

LAU magazine

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& ALUMNI BULLETIN

ELIE SAAB

Lebanese fashion's seminal influence
soon to partner with LAU

Tailor Soldier Seamstress Spy

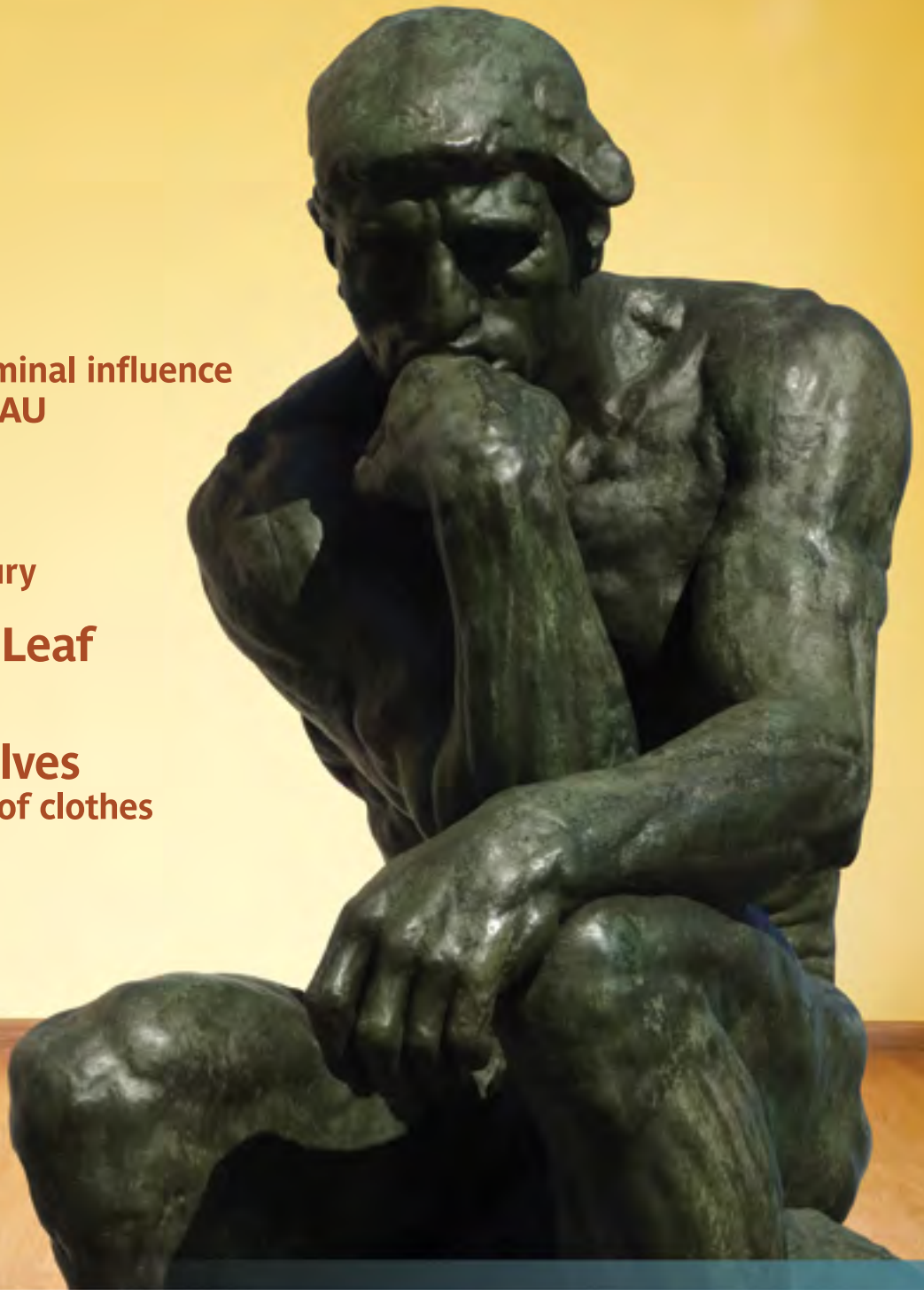
Beirut's sartorial century

More Than a Fig Leaf

Fashion and religion

Looking-Glass Selves

The social psychology of clothes



What to Wear



At LAU, diversity is not skin-deep.

