is the 10th year LAU is participating in the World MUN conference, which is established by Harvard University.

LAU Model U.N. final conference in Lebanon

Nearly 1,300 students from 125 high schools across Lebanon completed another season of activities, simulating international diplomats, as part of the AL WALID Global Classrooms–LAU Model United Nations (MUN) program. The final conference took place April 10–11 at LAU's both campuses — including the "Global Village" activity on the Byblos campus on April 10, where students enjoyed some traditional food, music and dance. During the closing ceremony at the UNESCO Palace in Beirut on April 11, awards were distributed in the presence of university and government officials, as well as numerous ambassadors in Lebanon.



Stunning results by LAU Model U.N. students in New York conference

Five Lebanese high school students from the LAU Model U.N. program won six awards at the 11th international United Nations Association of the United States of America (UNA–USA) Model U.N. conference in New York, May 13–15. The event brought together around 2,400 students from 200 educational institutions worldwide.

Engineering

ASME design contest

Three teams involving a total of 12 LAU mechanical and industrial engineering students won the top three places at this year's District J American Society of Mechanical Engineers (ASME) Student Design Competition, held on May 7 at Notre Dame University (NDU). The winning team will represent the MENA region in the finals in Vancouver, Canada, later this year.





Redefining Beirut's Cityscape

A new generation of ethical designers and architects are challenging conventions

By Kristen Hope Burchill

View of Beirut

Perceptions of Lebanon are rooted in contradictory images — perfectly illustrated by mottoes like “skiing in the morning and swimming in the afternoon,” which highlight the country’s varied landscape.

A similar, albeit more sinister, note was struck by the photograph that won the 2007 World Press Photo competition, depicting a group of sun-kissed girls in a flashy convertible car, flanked by a building destroyed by Israeli airstrikes in the July 2006 war.

Yet a new generation of Lebanese, particularly those with an eye for art, are finding it more difficult to romanticize Lebanon’s paradoxical identity.

An emerging group of architects and graphic designers are mixing their aesthetic imperatives with a critical assessment of Beirut’s ongoing “postwar” reconstruction. Postwar, in this case, refers to both the 30-year civil war that tore up the country, and to the more recent 2006 war with Israel. These designers are changing the visual and spatial landscape of the capital, and locating their perspectives within a growing malaise that views the city — currently characterised by a wave of gentrified construction, privatization and environmental degradation — as increasingly out of tune with its own inhabitants.

A cursory look at Beirut’s cityscape indicates that such concerns are not misplaced.

Majestic villas of the prewar era are being bulldozed, day after day, to make room for luxury skyscraper apartments, while those who live in the less fortunate city suburbs and refugee camps face derelict housing conditions.

And all over Beirut, the burnt-out, bullet-ridden relics of civil war loom over the city like the remnants of a nightmare.

“There is a trend towards a refusal of what is happening here,” said LAU alumna Jana Jammal. As a graphic design graduate with a background in sociology, Jammal said, “It is necessary to have intellectual understanding before visual representation.”

“It is necessary to have intellectual understanding before visual representation.”

—Jana Jammal, LAU alumna

As a student, she had to come to terms with her social and political context as a necessary prerequisite to artistic creation. This meant asking difficult questions about the looming remnants of the war, when she realized that the signs of conflict are visible all around the city but absent from education and history: “I see the war, but I know nothing about it,” she explained, noting that the history of the civil war is not included in school curricula.

For Jammal, the fact that the destroyed buildings are still scattered around the city but are not given any historical significance is a reflection of Lebanese society’s collective amnesia and reluctance to deal with the past.

Prior to their renewed focus on architecture, artists and designers were recognizing civil war—era political posters as constituting a part of the visual landscape through which Lebanese history and identity could be deciphered. In 2007, Lebanese playwright Rabih Mroueh released his play, “How Nancy Wished That Everything Was an April Fool’s Joke,” which narrates incidents of the civil war through a parody of posters of martyrs.



The empty Burj El Murr tower looms over Beirut

A year later, Zeina Massri, an associate professor of graphic design at AUB, hosted an exhibition and published a book entitled “Off the Wall: Political Posters of the Lebanese Civil War,” which also set designers’ sights on the impact of visual imagery on Lebanese historical narratives.

Gaining perspective

Discussing the impact of Beirut’s civil war on the country’s architectural and human landscape also entails tackling the thorny issue of postwar reconstruction efforts.

The book “Recovering Beirut: Urban Design and Post-War Reconstruction,” edited by renowned Lebanese sociologist Samir Khalaf, the director of the Centre for Behavioural Research at AUB is considered by many young design students a seminal text for understanding architecture as an aspect of Lebanon’s postwar identity.

The book’s discussions of who should reconstruct downtown Beirut, and how, proved prophetic. The chosen course of action, in which one company, Solidere, is responsible for construction of downtown Beirut, has been greeted with disdain from many angles. Many see the pristine upmarket shops, including the recently inaugurated Beirut Souks area, as a consumer-driven appropriation of what used to be the heart of the city.

Dr. Maroun Daccache, chair of the Department of Architecture at LAU, is as critical as most: “Our city center has become a big private space, a big mall,” he said. In his view, this is reflective of a more general trend present in cities all over the Middle East. He added, “Our cities do not offer the opportunity where citizens or society can move and can enjoy the public structure. This is one of the major problems.”

Daccache’s colleague at LAU, graphic design instructor Nathalie Fallaha, holds a similar, though not wholly critical, view. 🍷

"In terms of visual language and downtown, I have big reservations about what has taken place there," she said. On one hand, Fallaha recognizes some positive aspects of the commercial emphasis in downtown Beirut, namely the development of shop windows as an emerging aesthetic form in which a whole story is being told through a windowpane. This, Fallaha pointed out, engages pedestrians in a way that enables them to break from their transient movement and create some sense of public space.

Nevertheless, the visual language of the downtown area is problematic because it lacks identity and reference, Fallaha said: "It's supposed to address the Beirut population, the Lebanese population, but it's not."

"Our cities do not offer the opportunity where citizens or society can move and can enjoy the public structure. This is one of the major problems."

—Maroun Daccache, LAU professor

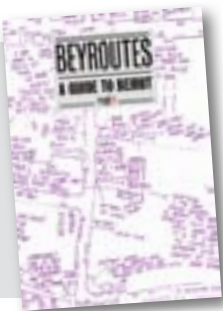
This lack of identity leaves an opening for the big multinational chains, which combine with the exclusive facilities to create a generally alienating environment. Echoing the sentiment of her former professor, Jammal claimed that Solidere is a phenomenon that people her age don't appreciate: "I feel like it's cheating Beirut, erasing Beirut's memories and trying to bring this shiny thing to life. It's very superficial."

Facing the challenges

In the face of corporate adversity, Jammal, some of her peers, and a growing number of artists and designers are taking steps toward reversing what they see as the homogenizing status quo.

One major stepping-stone along this path was the establishment of the chapter of Architecture for Humanity in Beirut in 2009. Like similar groups around the world, the chapter aims to use architecture and design to creatively impact underprivileged communities. "We want to use both aspects of architecture and design and humanitarian work together, and do something positive," said Jammal. With the help of its 18 registered members and hundreds more who support the organization through online social networks, the Beirut chapter recently painted a mural at a public primary school in Hamra as its first project.

Alongside such community-based efforts, a growing number of new publications have been adding steam to the movement that seeks to link public space with responsible citizenship. One example is "At the Edge of the City: Reinhabiting Public Space Toward the Recovery of Beirut's Horsh Al-Sanawbar." The book, edited by AUB graphic designer Fadi Shayya, is a collection of visual and written pieces that critically assess the current closure of Horsh Al-Sanawbar near Tayyounieh, Beirut's only open green space. As the brainchild of the alternative design consultancy group Discursive Formations, the book's website aims to "shape an understanding of continuously evolving meanings of public space in Beirut..."



Architecture for Humanity

This movement to mobilize artists and cultural institutions to challenge the privatization of Beirut's public spaces has a pedagogical dimension, as well. For instance, faculty at LAU are attempting to equip design students with the tools and capacities they need to effect change. A first step was the merging of LAU's graphic design and architecture programs into the School of Architecture and Design in 2009. The objective of the merger was to sensitize students to the links between the design-based disciplines.

Although Daccache acknowledged that this interdisciplinary approach is hardly new, he said he is convinced that a holistic approach will encourage students to engage more profoundly with the issues inherent in architecture and design, instead of focusing mainly on creating objects.

Building on this point, the school teaches its students to establish equilibrium between context and message. "We are educating them as responsible citizens," said Yasmine Taan, graphic design instructor, "not as technicians." This approach is not without its challenges, because upon graduation, students enter into a consumerist and advertising-driven market, which does not leave much room for designers to explore underlying themes.

Nonetheless, the market nowadays is more open than it was 15 years ago, and an abundance of conferences and cultural initiatives give designers a chance to produce non-commercial work. The proliferation of alternative print media is providing another textual and discursive space for designers to venture new solutions to the issues of their generation.

"I feel it, and you can see it in artistic interventions, a lot of art, a lot of theater, a lot of music. You can feel that there is a collective spirit of moving forward."

—Jana Jammal, LAU alumna

Despite the constraints currently facing Lebanon's new generation of graphic designers and architects, the movement of young, engaged artists committed to improving the public space of their capital city is growing.

For her part, Jammal said she is hopeful about the potential for change unleashed when talented individuals pool their creative energies: "I feel it, and you can see it in artistic interventions, a lot of art, a lot of theater, a lot of music. You can feel that there is a collective spirit of moving forward." ■

Alumni Profile

Doris Mukabaa Marksohn '78: an inspiration to aspiring artists

By Greg Houle



Doris Mukabaa Marksohn, a successful artist whose work has been exhibited worldwide, started her path at LAU in the mid-1970s, when it was BUC—and she faced a series of challenges that would have led others to give up. But she persevered, and the result is a career that can serve as an inspiration to aspiring artists.

Mukabaa Marksohn grew up four blocks from what was then Beirut University College. In 1974, upon finishing high school, she enrolled at the university to study interior design.

“The visual arts, performing arts — all of the arts — were thriving in Beirut during this time,” Mukabaa Marksohn recalled. “And BUC, which mirrored Beirut — with its mix of old and new, traditional and modern, national and international — was a wonderful place to be to catch all the cross-currents.”

But a year later, the civil war broke out. Even traveling the short distance to campus became too dangerous, and many classes retained only a handful of students. Mukabaa Marksohn was the only remaining student in the interior design program. In 1977, she switched to the fine arts major. Simultaneously, a lull in the war brought a new stream of serious students into the art department.

In 1978, she graduated with a B.A. in fine arts, receiving the Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Award — given annually to outstanding students.

Between 1978 and 1983, she immersed herself in her studio, working on her own paintings and on commissioned projects. She also illustrated five children’s books published by Oxford University Press and taught children’s art classes and a junior-level painting course at BUC, before heading to New York in January 1984 to pursue her master’s at Pratt Institute. She planned to return to teach at BUC.