It goes to the heart of what we do.

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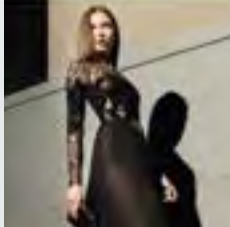
Embark, Explore, Discover



What to Wear

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ELIE SAAB

Lebanese fashion's seminal influence soon to partner with LAU

Elie Saab reinvented Lebanese *haute couture*, spawned legions of imitators and generations of apprentices, and became a household name in the West to rival those of the major European designers. He is now partnering with LAU's School of Architecture and Design to create a fashion design program. Mehrnoush Shafiei reports.

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The history and intrigue of Beirut's sartorial century

Exuberant and culturally hybrid, Beirut fashion has fascinated the region and the world since the late 19th century. Muriel Kahwagi explores the links between the city's inimitable style and its troubled, colorful history.



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More Than a Fig Leaf

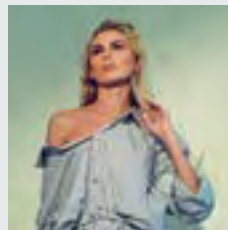
The overlapping iconographies of fashion and faith

From the stark elegance of nun's habits to the geometry and mystique of the veil, religious dress has long inspired the visual imagination of designers in both the Eastern and Western. Mehrnoush Shafiei traces the sinuous seams between the secular and the sacred.

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Cultural consciousness and clothes

Fashion acts as a mirror, reflecting society, psychology and everything in between. Natalie Shooter speaks to designers, commentators and academics to trace the roots and branches of contemporary Lebanese trends.



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From the President's Desk

Dear friends,

Fashion may seem by definition ephemeral, distant from the concerns of a university, where what is studied is what is lasting. Seen from another angle, however, fashion — for all its dynamism and changeability — offers a kind of X-ray moving picture into a society's core values. Clothing is among our oldest inventions; if with the advent of the wheel man began to tame, tailor and reshape his environment for his own purposes, clothing gave him similar dominion over something more subtle: his identity, his projection of selfhood, his very sense of self.

From our central place in the sericulture of the late 19th century (when billions of silk cocoons found their way from the mulberry trees of Mt. Lebanon to the dressmakers' studios of Paris) to the proliferation of fine men's tailors in the Beirut of the mid-20th century, to the rapid rise of a distinctive Lebanese haute couture in the early 21st century, the evolution of modern Lebanon has been graced by a beguiling history of fashion.

In that history we would see a creative blending of Ottoman sartorial opulence with the more muted sleekness of Western dress; we would see an inventive use of abstract form, pattern and color drawing inspiration from Lebanon's rich religious heritage; we would see a ceaseless interweaving of multiple strands of tradition into unique forms of modernity. In this history we would see, above all, our entrepreneurial transformation from a nation of producers and suppliers to one of designers and creators.

Cultivating the creativity and ingenuity of the Lebanese people is indeed core to our university's mission, and it is in this spirit that we years ago set out to build — and will soon unveil — a bachelor's degree program in fashion design, to be housed in the School of Architecture & Design. The program will draw on the general design expertise of existing faculty, as well as on the research and practice of new faculty specializing in fashion, and it will be fully incorporated into the school's foundation program.

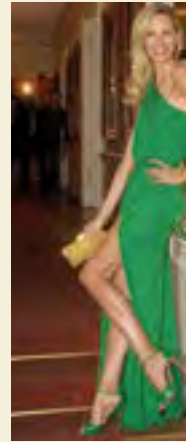
With the renown of our existing programs in graphic design, interior design, architecture, fine arts and communication arts, it is unsurprising that so many LAU alumni have already gone on to build successful careers in the world of fashion. Our university has earned its reputation for "designing designers" — for turning out graduates with the confidence, energy, resourcefulness and uniqueness of vision to distinguish themselves in the creative professions. What the new program will do is turn LAU into a kind of conservatory, a greenhouse of talent for the next generation of household names in Lebanese and international clothing design, a world in which we have already begun to make our mark.