In 1984, Mukabaa Marksohn embarked alone on her first trip to the U.S. New York City in the mid-1980s was not an easy place to live, and the devaluation of the Lebanese pound added another complication, since her savings dried up almost overnight, forcing her to work three jobs to pay for school.

After receiving her M.F.A. in painting and printmaking from Pratt in 1986, and training with an art consultant, Mukabaa Marksohn booked her flight back to Beirut for February 6, 1987. But Lebanon was still at war, and as the fighting intensified, the airport shut down on February 1, leaving her scrambling for an alternate plan.

“I had already quit my job, trained my replacement, and given up my apartment,” Mukabaa Marksohn said. Luckily, she heard about an opening for an assistant at Rotunda Gallery in Brooklyn, so she applied and got the job.

Although she intended to return to Lebanon before long, she met Jerry Marksohn two months after starting at Rotunda. The couple were married in September 1987, and she moved to Long Island, where his business is based.

The Marksohns have lived there ever since, raising a son, Vincent. Meanwhile, Mukabaa Marksohn’s career has soared. Her work has been exhibited in Beirut and New York and is held in private collections worldwide. She has curated more than a dozen exhibitions, and was featured, along with other artists, in the book “The Woman Artist in Lebanon.”

In March 2003, Mukabaa Marksohn founded DM Contemporary, a gallery and salon dedicated to exhibiting significant art in a residential setting. The gallery currently represents 23 artists and hosts discussions in conjunction with its exhibitions. This October, DM Contemporary will launch a new branch in Manhattan.

Mukabaa Marksohn recently returned from a trip to Lebanon, where she visited LAU. Her latest inspiration: to establish a program where artists and art students from Lebanon and the U.S. can interact and enrich each other artistically and culturally — much as she has had the opportunity to do, both by design and by chance, throughout her life.

Lina Abyad: Theater is my passion

By LAU Staff



“LAU has allowed me to fulfill my dreams, taught me what good production means, and given me freedom to choose my topics.”

Dr. Lina Abyad, assistant professor in LAU’s Department of Communication Arts, has directed more than 20 plays since returning to Lebanon in 1997, after completing her postgraduate studies in France at the Sorbonne Nouvelle, Paris III.

Abyad has also adapted and translated several plays into Arabic, and has run acting workshops in Beirut and elsewhere in the region. Most recently, she directed “Kafka,” LAU’s major spring theater production this year.

The years Abyad spent studying and working in Paris have had a major influence on her life and career. “Paris is not an ordinary city,” said Abyad. “The whole city impacts you.”

Still, Abyad has found that theater, no matter its context, has a magical power over its audience. The strength of theatrical language, the body movement of actors, the synergy among performers, all make theater universal, while also specific to the culture from which it emerges.

LAU Magazine recently chatted with Abyad about her unique background and what makes her work stand out.

Q&A

LAU MAG: Aside from directing plays, you also started a pioneering program with the School of Medicine at LAU. How did this happen?

ABYAD: I was approached by the dean of the medical school to participate in the LAU medical school’s Standardized Patient Instructor program, the first of its kind in Lebanon, designed to simulate doctor-patient scenarios.

I was asked to train volunteers to act and behave as patients, as well as train medical students to interact, listen and communicate with patients effectively. The goal was to create a realistic medical examination that will help students enhance their clinical and communication skills.

You studied in English and in French, but most of your work is in Arabic. How do you explain this diversity?

I have worked in French and English, but when I came back to Lebanon, I felt that I needed to communicate with people in their own language so they can relate and interact with the play. Actors also need to feel the play.

Your plays are sometimes rated as difficult. How would you respond to such a statement?

I usually choose plays with political and social themes that talk about the world, and not art for art’s sake. Besides being aesthetic and beautiful, theater is also mirroring our society, raising critical questions. Each play had a social message to portray and expose.

In this era of wars, hate and injustice, theater is a necessity to awaken our senses and feelings. My plays are hard because they address reality, and our reality is sad. The truth hurts and awakens our inner repressed feelings.

What attracted you to academia?

I still have the words of my parents in my mind: “You can’t live from theater in Beirut. You need a real job.” Teaching at a university has allowed me to still follow my passion, but also to communicate my knowledge to future generations.

What are your future plans?

LAU is the platform for all my plays. They all start here, and then move around. I see myself in 10 years still working at LAU, in the Gulbenkian theater, surrounded by the best equipment and technicians, working with greatly talented students. LAU has allowed me to fulfill my dreams, taught me what good production means, and given me freedom to choose my topics.



“I usually choose plays with political and social themes that talk about the world, and not art for art’s sake.”

Faculty on the Move



DR. AMJAD TOUKAN

Dr. Amjad Toukan recently joined LAU as an assistant professor of economics. Toukan, who holds an M.B.A. and a Ph.D. in economics from the University of California, Irvine, received his master's degree in electrical engineering from California State University at Fullerton. His primary research interests are in the areas of microeconomics, political economy, and international trade, and his teaching specialties include micro and macro theory, game theory, corporate governance, political economy, and international trade. Prior to academia, Toukan worked in industry, focusing on project management and general management.



DR. AYMAN REDA

Dr. Ayman Reda arrived at LAU in 2009 as an assistant professor of economics, after previously teaching at several universities in the United States, including Grand Valley State University and Michigan State University. He said his motivations for joining LAU are to pursue his research interests and to be part of a university that is "impressively evolving." Reda is currently involved in a research project that aims to examine the relationship between morality and business or economic behavior. He is a member of a number of professional organizations, including the Midwest Economics Association, the Association for the Study of Religion, Economics and Culture, and the American Economics Association.



DR. AZZAM MOURAD

Dr. Azzam Mourad came to LAU in 2009 as an assistant professor in the Department of Computer Science and Mathematics. From 2003 to 2008, Mourad worked as a research assistant while studying for his Ph.D. in electrical and computer engineering from Concordia University in Montreal. He said he chose LAU since it is one of only a few universities in Lebanon offering the opportunity for a professor to build a career in both research and teaching. His current topics of research include web service security, software security evaluation and hardening, security engineering, secure software design, ad-hoc network security and Java acceleration.



DR. NADINE ZEENI

Dr. Nadine Zeeni joined LAU as an assistant professor of nutrition in 2009. She holds a master's in human nutrition from McGill University and a Ph.D. from AgroParisTech University. She participated in the NuSISCO (Nutrient Sensing in Satiety Control and Obesity) project, which was funded by the E.U. with an aim to provide a better understanding the growing obesity problem in Europe. She has strong research interests in the areas of nutrient sensing, satiety/hunger regulation, and obesity, as well as in eating disorders. Zeeni has published several papers and scientific communications looking at the effects of diet on the brain. She is a member of the Society for the Study of Ingestive Behavior, Société Française de Nutrition, and the International Society for Magnetic Resonance in Medicine.



DR. JOHN EL KHOURY

Dr. John El Khoury started at LAU in 2010 as an assistant professor in the Department of Civil Engineering. Khoury first earned his B.E. in civil engineering from LAU back in 2002, before pursuing a master's and a Ph.D. from Virginia Tech in 2003 and 2005, respectively. From 2006 until his arrival at LAU, Khoury worked as a transportation engineer on a number of projects in California, Colorado and New Mexico. He said he came to LAU because of its friendly environment and solid reputation. During the summer of 2010, Khoury was part of the research team at the Virginia Tech Transportation Institute and collaborated on research projects.

Faculty on the Move



DR. MIRVAT EL SIBAI

Dr. Mirvat El Sibai was promoted in 2009 to the position of assistant professor of biology, after first joining LAU as a part-time faculty member in 2008. El Sibai earned her Ph.D. in molecular pharmacology from Albert Einstein College of Medicine in New York in 2007. She said she was encouraged to join LAU by the new advances being made at the university and by its commitment to medicine and research. El Sibai is working on a number of collaborative research projects directed toward finding a mechanism to stop cancer, mostly brain tumor cells and breast cancer cells, from invading the neighboring tissues.



DR. MONA MAJDALANI

Dr. Mona Majdalani recently returned to Lebanon after spending 21 years in the United States, where she held a number of teaching positions at the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire. She initially joined LAU, her alma mater, as a visiting professor in 2009, before taking on a position as assistant professor of education in 2010. She said LAU's growing reputation and new direction under the current leadership attracted her to the university. She received a Ph.D. in curriculum and instruction from Texas A&M in 1993.



DR. RITA AWWAD

Dr. Rita Awwad has joined LAU as an assistant professor in the Department of Civil Engineering. A 2004 LAU graduate, Awwad continued her studies in the United States, where she earned two master's degrees followed a Ph.D. in civil and environmental engineering at the University of Michigan. She said she came back to LAU since it offered her "great opportunities" during her undergraduate years. "I am looking forward to a bright and successful future and to make a positive contribution at LAU," she added. Awwad holds membership with the American Society of Civil Engineers and the Lebanese Order of Engineers and Architects.



DR. WALID MARROUCH

Dr. Walid Marrouch arrived at LAU's School of Business in 2009 as an assistant professor in the Department of Economics and Finance. He received his B.A. in economics from AUB in 2002, then moved to Canada, where he earned a master's in economics from Concordia University in 2004, followed by a Ph.D. in applied economics from HEC Montréal-Business School. He noted that he joined LAU because it offers an environment conducive to promoting his research and to further developing as an economist and scholar, while providing him with the chance to remain in his native country, close to his family and friends.



DR. ALINE MILANE

Dr. Aline Milane became part of LAU's School of Pharmacy in 2009, as an assistant professor in the Department of Pharmaceutical Sciences. Milane earned her Doctorate of Pharmacy degree from the School of Pharmacy at the Saint-Joseph University in 2004. She then continued her studies in France, where she received her master's, then Ph.D., in pharmacology and pharmacokinetics at the Paris-Sud University (Paris-XI). Her research interests focus on drug transporters at the brain level. She said she decided to come to LAU because of its "excellent reputation, high professionalism, young spirit, student-centeredness and academic excellence."



DR. RANIA EL HADDAD

Dr. Rania El Haddad joined LAU in 2010 as an assistant professor in the Department of Hospitality Management and Accounting. Prior to her arrival at LAU, she taught at the University of Wales' TSMAC Business School for one year, and held a number of positions at several hotels in Lebanon, France and Switzerland between 1999 and 2006. She said she chose LAU because of its dynamic hospitality and business sectors and its commitment to research. She also serves as a consultant at H-Hotelier, a hospitality services company specializing in business intelligence tools, training and development programs, and revenue management consultancy.



DR. JAD ABDALLAH

Dr. Jad Abdallah first began teaching part-time at LAU's School of Pharmacy in 2007, before joining full-time in 2009. He teaches medical biochemistry, biotechnology and pharmaceutical analysis, medical microbiology, and pharmacognosy. He says he was inspired to join LAU because of the administration's amiability and professionalism, as well as the school's level of excellence. He received his Ph.D. in Structure, Function and Protein Engineering from Ecole Doctorale de Biochimie et Biologie Moléculaire – Université Paris 7 in France. Abdallah is currently working on a research project in collaboration with a French lab in the field of proteomics.



DR. NIDALE DACCACHE

Dr. Nidale Daccache has recently taken on a full-time position as assistant professor in the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences at LAU Byblos, after having taught Arabic part-time since 2005. Daccache received her Ph.D. in Arabic literature from the Lebanese University in 2004. She is an active member of the "Halkat Al Hiwar Al Thakafi," a cultural organization that deals with Lebanese and Arab culture. In 2010, out of concern for the direction of the country, she organized a symposium at LAU that gathered ministers and civil society leaders to address steps needed to create a civil state.



DR. TAMER AMIN

Dr. Tamer Amin joined LAU in 2009 as an assistant professor in the Department of Education, where he teaches science education at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. Before joining LAU, Amin taught in the Department of Education at the American University of Beirut from 2002–2009. His background primarily lies in the sciences, having earned his master's and Ph.D. degrees in psychology from Clark University, and bachelor's and master's in chemistry from The American University in Cairo and Boston University, respectively. Recently, Amin has begun researching the challenges associated with learning science in the multilingual environment of the Arab world.



New Appointments

Dr. Nancy Hoffart Dean, Alice Ramez Chagoury School of Nursing

By LAU Staff

Dr. Nancy Hoffart joined LAU in October 2009 as founding dean and professor at the new Alice Ramez Chagoury School of Nursing, which will welcome its first students in the fall of 2010.

Prior to joining LAU, Hoffart was the dean of nursing at Northeastern University in Boston from 2002 to 2008, and the assistant dean at the School of Nursing of the University of Kansas Medical Center, in Kansas City, from 1997 to 2002.

Hoffart received her bachelor's degree in nursing from South Dakota State University, her master's in nursing from the University of Minnesota, and her Ph.D. in nursing from the University of Virginia. She completed a research fellowship as a Robert Wood Johnson Clinical Nurse Scholar at the University of Rochester from 1989 to 1991.

Hoffart has more than 20 years of experience in nursing education. She has played leadership roles in the development of nursing curricula at all program levels and is an active researcher in the areas of nephrology nursing, nursing practice



models, and education – practice collaboration in nursing.

She has held several editorial positions at notable journals and publications in the field and has received numerous awards for teaching, research and service, including the Nephrology Nursing Education Award from the American Nephrology Nurses' Association, as well as the Distinguished Service Award from the National Kidney Foundation.

Hoffart served as the chair of the Massachusetts Association of Colleges of Nursing from 2005 to 2008 and was a member of the Massachusetts Department of Higher Education's Nurse of the Future Work Group.

Mr. Roy Majdalani Vice President of Human Resources and University Services

By LAU Staff

Mr. Roy Majdalani was appointed Vice President of Human Resources and University Services (HRUS) at LAU in May 2010, leading the areas of facilities management, information technology, human resources, business services, and university protection.

In his role as the VP of HRUS, he plays a key role in overseeing the expansion of LAU as an institution as part of its strategic plan. This encompasses the development of new schools, human resources, services, and facilities at both the Byblos and Beirut campuses.

Mr. Majdalani joined LAU in 2002 as the Director of Information Technology and Systems. In the fall of 2003, he was appointed Assistant Vice President for Information Technology. In addition, he served as the Chief Information Officer of LAU.

In his previous role, Mr. Majdalani led and managed the university's cutting-edge Information Technology Department, overseeing three departments: IT Applications and Solutions, IT Infrastructure and Support, and IT Security.

In addition to his IT responsibilities at LAU, he has been involved in solving HR challenges, helping extensively in the area



of facilities, and providing support in re-engineering processes.

Upon joining LAU, Mr. Majdalani spearheaded the implementation of a university-wide ubiquitous wireless network, making LAU the first complete wireless multimedia university in the Middle East in 2004. He also implemented the Cisco Unified Communications project, providing a platform for collaboration and communication between the two campuses and the New York office.

Mr. Majdalani has an extensive background in IT and executive management, both in the USA and Lebanon. His last position prior to joining LAU was CEO/CFO of the Binary Corporation, an IT consulting company based in Boston, Massachusetts.

Mr. Majdalani holds a Bachelor of Engineering in Computer and Communications from the American University of Beirut, and an M.B.A. from the University of Massachusetts, Boston.

Assad Fouladkar: Making history in Egyptians sitcoms

By LAU Staff



"In Lebanon we don't have a real industry. Every movie is an adventure by itself."

Filmmaker and television director Assad Fouladkar is an adjunct professor of film and TV at LAU. He rose to fame with his 2001 film "When Maryam Spoke Out," which tackled the social and family pressures a woman faces to get pregnant, and which garnered international praise at numerous festivals. Since then, Fouladkar has established a name in Egyptian television and has become a celebrity TV director in Egypt, where he has directed a number of massively popular television series.

In 2009–10, he took a year off from LAU to move to Egypt to direct "Al Rajul w Sitt Banat," [English: "A Man and Six Ladies"]. He will be returning to LAU in the fall of 2010 to teach his popular classes in scriptwriting.

LAU Magazine recently caught up with Fouladkar amid his busy schedule to talk about Lebanese cinema and his background in film and television.

"It's too bad that while I'm Lebanese, I'm more popular in Egypt than here in Lebanon."

Q&A

LAU MAG: What did you study and where?

FOULADGAR: Boston University, M.A. in film, 1989. Lebanese University in theater. I always wanted to study film, but there wasn't anything like that in Lebanon, so that's why I studied theater.

How have you seen your students evolve over the years?

Greatly — some are doing very well in the industry as producers, directors, critics and scriptwriters. You feel students are doing well when you see them in the industry throughout the whole Arab world, and not just Beirut.

What is your professional experience in film and television to date?

"When Maryam Spoke Out" and "Lebanese Talking" — these are the two feature films I have done. I have made many short films, including "God Have Mercy," which won an award.

What are your reflections on Lebanese cinema and the country's fledgling film industry?

In Lebanon we don't have a real industry. Every movie is an adventure by itself.

We need successful films in Lebanon because as filmmakers, we're relying on these to make our next movie. Everyone is relying on each other's films to be successful in terms of generating interest in funding.

When did you get into working in television?

After graduating, when I moved to Australia. Then, when I came to Lebanon, I did a series for Future TV, after which I went on to work in Egyptian television.

What led you to direct your current series, "A Man and Six Ladies," in Egypt?

The first season was done in 2007, and I just finished season eight. It has been the most successful Arab sitcom ever. It's making history in Egypt. My name has become so famous there — not because of my films, but because of this series. It's too bad that while I'm Lebanese, I'm more popular in Egypt than here in Lebanon.

What do you have planned for the future?

Many television projects and a film, which are all in Egypt. At LAU, I'm switching to the role of adjunct professor, so I'll still be teaching two courses a year and keeping my work in the academic environment.

What advice can you give to young people starting careers in film and TV in Lebanon and the region?

Don't just be good; be better. Be creative and be original. In a competitive world, being yourself is the right way, but work on yourself and be creative and original.



Is Lebanese Cinema Defined by the War?

Ten films that have proven seminal in shaping Lebanon's cinema since 1975

By Saba Haider

Film culture in Lebanon has traditionally been dominated by Egyptian and French cinema. Yet independent Lebanese cinema is an extension of Lebanon's well-known tradition in arts such as music and literature. Although, as a small Mediterranean country that has been the victim of much conflict, Lebanon has frequently been unable to provide its filmmakers with the climate and resources to thrive in their trade, the most talented and determined have persevered. Since the late 1970s, some have produced films that have been seminal and have ultimately caused viewers to stop and think.

In her book "Lebanese Cinema: Imagining the Civil War and Beyond," Dr. Lina Khatib, now at Stanford University, asserts the view that the modern Lebanese cinema can best be explored or read in the context of the infamous and nationally traumatic civil war, which started in 1975.

Hady Zaccak is a Beirut-based documentary filmmaker and scholar at Université St-Joseph. Zaccak said he shares Khatib's

view that Lebanese filmmakers have indeed kept "turning back to 1975" as an initiating event for their stories. He also pointed out the difference in how Lebanon is represented by Lebanese filmmakers who grew up here versus those who came of age in the diaspora.

Award-winning director and filmmaker Assad Fouladkar is a lecturer in the Department of Communication Arts at LAU. He rose to fame with his 2001 film "When Maryam Spoke Out." In a recent conversation about sectarianism in Lebanese cinema, Fouladkar said, "This is not an intentional thing. Lebanese films are about Lebanese people, and Lebanese people are about sectarianism."

Here are 10 must-see Lebanese films. They are presented in order of release year, beginning in 1975, to provide viewers with the chance to see the evolution of narrative and style — in addition to the unraveling of history — in Lebanese cinema.

1 "Beirut oh Beirut" بيروت يا بيروت

Director: Maroun Baghdadi
Year of release: 1975

Significance: This film is an enigma, because it is both seminal and mostly unseen by the general public. Maroun Baghdadi launched the "new Lebanese cinema" (which refers to Lebanese film since 1975) with "Beirut ya Beirut," in which he ultimately predicted the outbreak of the civil war, which coincidentally happened the year of the film's release. The fact that the film was made and released in 1975 is noteworthy: "It's a film that somehow, when you see it, you realize there is going to be a war," said Zaccak. "It anticipated the war, and it wasn't shown in Beirut because of the war."



2 "Little Wars" حروب صغيرة

Director: Maroun Baghdadi
Year of release: 1982

Significance: In "Little Wars," three disconnected main characters lead fearless lives despite being in a war zone. The film's revered, tense, and musical score was created by Lebanese composer Gabriel Yared, who went on to achieve fame in French and American cinema. The sheer brilliance of "Little Wars" is in how Baghdadi depicted the raw reality faced by people during the war — not in the trenches, but in their attempts to live and survive their everyday lives — using the war as the underlying reason or excuse to justify their actions.



3 “The Tornado” الإعصار

Director: Samir Habchi

Year of release: 1993

Significance: This is the first film to talk about the war after the war ended, Dakkak noted, explaining that “The Tornado” communicated mainly through images that were a far cry from classical narrative construction. “The importance of the film is that for the first time, also, it was able to attract the audience. The Lebanese had not watched a Lebanese film since a long time, due to the previous bad quality of films, and also commercial films,” said Dakkak.



6 “When Maryam Spoke Out” لَمَّا حَكَيْت مَرِيَمَ

Director: Assad Fouladkar

Year of release: 2002

Significance: This low-budget film is based on a true event that happened in Lebanon, and it experienced a successful run on a smaller-scale festival circuit. In the film, a happily married couple, Ziad and Maryam, start facing growing social and family pressures to have a child. Maryam initially reacts to the pressure with a false pregnancy, but the family’s joy and support is deflated when they realize that she isn’t really pregnant. The film, funded partly by LAU, garnered much praise for its depiction of a controversial social story at the time.

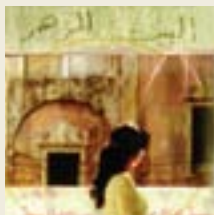


4 “Around the Pink House” البيت الزهر

Director: Joana Hadjithomas
and Khalil Joreige

Year of release: 1999

Significance: This film is about a grand pink house in the fictional Matba’a area of Beirut. The house was abandoned in the early years of the civil war, and more than two decades later, it faced the threat of being destroyed and replaced by a vulgar commercial building. The relationship between the neighborhood residents and the pink house acts as a metaphor for the relationship between the Lebanese people and the country they collectively had to rebuild after the war.



7 “In the Battlefields” “Dans les champs de bataille”

Director: Danielle Arbid

Year of release: 2004

Significance: This film is also set during the civil war, in 1983, the year after the Israeli invasion of Lebanon. The lead character is a rebellious 12-year-old girl named Lina, who lives in war-torn Beirut and couldn’t care less about the war. The adolescent doesn’t get much attention at home, where her mother is preoccupied with life and her father is a destructive gambler. Lina develops an awkward relationship with her bossy teenage aunt’s maid, Siham, and begins monitoring the maid’s daily public, and often private, activities. On the other hand, Siham opens Lina’s mind to what life could be like away from Beirut and the chaos that surrounds them.

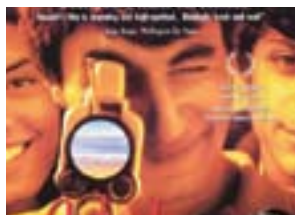


5 “West Beyrouth” بيروت الغربية

Director: Ziad Doueri

Year of release: 1998

Significance: Ziad Doueri’s seminal and beautiful film “West Beyrouth” is popularly described as the best Lebanese film ever made. Audiences all over the world fell in love with the teenage trio of Tarek, Omar and May, who must cope with changing circumstances in their day-to-day life as fighting breaks out between the Lebanese Muslims and the Christian militias. This film constitutes an ingenious example of Doueri’s ability to capture and depict a multiplicity of tensions that came into play during the war — familial, national, political, social, cultural, religious and sexual.



8 “Bosta” البوسطة

Director: Philippe Aractingi

Year of release: 2005

Significance: “Bosta” was the best-selling film in Lebanon in 2006. Although this film doesn’t have a strong narrative, it managed to draw the masses to the cinemas because it was seen as accessible. “Bosta” is set in post-war civil war Beirut; in the film, a prewar high school dabke dance troupe is reformed with its now-grownup original members, who, reflecting Lebanese society, are all of different religions. They travel around the country in a redecorated bus introducing a new, modernized style of dabke called “techno-dabke” to the Lebanese masses. The film shows a scenic, postcard-esque Lebanon (speckled with images of war-torn Beirut), and is filled with song, dance, love stories and colors.



9 “Caramel” سكر بنات

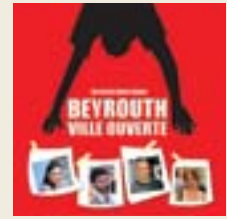


Director: Nadine Labaki

Year of release: 2007

Significance: “Caramel” is a fascinating social and cultural study of five women of different backgrounds who live in postwar Beirut and cope with the struggles of being Lebanese women — and all that reality entails when it comes to love, infidelity, repressed sexuality, traditions, cultural obligations, fear of aging, family pressures. This film premiered at Cannes in 2007 and has had unprecedented international success for any Lebanese film to date. As a testament to its success, it was released in 40 countries and has been hugely profitable, raking in approximately 14 times its production budget of \$1.6 million.

10 “Beirut Open City” دخان بلا نار



Director: Samir Habchi

Year of release: 2008

Significance: As the first feature film made in Lebanon after the assassination of former Prime Minister Rafik Hariri, “Beirut Open City” is an intriguing film with a strong narrative. It takes a creative approach to show a city that is partly being reconstructed after the civil war, but is also filled with people who live in anxiety and fear of those around them. The film is about an Egyptian filmmaker who comes to Beirut to make a film about repression in the Arab world; he advocates the view that Beirut is more liberal and offers more freedom of expression than other places in the Middle East. Despite this, he encounters horrific Lebanese repression and faces numerous challenges socially and politically while writing the script for his film.

An Interview with Ziad Doueiri

With “West Beyrouth,” what drove you to make a film about the civil war?

I don’t know if you can call it a film about the civil war. The war in the film is depicted as just the background. It’s really about the relationship between a couple of friends and how they evolve in that time of upheaval. The film is not strictly about the civil war, but I can also not deny that fact that part of my upbringing happened during that time when the civil war started. It’s also about other things going around, how those teenagers grow to mature, how they become aware of the fragility that war leaves, and also having fun. Wars tend to be portrayed in a very dramatic sense, but I was trying to say in the film that the war that happened was a license to do anything because all the rules break down. The war brings chaos, and when you’re young you take advantage of that chaos to discover what you want — your sexuality, to have fun, and to be a regular teenager. My perspective on it was to look at it from the lighter side, the humorous side. I remember growing up, and it was not so traumatic. It had difficult moments, but overall I was just a regular teenager.

How much of the film was circumstantial and how much was intentional?

When you write, you have to take historical fact and make it work for your story. You don’t take your story and make it history. So a lot of things that were happening in terms of historical fact, I had to mesh them into the story line. I made the film start the day the civil war starts, and it ends with the arrival of the Israeli army in 1982.



How would you say the film was received in Lebanon?

I guess it was really well received, because there was no moviemaking going on in Lebanon at the time, and the language I was using in the film was unheard of — because I was using a lot of curse words and making reference to sexuality. There was some humor to it and a quick dynamism to it. I personally did not think that the film would work, and in fact I didn’t even think that it would come out. But you always hope that it would, because you want to touch as big an audience as possible — and then when it came it was a surprise. The film got sold a lot, all over the world. At that time when filmmakers were struggling — it took me three years to find financing for that film — it did really well.

Artist Profile



Mohammad El Rawas was consulted for the drawing of the new LAU seal by Mind the Gap, the design and communication agency behind the university's recent identity reengineering.

A landmark Lebanese artist: Mohammad El Rawas

By Saba Haider

Over the past 30 years, Mohammed El Rawas has established quite the name for himself as a contemporary Lebanese artist.

El Rawas' mixed-media paintings are unconventional in style when compared to the work of other artists of his generation in Lebanon and in the region as a whole. His work hardly personifies a Middle Eastern or Arab identity or subject, and if it does, it's likely by happenstance. El Rawas does not believe there is such a thing as a pan-identity when it comes to contemporary Arab art. His work encompasses a multiplicity of themes, ideas and concepts.

"I look at the act of making art as if it's a continuous activity of mankind," said El Rawas, who works with various media, including oil and acrylic paints, assemblages of three-dimensional structures meticulously constructed out of Balsa wood, aluminum and copper wires, and ready-made resin figurines. "What other artists did in the past, I take as a precedent of the whole process of making art," he added.

He explained that the concept of time underlies much of his work, noting, "The present holds aspects of the past. There is this constant attachment to what has happened before."

El Rawas only exhibits his work approximately once every three years, but he has shown his art extensively around the world, in both solo and group exhibitions. His work also featured as part of an international group exhibition, "Convergence: New Art From Lebanon," at the American University Museum, in the Katzen Arts Center, in Washington, D.C.

He describes his art as a "repertoire of experience, souvenirs, memories and cultural intake."

El Rawas explained: "I don't know really what makes me interested in a topic or theme when I start a painting — because in many instances, the theme is not achieved until the very end [of the painting]." The benefit of the developmental evolution of his painting is the fact that it often enables him to "discover" themes, he said. "Many times a theme is deviated into another throughout the process."

El Rawas acknowledged that his work is very personal to him, and said his paintings are a "personal reflection on aspects of our time and our lives, which does not rule out our relation to the past."

Previously, El Rawas taught art at the Lebanese University's Institute of Fine Art from 1981 until 2009, and at the American University of Beirut's Faculty of Architecture and Design from 1992 until 2004. His book, "The Art of Rawas" (Saqi Books, London, 2004), edited by Heather Reyes, is available at most major art booksellers.



Entering its second year in 2010–2011, the School of Architecture and Design (SArD), which unified the architecture, fine arts and design departments, has proven to be an asset for LAU. Since the establishment of SArD in 2009, students and faculty have benefited from value-enhanced learning through increased interdisciplinary studies.

Here, the academic leaders who have spearheaded the establishment of this new school — the dean, assistant dean and department chairs — share with LAU Magazine their visions and future plans.

The School of Architecture and Design at LAU: An integral education for the professionals and artists of the future

By LAU Staff



DR. ELIE HADDAD
Assistant Dean, SArD

“During the 2009–2010 year, we have been establishing the academic structure of the school, developing the School Bylaws and other policies necessary for the proper functioning of SArD and its various programs.

We are working to reach a consensus about the academic mission of SArD and its priorities, while establishing a better physical and intellectual framework to enable it to further expand in the future.”



DR. MAROUN DACCACHE
Chairperson, Department of Architecture
and Interior Design

“The curriculum offered by our department aims to give students a comprehensive education based on a humanistic approach to the discipline. Faculty-student interaction is conducted on an intensive basis whereby our faculty encourage students to develop their individual interests and strengths, with a constant stress on fundamentals and a basic commitment.

The unification of all programs under one school has provided our students and faculty with an environment of open academic exchange. This approach has introduced a new dimension to academic research through the collective work of inter-academic programs specifically designed to favor studies on contemporary design.”



RACHED BOHSALI
Chairperson, Department of Fine Arts
and Foundation Studies

“The department has benefited from the creation of SArD, as it has been moved to its natural environment, and all the disciplines there interrelate in harmony and have the common denominator of creativity.

This new amalgam with the miscellaneous design fields (architecture, interior and graphic design) allows our students to widen their scope horizontally by mixing with others from different design majors.

Interactivity also encourages designers to minor in fine arts, hence widening their creative abilities and giving them a richer and a more colorful approach to their practice.

With our new vision that encourages knowledge of design and computer graphics, the doors will open wide for them to jobs in many fields.”





DR. ELIE BADR,
Acting Dean, SArD

“Over the past year, SArD established itself as one of the major schools at LAU. Its enrollment witnessed the highest increase ever, and addressing this, faculty recruitment has hit an all-time record, evidenced by hiring three tenure-track faculty and six visiting full-time faculty.

Over the year ahead, SArD will keep on consolidating all of its programs. SArD has initiated the establishment of new programs at the undergraduate and graduate levels, and will also be creating a five-year strategic plan in order to focus on growth while upholding the highest standards.

This includes expanding the architecture program accreditation — currently accredited by the French Ministry of Culture — to also be accredited by the National Architecture Accrediting Board (NAAB).”



SILIA ABOU-ARBID
Co-Chair, Department of Fine Arts
and Foundation Studies

“Providing access to specialist studies in design and the visual arts, our curriculum strives to cultivate the individual imagination and offer the best 21st-century learning solutions to enable students meet the challenges of their future studies.

The incorporation of new media and technologies where ‘direct action’ makes design thought visible, allows students to benefit from an exceptional educational experience current with contemporary trends in thought and technology.

SArD has created a dynamic trans-disciplinary arena for training sharp individuals, dotted with a broad outlook into design and visual arts. By consolidating the educational means with the resources of the various departments, SArD enables a panoptic environment that fosters scholarly inquiry and exchange.”



RANDA ABDEL BAKI
Chairperson, Department of
Graphic Design

“The Graphic Design department offers a rich multicultural design experience. Our faculty has worldwide academic and professional experiences, promoting an international design outlook with a Middle Eastern heritage and producing a special blend of East meets West.

By unifying all the design programs at LAU, SArD has created a multidisciplinary design environment where faculty and students learn, collaborate and create innovative academic endeavors.

Our pedagogical approach is based on promoting growth and innovation, both personally and academically. Our students and graduates will have a flexible mindset, allowing them to tackle tomorrow’s design challenges with an out-of-the-box approach while adhering to sound design principles.”



TAREK KHOURY
Co-Chair, Department of
Graphic Design

“Graphic design is a multifaceted and ever-evolving discipline. Our program offers students the option to choose a specific emphasis in print media or digital media, enabling us to provide a greater diversity of courses to accommodate the needs of today’s market.

We are now moving in a more cross-disciplinary and cohesive manner. More than ever, we are striving to build a new school with a primary objective: to graduate students with excellence in design.

LAU’s graphic design program offers students facilities and faculty that foster an environment of personal, academic and artistic growth. Our students are taught to be intelligent visual communicators with a creative vision and know-how to tackle the design problems of today.”

Interview with Said Khalil '92

Communication Arts Studio Supervisor, LAU Byblos



By LAU Staff

Said Khalil, the Communication Arts Studio supervisor at LAU Byblos, joined the university in 1992. In his first year with LAU, he initiated and established the studio on the Byblos campus.

Khalil boasts a tremendous amount of experience and expertise, which he gained working hands-on in the television and film industries throughout the region. His technical know-how makes him a great asset for students and faculty in need of the studio and related services.

An alumnus of LAU himself (when it was BUC), Khalil completed his B.A. in communication arts and media at the university. He then went on to do his M.F.A. at the Université Saint-Esprit de Kaslik (USEK), where he had the chance to meet international professionals in the field.



Khalil has directed more than 1400 hours of live events and more than 600 recorded and live musical, cultural, social, political, athletic, theatrical and entertainment events. These include "Kalam El Nass," a famous talk show in Lebanon, the Middle East and Europe; "Kel Youm Malyoun," one of the biggest-ever game shows produced in the Arab world; and "Anta Wal Hadath," a live political program, rated in the top three political shows in the Middle East for six years.

He has served as a consultant to many Arab programs, as well as to Abu Dhabi TV. He also participated in the Arab Media Forum 2010.

Khalil recently spoke with LAU Magazine about his work and the changing industry.

Q&A

LAU MAG: How has the study of communication arts changed in Lebanon and the region over the past 10 to 15 years?

KHALIL: Communication arts is related to technology, hence it develops every minute, not to say every second. Universities in this regard are not responding as quickly as desired to the rapid development, so as to train students on the most recent and advanced technologies and ways of communication.

What is your professional experience in film and television to date?

As a senior director for TV stations, with whom I work on an on-call basis, I have stayed in continuous contact and kept up-to-date with the most advanced technologies. I am always exposed to new developments through international training and seminar sessions, which I attend as part of my work with those TV stations and media firms.

What do you have planned for the future?

My plan is to establish a private media and production company, in addition to writing, directing and producing my first long feature film.

What are some challenges that young people starting careers in the communication arts currently face?

The communication arts involve many areas. The challenges that young graduating students might face are related to the requirements of the market, which have most likely not been covered during their academic studies. Those graduates face the difficulties of acquainting themselves to the needs of the media market in all its sectors.

As for job opportunities, I personally believe that there is always the possibility for people to find work. Despite the financial difficulties that many of those companies have faced in the last two years due to the global crisis, the media is still growing at a remarkable rate.





Instructor Melissa Plourde Khoury with children

LAU Partners with Toufoula

By Marc Abizeid

Some partnerships seem to develop more naturally than others. Take, for instance, LAU and Toufoula, a local NGO dedicated to supporting children with cancer.

Founded in 2005 by a handful of LAU students and alumni, Toufoula has an ongoing affinity with the university — and that relationship was illustrated with colorful paints and crayons in a series of five art workshops held at LAU Beirut in April. The workshops brought together a total of 22 child cancer patients, who learned new art skills from university professors and staff and had a chance to experience the campus environment.

One of the objectives behind the workshops, conceived by assistant professor of biology Dr. Mirvat El Sibai, was to create a healthy, therapeutic space for the children to play and interact.

"I hope it makes a difference," El Sibai said. "I think it helps them relieve some of the stress they have to deal with in the hospitals."

"It's important that you keep a connection with the children," said Fida Safieddine, a Toufoula member who has built relationships with many of children and their families through her frequent visits to hospitals and participation in other Toufoula events.

El Sibai secured the human and material resources to execute the project by reaching out to faculty members with a background in the arts. LAU's Health Services Office recruited students from the Red Cross Club to participate.

The workshops were split up into categories. The children snapped pictures after learning the basics of using a camera, in a session taught by photography professor Bassam Lahoud on April 13.

An array of art supplies and games filled a playroom during the second workshop, on April 22, in which the children painted, colored, molded dough figurines and challenged one another to board games.

LAU fine arts faculty member Betina Badr led the third workshop, on April 23, where the children painted self-portraits on canvases that stood nearly as tall as they did.

On April 29, LAU ceramics instructor Samar Mogharbel welcomed the children into the ceramics lab, where they learned to spin a pottery wheel to make bowls.

The last workshop of the series was held on April 30 with Melissa Plourde Khoury, assistant professor of graphic design, who brought along one of her senior students, Joy Jeha, to help the students construct collages.

"I was impressed with each of their own unique artistic abilities, approaches and creativity," Plourde Khoury said. "The children opened my eyes to their amazing imaginations, and in doing so they also welcomed me into their worlds and won over my heart."

Plourde Khoury was hardly the only one taken aback by the children. Nine-year-old Fida, whose hair was just beginning to grow back after chemotherapy, left every person in the room speechless with a stunning Arabic dance performance during one of the workshops.

Then there was 10-year-old Samer, who surprised student assistants with his striking wit and skill at art, while revealing a soft spot in his heart for Safieddine, for whom he tailored a poster.



One of Toufoula's "Dream Rooms" at a Beirut hospital

LAU Hosts First New York City Gala Dinner

By Greg Houle



*Lebanon's ambassador to the US
Antoine Chedid, LAU President
Joseph Jabbra and judge Jeanine Pirro*

LAU hosted its inaugural gala in New York City at the University Club in Midtown Manhattan on April 30, marking the first such event in North America in the university's history.

Proceeds from the event will be used to help establish the Sarah Lanman Huntington Smith Fund, which will fund scholarships and support for LAU's Institute of Women's Studies in the Arab World.

More than 260 guests, including alumni and longtime supporters, attended the event and purchased over 20 tables, as well as individual tickets. Some offered in-kind donations to help make the fundraising gala a success.

The university benefited from the great generosity and support of both individual donors and companies, including Middle East Airlines, Lebanon's national airline.

Members of LAU's Board of Trustees and Board of International Advisors also traveled to New York to support the event, coming from as far away as Texas and California.

The gala provided an opportunity to celebrate LAU's rich heritage, including its ties to Sarah Lanman Huntington Smith, the American woman who, in 1834, started the first school for girls in the Ottoman Empire, which was the precursor to LAU.

In addition to honoring the university's legacy, the event recognized the service of two of Lebanon's most experienced diplomatic voices. This year, Lebanon's ambassador to the United States, Antoine Chedid, and Lebanon's ambassador to the United Nations, Nawaf Salam, were honored for their service to Lebanon and given awards by LAU's president, Dr. Joseph Jabbra.

Both diplomats paid homage to LAU while accepting their awards. Ambassador Chedid noted the quality of the university's graduates, saying: "We noticed with pride that more and more LAU graduates have assumed positions in various branches of the [Lebanese] government and in economic institutions." Chedid also praised the university's resilience, noting how it established temporary campuses during the civil war in the 1980s in order to keep teaching students.

The evening was hosted by an American of Lebanese descent, judge Jeanine Pirro, a long-serving politician and public servant in New York State and a noted television personality. Pirro — who became the first woman in New York's Westchester County to become its chief prosecutor — proved an effective and amusing emcee, recounting her recent visit to Lebanon while keeping the large crowd entertained throughout the evening.

The university is as committed as ever to expanding educational opportunities for young people in need — just as Sarah Smith did by providing Ottoman girls with an education when few others would—and LAU's endowment received a tremendous boost from the event, enabling the university to continue in Smith's footsteps. Although LAU regularly holds events such as this one in the Middle East, the first gala in North America underscored LAU's appeal and standing with an influential community.

THE LEGACY & THE PROMISE CAMPAIGN

LAU Dedicates Business Dean's Office to Sheikh Essam Fayez Makarem

By LAU Staff

The School of Business at LAU dedicated a suite, comprised of the offices of the dean and his assistant, on the Beirut campus to philanthropist Sheikh Essam Faye Makarem, during a public ceremony on June 15, in gratitude for his support and a generous donation of \$65,000 to the school.

At the event held outside the new Essam Faye Makarem Suite on the top floor of the Business Building, speakers praised the prominent business leader for his continued support of education in Lebanon.

"We are gathered here today to honor a person who embodies the gift of giving," said LAU President Dr. Joseph Jabbra during the ceremony, which was organized by the university's Development Office in Beirut.

"What is a better, a more noble cause than the cause of education? We are privileged today to honor Sheikh Essam Makarem because of his commitment to academic institutions," Jabbra added.

"To name a space at the School of Business is not an easy decision as one needs to keep in mind what serves best the interests of our university, our school, its students, and our community," said Dr. Tarek Mikdashi, dean of the Business School in Beirut.

Makarem said he chose to support LAU's School of Business with the hope that the students will go on to help ease "economic and financial hardships" that many countries are suffering from.

"It is our duty to support institutions that promote and encourage education, and from which future generations will graduate, with the vision to perhaps offer solutions to today's economic ailments," he said.

"I have chosen LAU to materialize my belief in such support," he added, "[because] this university has proven to be one of the world-class institutions of higher education which is providing our new generations with a second-to-none education, allowing them to become achievers in their careers and leaders in their society."



Sheikh Essam Faye Makarem delivers a speech at the ceremony

GOAL \$65 Million

RAISED \$44,695,705



The unveiling of the room



THE LEGACY
& THE PROMISE
LAU CAMPAIGN FOR EXCELLENCE

Retired Lebanese-American Professor Unites with Long-lost Relatives

By LAU Staff

In June, 2008, Dr. Lawrence Aleamoni, a retired professor from the University of Arizona, in the United States, was invited to LAU to evaluate the Department of Education as he had done dozens of times serving as a consultant to over 100 universities across the globe.

But unlike his other trips outside the United States, the visit to Lebanon presented an opportunity to discover his roots, as both his mother and father had emigrated from the country, but had never brought their son back to be introduced to his relatives.

Curious as anyone in his position would have been, Aleamoni began asking questions and sought help to find his relatives.

"We had friends, faculty and administrators at LAU all trying to locate any known family members, with only vague ideas of where my mother and father had lived in Lebanon," he said. "Unfortunately, we were not successful."

One year later, Aleamoni was again invited to LAU by the Department of Education, this time to lead a week-long workshop



Aleamoni with extended family

on research methods and statistics. Having discovered the name of his mother's village, he was more optimistic about his chances of locating his relatives this time around.

During a meeting over coffee with the chair of the Department of Education, Dr. Ahmad Oueini and his wife, Katia, Aleamoni discovered that Katia came from the same village as Aleamoni's mother, Jebayel Aaqar. Within 10 minutes, Katia was able to locate Aleamoni's last living uncle.

The following day, Aleamoni paid his uncle a visit, and soon after, met other members of his extended family.

"This was an overwhelming experience as I had never met any of these family members before," he said. "This reunion would not have been possible without the dedicated help of the LAU faculty and administration, as well as a great deal of luck!"

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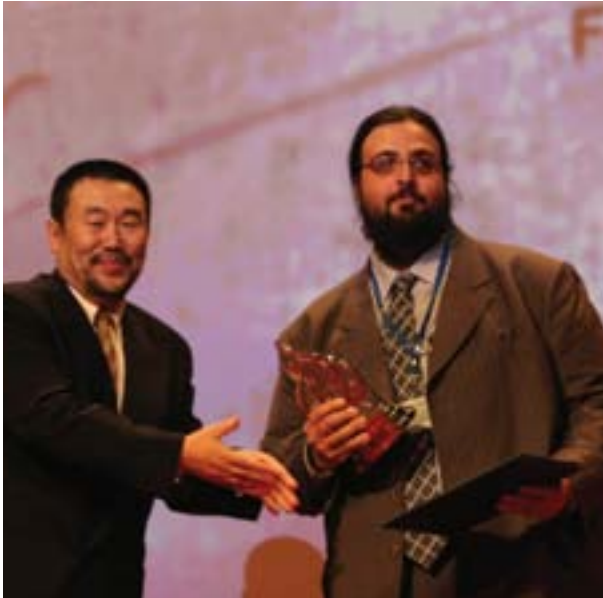
Once a year, make a gift of any amount to the LAU Annual Fund. Every gift makes a difference—including yours.

Alumni Profile



Walid Fakherddine '97: Cinema and the path to knowledge

By LAU Staff



Walid Fakherddine, a 1997 graduate with a B.A. in communication arts from LAU (formerly BUC), puffs on a cigar and leans back on a green armchair in the basement office of his Achrafieh-based film and television production company, 4 Productions.

Scattered on the floor around us are several of Fakherddine's students from AUST, where he teaches film and television.

Fakherddine started 4 Productions after returning to Lebanon, upon completing his Ph.D. in cinema and film studies at Cardiff University in 2004. He runs the firm with fellow alumni Lina Khoury and the actor Talal Jurdi, and the trio recently created a 14-episode drama series for television.

LAU Magazine caught up with Fakherddine to talk about how LAU influenced his career path.

"Our university was a place where we could learn about other people. It was there that I learned that I am not here to be taught, but to be given the path of knowledge."

Q&A

LAU MAG: How did LAU inspire you to start your career?

FAKHERDDINE: When I joined BUC, it was as a computer science major. I was hooked up with theater because my sister was also a BUC student majoring in interior design, and she was doing a set for a play. I helped her with the set, lights and stage. This was the period before the boom in film and television.

At the time, BUC was the space that gave you the liberty to express yourself. Three things made life special: The first were the classmates. We worked together and competed with each other. We used to sleep in the theater and fight to work overnight. Secondly, the teaching staff. They treated us as colleagues and expected us to be professional.

Finally, the university environment made life special. We were the first generation starting life just after the civil war ended, and we had lived our entire childhood and adolescence during the war. Our university was a place where we could learn about other people. It was there that I learned that I am not here to be taught, but to be given the path of knowledge.

Was there anything that specifically helped push you into a professional career?

Basically I went into professional performance while I was still a student. What we performed at LAU's theaters was worthy of being performed in commercial theaters, and it was.

During university, an article about a play I directed about Che Guevara was published in the mainstream press. I loved the fact that suddenly I became someone recognized, and I started directing plays outside university.

So what led you to move to the U.K. in 1999 to do an M.A. in media studies?

I asked for the advice of many of my professors from BUC, and they told me it would be a waste of time to do an M.A. in theater because I was already working in theater. They encouraged me to pursue graduate studies in something relevant but broader. I had strong interests in film as well, and after finishing my M.A. in media, I immediately did my Ph.D. in cinema and film studies.

What is one film you've worked on at 4 Productions that stands out for you?

In 2007, we went to Iraq and made "Pencils Without Lead," about children in Baghdad and their experience of education in the context of war. The film was selected as Best Short Documentary in the Al-Jazeera International Documentary Film Festival in 2008. It was the only Arab film to win any prize in that festival.



Alumni Events

March

Desert Camp Outing by LAU and AUB Alumni in Bahrain

The LAU Alumni Association – Bahrain Chapter in collaboration with American University of Beirut alumni organized a Desert Camp Outing on Friday, March 19, 2010. Over 300 alumni, along with their friends and families, enjoyed the day.



Byblos Alumni Chapter Dinner

The Byblos Chapter of LAU's Alumni Association held a dinner at Il Sorrentino restaurant in Antelias, on March 26, 2010. Over 200 alumni and friends enjoyed the evening.



Kuwait Alumni Chapter Desert Open Day

The LAU Alumni Association – Kuwait Chapter held its annual Desert Open Day on Friday, March 5, 2010 at Al Ghanim International. More than 400 alumni as well as their friends and families took part in a day full of activities for both children and adults.



Oman Alumni Chapter Annual Dinner

The LAU Alumni Association – Oman Chapter held its 3rd annual Gala Dinner in the presence of LAU President Dr. Joseph Jabbra at the Grand Hyatt, Oman, on Thursday, March 4, 2010. More than 300 alumni and friends were in attendance.



Southern California Alumni Chapter Gathering

Members of the Southern California Alumni Chapter organized a dinner and officer nominations were part of their reorganization.



April

Abu Dhabi Alumni Chapter 17th Annual Gala Dinner

The Abu Dhabi Chapter of LAU's Alumni Association held its 17th Annual Gala Dinner on Thursday, April 15, 2010 with over 550 alumni and friends in attendance. The event took place at the Beach Rotana Hotel and Towers, Abu Dhabi. Lebanese singers Aline Lahoud and Issam Braïdy provided the entertainment for the evening.



Alumni Relations Office Lecture on Emotional Intelligence

"Emotional Intelligence – Part II," a lecture organized by the Alumni Relations Office, was presented by Dr. Ahmad Oueini, chair of LAU's Department of Education, on Friday, April 23, 2010 in the Business Building of the Beirut campus. The lecture attracted more than 160 alumni and friends, and a reception followed.



Beirut Chapter "Kids Power" Show

The LAU Alumni Association – Beirut Chapter held a special show for children entitled "Kids Power" on Thursday, April 1, 2010. Members of Beirut's Alumni Chapter Committee distributed sweets to over 400 children of alumni and their friends, who enjoyed the fun-filled program.



May



4th Annual Alumni Business Networking Reception

LAU's Alumni Relations and Guidance offices co-organized the 4th Annual Business Networking Reception, with HR directors of prominent businesses, graduates of the last 10 years, in addition to LAU VPs, deans, and chairpersons in attendance. The cocktail reception was held in the Rotana Grand Ballroom of the Gefinor Rotana Hotel in Beirut on Tuesday, May 11, 2010. The event served as an informal venue for graduates to meet with company representatives, swap business cards, and discuss job market and career opportunities. It was also an opportunity for LAU officials to get feedback on the performance of LAU graduates in the market.



LAU Alumni Basketball Game

On Friday, May 14, 2010, a basketball game, organized by the LAU Alumni Relations Office, was held at the Beirut campus between the Beirut and Byblos Alumni and Varsity Teams. LAU President Dr. Joseph Jabbra started the game by throwing the first ball. Alumni and friends enjoyed a good game, and the Byblos team was victorious.



Bahrain Alumni Chapter – Water Fun under the Sun

The "Water Fun under the Sun" day was held on Friday, May 28, 2010 at the Lost Paradise of Delmon Waterpark. The event was organized by the Bahrain Chapter of LAU's Alumni Association. Alumni, in addition to their friends and families, enjoyed a wonderful day in the sun.



Beirut Alumni Chapter Dinner

The Beirut Chapter of LAU's Alumni Association held its annual Gala Dinner on Thursday, May 20, 2010 at Le Particulier restaurant in Beirut. Over 150 alumni and friends were in attendance.



Damascus Alumni Chapter Annual Gala Dinner

The Damascus Chapter of LAU's Alumni Association held its annual Gala Dinner in the presence of Dr. Jabbra at the Sheraton Damascus Hotel – Ommayad Ballroom. Held on May 20, 2010, the dinner featured renowned musician Guy Manoukian and his band. Over 300 alumni and friends enjoyed the evening.



Detroit Alumni Chapter Dinner

The Detroit Chapter of LAU's Alumni Association held a dinner in the presence of Dr. Elise Salem, Vice President for Student Development and Enrollment Management at LAU, on May 18, 2010.



Senior Students Orientation Activity

LAU's Alumni Relations and Guidance offices co-organized the 4th Annual Business Networking Reception, with HR directors of prominent businesses, graduates of the last 10 years, in addition to LAU VPs, deans, and chairpersons in attendance. The cocktail reception was held in the Rotana Grand Ballroom of the Gefinor Rotana Hotel in Beirut on Tuesday, May 11, 2010. The event served as an informal venue for graduates to meet with company representatives, swap business cards, and discuss job market and career opportunities. It was also an opportunity for LAU officials to get feedback on the performance of LAU graduates in the market.



Alumni Reception in South Lebanon

In an effort to reactivate the South Lebanon Alumni Chapter, LAU's Alumni Relations Office arranged a reception in South Lebanon, on Friday, May 28, 2010, at Saida Resthouse. Over 50 alumni and friends were in attendance.

Riyadh Alumni Chapter Dinners

The Alumni Association – Riyadh Chapter organized two dinners/shows attended by more than 500 alumni on May 5 and May 6, 2010 at the Lebanese Embassy. Renowned artist Bassem Feghali entertained the shows.



June



Alumni Relations Office Lecture on Body Language

"The Essentials of Body Language," a lecture organized by the Alumni Relations Office, was given on Friday, June 4, 2010 in the Irwin Hall Auditorium, Beirut campus. Mr. Imad Mekahal presented the lecture, which attracted more than 150 alumni and friends. Mekahal, a body-language consultant to various public figures, offered advice for improving work and social exchanges. The lecture was received positively by all attendees, and was followed by a reception.

First Alumni Get-Together in Cairo

In an effort to launch the Egypt Alumni Chapter, the Alumni Relations Office had its first Alumni Dinner in Cairo on Wednesday, June 2, 2010 at Al Katamiya Heights. Twenty-five alumni and friends were in attendance.



NY/NJ Alumni Chapter Picnic in Central Park

On Saturday, June 19, 2010, the NY/NJ Chapter combined efforts with the American University of Beirut NY Chapter, holding a picnic in Central Park for alumni and friends.

Alumni Profile

Philip Bajjaly '86: Creativity with no boundaries

By LAU Staff



Beirut-based independent filmmaker Philip Bajjaly graduated from LAU in 1986 (when it was BUC) with a B.A. in communication arts and an emphasis in radio/TV/film, but he got a head start on his career years before completing his undergraduate degree. Bajjaly first found work in broadcast television as an assistant producer, then moved on to jobs as a camera operator and producer — steps that helped lead him to his current career as a documentary filmmaker.

Bajjaly's path initially took him to London in 1986, where he pursued a master's degree in filmmaking at the London International Film School. Upon his graduation in 1988, he returned to Lebanon, where he started working as a news broadcast producer for the prominent German television network A.R.D., remaining with the company for seven years.

Over the next 15 years, Bajjaly worked on a number of notable documentaries — including the famed two-part film "The Price of Freedom," about the exchange of prisoners that occurred between Lebanon and Israel — and earned much acclaim.

In addition to his work in documentary, Bajjaly has also worked with a number of universities in the region, including LAU and AUB, to make institutional videos highlighting various developments and success stories.

LAU Magazine recently spoke with Bajjaly about his current projects and how LAU shaped his career.

Q&A

LAU MAG: What kinds of projects are you working on these days?

BAJJALY: I am working on a series of documentaries within the Arab world, which are exploring cities. I am looking at a development project in southern Lebanon, in terms of how it enabled the citizens of a village to stay where they are.

How did LAU prepare you for your career?

We had a string of international professors here at the time who ignited a certain self-initiative in us as a group. We stood out at the time — people still remember us today. What they really made us understand is to rely on ourselves — to do things ourselves and not to rely on what the university is telling us to do. So in the middle of the 1980s conflict in Lebanon, we were out there shooting and capturing what was going on.

How did LAU push you to enter your career?

The professors pushed us, and I felt I needed to fulfill my promise to these teachers and bring something back. The teachers had a lot of expectations of us, and that is a push. It makes us want to go out there and do things.

What inspired you to do an M.A. in the U.K.?

I wanted to go into the film business, and I had a drive to educate myself more. Coming out of LAU was good, but it wasn't enough. I had the drive to go out there and learn more. It was essential to go out and see something else, especially back then, when Lebanon was going through a hard time and it seemed that there was little hope for us here.

What are some films in your career that have stood out for you?

"The Big Trade Off" was a big hit in the Arab world. Other things I've enjoyed doing for Al-Jazeera have been very rewarding. "Immortal Memory," about the 2006 Lebanese-Israeli war, has done very well. "Home," which I recently finished, is the first film about mental illness in Lebanon.

Alumni Profile

Rana Raouda Toriel '83 Paints a bright world

By Tracy Chemaly



“My studies at BUC allowed me to reveal my real personality – the artist in me.”



Rana Raouda Toriel began her painting career without a brush. Rather, it was her heart that became her first artistic tool. “When I was about six years old, I started imagining the Bekaa Valley in terms of its shapes, forms, colors and textures,” said the fine arts graduate of LAU (formerly BUC), who now lives in France.

What began as a childhood fascination with a simple process—the way in which paint gets mixed with water when a painter dips a paintbrush to clean it—has resulted in an artistic career that has led Toriel to exhibit her work in shows from Beirut, Dubai, Jordan and France, to the U.S., Italy, the U.K. and Switzerland.

After graduating in 1983, Toriel went on to complete her master’s in the U.S. Her work is currently part of permanent exhibitions in Beirut, Rome and Dubai, and it stands in the private collections of the Banque Audi art collection, Sursock Museum, as well as the Hermes art collection in Dubai.

Being born and raised in Lebanon provided Toriel with perhaps her greatest realization. “Growing up during the ugliness of the war left space for a huge imagination,” she explained. “I realized that beauty existed no matter what. As long as I had a window from where I could see the sky, there was no limit to my imagination.” The green of the cedars, the red of the tiled roofs, the blue of the Mediterranean and the pink and orange colors of the sunsets allowed her to replace the gray memories of war with optimistic colors and brushstrokes of light.

Bright color dominates Toriel’s work, mostly painted in various tones of the same hue. This fascination with color has been a major influence since early on in her career, when she

came across one of Odilon Redon’s paintings in the National Art Gallery in Washington, D.C. That painting contains a red stain, which Toriel described as an “honesty and purity of color,” and which continues to fuel her creativity to this day.

Another great influence was one of her BUC lecturers, Ms. Irani. “I owe a lot to her,” said a grateful Toriel. “She was generous with her knowledge and showed me the real dimensions of art.” She remembers Irani forcing her to repeat the same relief seven times. “It made me cry then, but now you can imagine how much I thank her for having believed in me,” she said, laughing.

“I remembered how, as students, we often wondered how people got to exhibit their work, how they sell and how they evolve. Finally I had the answer: time, patience, seriously hard work and belief in oneself”

Toriel added that studying at BUC, whose campus she called a haven, was a vital experience for developing her art. “My studies at BUC allowed me to reveal my real personality – the artist in me. When I returned to visit after an absence of several years, I remembered how, as students, we often wondered how people got to exhibit their work, how they sell and how they evolve. Finally I had the answer: time, patience, seriously hard work and belief in oneself.”

Alumni News



Suad Freji Dirani (A.A.'45, B.A.'53) has written a book in Arabic entitled "Iyem Kenna Zghar" ("The Days We Were Children"), which describes the lifestyle in Baalbeck about 90 years ago. The signing of her book took place at St. Joseph University and was attended by the President of the LAU Alumni Association Mrs. Leila Dagher.

Siran Jizmejian (A.A.'48) married Rev. Abraham Jizmejian in 1949. They had five daughters and two sons. In 1969, they received an invitation from the Armenian Evangelical Church in Toronto, which they accepted. In 1992, her husband passed away. She is the proud grandmother of nine grandchildren.

Aida El Awar Porteneuve (A.A.'50) lived in Venezuela for 10 years, until 1965, when she moved to the U.S. She has four children, all of whom are married and living in the U.S. She has acquired a double major in French and English with a minor in Portuguese and Italian while working at California State University. She is presently retired in Long Beach, California, and is involved in community work while continuing her studies.

Leila Salman Younes (B.A.'70) is happy to announce the recent engagement of her daughter, Lama, to Mounir Georges Corm.

Mona Hatoum (A.A.S.'72) has received many prizes and is recognized internationally for her work as an artist. She teaches in Berlin and has earned an honorary doctorate from the American University of Beirut, in addition to her degree from LAU (then BCW).



Talal El Khalil (R.C.D.'83) was named the Donald M. Kendall (DMK) Award Winner of the Year by PepsiCo International, for developing the beverage business in Iraq. PepsiCo International CEO Saad Abdul-Latif recognized the winners of the highest honors in PepsiCo's international system, which included El Khalil.



Saada Wahab Halimeh (A.A.'87) is the owner of Nour Nursery and Berthe School in Aley. She is also a member of Yasa, and has a program on Voix Du Liban every Sunday. She has been elected as a new member for the municipality of Aley.

Maha Khouzami El-Azar (B.A.'88) is the owner of the Awladouna Center for children with special needs. She is married to Camille El-Azar and they have two children, Fred and Jawad.

Sunday N. Chukwudi (M.B.A.'90) currently works and lives in Lagos. After working for more than 10 years with a non-bank financial institution, he is now an administrator of a private primary and secondary education institution. He seeks collaboration from interested alumni or institutions in the areas of educational exchange programs and learning resources.



Abdel Salam Knio (B.S.'90) worked as a senior manager for Mideast Data Systems UAE. He is currently a managing partner at Information and Communication Technology W.L.L. in Doha, where he resides. He and his wife, Rouwaida Flayfel, have three children.

Nada Lutfi (B.S.'90) obtained her Teaching Diploma in science education from the American University of Beirut in 1995, and is currently a science teacher. In August 2009, she married a U.K. citizen, and she now resides in the U.K.

Tania Saba Maazrani (B.A.'91) joined the creative department of Saatchi & Saatchi in 1992. In 1998, upon moving to California, she co-founded a technology wholesale business with her husband and took charge of the administrative and financial aspects. Two years later, they returned to Lebanon, where Maazrani co-founded a cable TV guide in Beirut for a large publishing group. She is now director of Berytech Technology & Health, a spin-off located in Ashrafieh. She is also the proud mother of three sons.

Talal Farah (B.S.'92) established his own business called Glow Glass, which specializes in designing and producing high-quality 3D laser-engraved signs and motives for interior and exterior products, in addition to high-end residential products.

Michel El Am (B.S.'93, M.B.A.'03) has recently been promoted to general manager of Byblos Bank S.A.L., where he has been working since 1999. He is married and has three children.

Rasha Hassanieh Tabet (B.A.'93) is married to **Ramsey Tabet (B.S.'97)**, and they would like to announce the birth of their son, Tameem, who is now 14 months old.



Camille T. Barkho (B.S.'94) is presently the regional manager of an American company, a position that includes providing solutions for banks in combating both money laundering and the financing of terrorism. He is married and has three children.

Hassane Ghalayini (B.S.'98, M.B.A.'00) and his wife, Nadine, have recently welcomed the arrival of their baby son, Adam.

Hassan Nasser (M.B.A.'95) is currently the general manager of Addison Bradley Al Arabiya, which handles risk management, insurance, and reinsurance consultancy. He is married to **Dania El Hajj (B.A.'93)**, and they live in Riyadh with their two children and newborn son.

Loula Ali Ezzeddine (A.A.'96) currently lives in Kuwait.

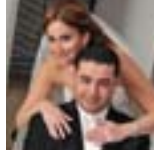
Marwan Abdul-Malak (B.S.'00) celebrated the second birthday of his son, Hisham, on May 26.





Faysal Awar (B.S.'00), moved to Mohamed Yousuf Naghi Motors in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. He is currently working as the sales and marketing director in Jeddah, where he and his wife, Olya, now reside. Having been an active member of the Dubai Alumni Chapter for seven years, Awar intends to join the Jeddah Chapter as well.

Zeina Nadim Arnous (M.B.A.'00) married **Wissam Najib Abou Alwan** on December 28, 2009.



Rami Zein (B.S.'01) has been working with SMLC-Pepsi as a senior sales manager since 2006. He married Rola Chbaklo in 2009, and they are proud to announce the birth of their daughter, Rhea, in January. Zein is currently at LAU pursuing his M.B.A., which he expects to complete in 2012.

Bilal Aranout (B.S.'02) recently joined the Four Points Sheraton Le Verdun as the guest services manager, after working at the InterContinental Hotel Group in KSA. He and his wife, **Zeina Zein (B.A.'09, M.A.'09)**, welcomed a baby daughter, Yara, on January 28.

Maya Kanaan (B.S.'02) has been working at Brand Central, a division of M&C Saatchi, as a brand developer/senior designer. She is married to Rachad Al Chami, and they are the proud parents of a baby son named Dany.

Jamil Maktabi (B.S.'02) is a sales executive for Hassan Maktabi & Sons. He is married to Leen Ghazy.

Ghina Sinno (B.S.'02, M.B.A.'04) lives in Abu Dhabi and has two children. She is not working at present.

Bassel Nemer (B.E.'02) graduated in December 2008 with a Ph.D. in civil and coastal engineering from the University of Florida. He works on projects in both the U.S. and Lebanon. He is currently at the University of Florida. Dr. Nemer is preparing publications for the Journal of Water Resources Research. He is the current president of the LAU Alumni Chapter in Florida. He met his wife, Silvia Moukhtara, through a meeting he organized as the president of the Lebanese American Society (LAS).



Ezzat Osman (B.S.'03, M.B.A.'06) worked in Qatar in 2007, and then moved to Brussels in 2008, where he now resides with his wife, Hiba. He established a pharmaceutical company named Danos International, which specializes in exporting medicine to European, African and Middle Eastern markets.

Amir Sabra (B.S.'03) started working in the media field after graduation, and opened an outdoor media agency named SABRAGROUP. On a personal note, Amir was married in June 2009 and currently lives in Aramoun.

Maysa Tannir (B.S.'03) is currently an internal auditor and assistant head of the department at the Lebanese Canadian Bank. She was engaged to Nasser Hamed on May 10.



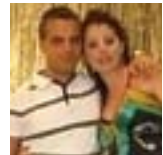
Jean Paul Chami (M.A.'04) has pursued an M.A. in peace and conflict studies from the European Peace University in Austria. He is currently the peace-building and conflict-resolution program manager at the Forum for Development, Culture, and Dialogue, a local Lebanese NGO working on the regional level.

Bouchr Dabaj (B.Arch.'04) received a certification as an expert from the Arbitration Chamber at the Regional Centre of the Federation of Engineering Institutions of Arab countries in 2008. He is currently focusing on his own projects and managing others in northern Lebanon and Beirut. He is married to Rida Fares, and they welcomed a daughter, Lucciana, in May.



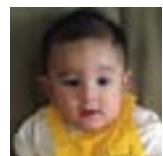
Ahmad Ghandour (B.S.'04) works for Thomson Reuters as a business development manager, which allows him to cover the investment and advisory space in the Middle East and North Africa. His wife, **Rima Rahal (B.S.'01)**, is pursuing her master's in political sciences and international affairs, and currently works as a senior purchasing supervisor for Inkript.

Fady Hammoud (M.B.A.'04) is married to Farah Moussawi and the couple is expecting their first child. He currently works in Qatar as an operation manager for Azadea Group, and has recently been promoted to the position of operations manager to direct five departments within Azadea Group in Bahrain.



Mariane Maasri (M.A.'04) currently lives in Valencia with her husband, Fouad Osseiran, and their two children, Shireen and Rayan. She is working on obtaining her doctorate in education from the University of Leicester.

Sama al Qaddumi (B.A.'04) returned home to Kuwait after graduating from LAU. She worked for the Gulf Bank of Kuwait for one year and was married in 2005. She gave birth to a baby boy, Fahed Sulaiman al Qenai, in February. She also graduated from the Maastricht Business School of Kuwait with a pre-M.B.A.



Leila Hijazi Jaafar (B.A.'05) married **Ghazi Jaafar (B.S.'00)** in 2006, and they have a son, Karim. She currently works at the Central Bank of Lebanon (BDL) Beirut as the assistant manager for the head of IT.



George Kassar (B.S.'05, M.B.A.'08) has been working since 2005 as a performance analyst at Fransabank S.A.L. In addition, George has been working as an adjunct faculty member at the Modern University for Business and Sciences since 2008. He and his wife, Carla, welcomed a baby daughter, Anastasia, on March 30.



Nadine Hassan Tajideen (B.S.'05) worked for her family's business in Africa until her marriage in 2008. Our condolences go out to Nadine, who lost her father in the January 2010 plane crash of Ethiopian Airlines Flight 409 off the Lebanese coast.

Fares Ghattas (B.S.'06) is currently working in Doha as a supply supervisor for Qatar Petroleum, a governmental oil and gas company.

Ali Chehade (B.A.'07) is currently pursuing an M.S. with an emphasis on new media and media management as part of a Fulbright Scholarship to Southern Illinois University Carbondale. He will be interning at NBC Universal headquarters in New York City this summer.



Firas Rabih Maad (B.S.'07) worked for two years at the National Commercial Bank (NCB) in Saudi Arabia. He has currently been offered the opportunity, as part of the King Abdullah Scholarship, to go to the U.S. and pursue his master's in finance. On a personal note, Maad got married last month.



Elissar Zaki Zarwi (M.B.A.'07) recently founded a new marketing and communications company called Comma Hub. Since March, she has held the position of head of Marketing and Corporate Communications for Fransabank. She is also a lecturer at LAU, the Hariri Canadian University, and several Union of Arab Banks workshops in the Arab world.



Khaled Abdul Ghani (B.S.'08) has been working in Jeddah, KSA, for the past two years as a sales and marketing representative for Hassan Ghazi Ibrahim Shaker. He recently got engaged, and hopes to get married during the summer of 2011.



Diana Fidaoui (M.A.'08) has held teaching positions at LAU, the American University of Beirut, and the Hariri Canadian University. She has recently been nominated to receive the Fulbright Foreign Language Teaching Assistant Award. During the 2010–11 academic year, Fidaoui will be teaching at the University of Kentucky.

Chirine Jrab (B.S.'08) recently obtained her master's degree in leadership and organizational studies from Fresno Pacific University in California and is currently teaching undergraduate students there.



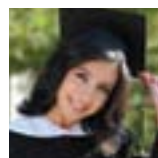
Manal Naboulsi (B.S.'08) moved to Dubai directly after graduation and began working in the media. She is currently with Optimum Media Direction, as a media planner handling the Jumeirah Group Account.

Saad Sraj (M.I.S.'08) is currently in the process of opening a restaurant in Ashrafieh named Frida, which will offer Lebanese cuisine with a Mexican twist. He is simultaneously pursuing his M.B.A.

Rima Bechwati (B.E.'09) is currently the technical manager at ELTEK.

Samir Haidar (B.S.'09) is currently working at Rayzcom, an IT company, as a sales executive.

Karim Kuzbari (B.A.'09) is currently the business development manager at Viscom-Investments LTD.



Lara Mikhael (B.Pharm.'09) is currently working for Novartis Pharma AG in drug regulatory affairs for the Levant countries.

Mohammad Morad (B.S.'09) has been working in the family business, an exchange company named Moradco for Exchange, which handles a multitude of financial processes. He serves as both the manager and director.

Rana Shehadi (B.A.'09) is presently working as a project assistant on a program supported by UNIFEM.

Remembered with Love

Arpiné Yenovkian Hanna (A.A.'47)



She was born April 14, 1924 in Acre, Palestine, to Armenian parents who had emigrated from Turkey. She was a graduate of The American Junior College for Women in Beirut, Lebanon. In 1949 she married Edwin B. Hanna and together they served 31 years as Presbyterian missionaries in Lebanon. She continued her church work after moving to KY in 1985, where her husband pastored churches in Middlesboro and Winchester. She had lived in Bowling Green since 2001 and was a member of The Presbyterian Church.

She was preceded in death by parents Levon Yenovkian and Josephine Najarian Yenovkian and a brother, Levon.

A private family service has been held and a memorial service will be held at a later date.

Expressions of sympathy may be made to a charity of one's choice.

Survivors include her husband, Rev. Edwin B. Hanna of McCalla, AL; three sons, C. Philip Hanna of Columbia, KY and his friend Natalie Lund of Glasgow, KY, Edwin A. Hanna and his wife Kim of Bowling Green, KY, and Richard B. Hanna and his wife Lisa of Bessemer, Alabama; a sister Leonora Y. White of Florida; four grandchildren, Parker Hanna, Owen Hanna, Dawn Purdey and Valerie Bell; three great-grandchildren; and several nieces and nephews.

WHY I GIVE BACK



Ziad Cheikh '81

LAU: What year did you graduate from LAU?
1981

What degree did you receive?
B.A. in Business Management

Which campus did you attend?
Beirut campus

Where do you live now?
Saudi Arabia

What is your occupation?
Partner and general manager at the first company to introduce electronic retailing, TV shopping, telemarketing and fulfillment in the Gulf, North Africa and the Levant countries [MENA region]. Products are also sold in Turkey, Greece, Armenia, Kazakhstan and Iran. The distribution network is the largest Direct Response Television in the Arab world and operates four 24-hour channels fully dedicated to TV shopping, in addition to acquiring airtime on other channels.

Why do you give to LAU?
After graduation, students should not forget the academic and social role the university offered them to reach where they are in their business and life. As such, it becomes the alumnus' responsibility to help universities provide proper education for new generations to become effective elements for society, whether they are working in their home countries or abroad. I am honored to take part in any contribution that will help introduce good elements to our society. LAU is constantly working to offer its students additional facilities and higher education, and I encourage all previous students to assist in any way they can.

THE LEGACY
& THE PROMISE
LAU CAMPAIGN FOR EXCELLENCE

Aminy Audi, a long-time friend of the Lebanese American University, cares about quality. As President of L. & J.G. Stickley, she is responsible for maintaining the high standards associated with one of one of the best-known names in furniture manufacturing.



AMINY AUDI
IS THE LEGACY AND THE PROMISE.

She also shows her dedication to quality in higher education by serving on the State University of New York Board of Trustees and by being a loyal donor to LAU's Annual Fund.

For more information, please contact:

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