The issue of LAU Magazine you hold in your hands is at once an exploration of the economic, historical and sociological implications of fashion, a tribute to the rising star of Lebanese design, and finally a foretaste of what LAU's own fashion program will offer.



Joseph G. Jabbra
President





FEATURE

ELIE SAAB

Lebanese fashion's seminal influence soon to partner with LAU

By Mehrnoush Shafiei and Curtis Brown

At top, from left to right: Katy Perry, Milla Jovovich, Megan Fox, Emma Stone, Karolina Kurkova, Elizabeth Banks, Gwyneth Paltrow



When residents of Lebanon give foreigners a tour of Beirut, the itinerary generally begins downtown, with a survey of its most important landmarks — Martyrs Square, the clock tower, the Roman baths, the Riad el Solh statue, the Khalil Gibran gardens — and as often as not, the ELIE SAAB building. Even travel guides place it prominently in their list of “things to see” in Lebanon.



It may seem quirky to find a fashion-designer’s showroom and corporate offices — built to “showcase the entire universe of the ELIE SAAB brand,” in the words of his publicist — set among monuments to Lebanon’s Roman past, its revolt against the Ottomans, its first prime minister, its poet laureate. But Saab in his own way has become something of a national icon.

In another sense, however, the modern five-story Saab building is subtly at odds with its environs. The romance and allure of Lebanon before its civil war is legendary, and you might expect the king of Lebanese fashion to trade on that. But if much of Beirut’s reconstructed downtown is a nostalgic evocation of pre-war glamour, the gleaming seat of the Saab empire is something else: a bold invocation of the city’s post-war promise.

Unlike many among Lebanon’s creative class associated with this revitalization, Saab did not wait out the war from abroad. He came of age in the thick of it, and worked right through it. He opened his first studio and held his debut show in 1982, the year of the siege of Beirut and the long war’s bloodiest months. He was still only a teenager, and a homegrown and largely self-taught one at that (he had studied briefly at a design school in Paris the previous year), but his genius was readily recognized, and he rose quickly to national and regional acclaim.

By the mid-1990s Saab was a byword among Lebanese and Gulf society elites, and had made serious inroads in the West, which traditionally prefers its designers to be French, Italian, or sometimes English. His name had been spoken with hushed reverence in Hollywood circles for years, but in 2002 — when Halle Barry wore one of his gowns to the Academy Awards — the hush burst into a roar of acclaim. Barry made history that night as the first black woman to win Best Actress, but as she delivered her acceptance speech all eyes seemed to be on her dress, still consistently ranked among the top Oscar outfits of all time. Television coverage of the ceremony gave more airtime to Saab than to any other designer, and his status as couturier to the stars has remained unrivaled ever since.

Saab is, in short, both a local folk hero and a global star. His signature style — at once inimitable and widely imitated — is marked by opulent elegance and intricate embroidery, a touch of extravagance many see as characteristically Middle Eastern, though Saab himself tends to shrug off facile attributions of influence. On the other hand, it is surely no coincidence that his

Lebanon’s premier couturier, Elie Saab, working on his latest collection



Saab with his wife Claudine and sons Elie Jr., Selim and Michel, in their Paris home

look has found such a home in Hollywood: the sumptuous fabrics, sequins and sinuous lines of his coveted evening gowns are equal parts fairy tale and cosmopolitan chic, capturing femininity at its most sophisticated — as well as its most fantastical. “His dresses are the softly whispering stuff of luminous dream visions,” wrote an awestruck *Vanity Fair* journalist last year.

It is tempting to speculate that this very element of dreamlike wonder was formed in reaction to the ravages of war. “There was no joy in people’s lives — beauty did not occupy anyone’s mind at the time,” he recalls. “Maybe an accumulation of sorrow in my surroundings pushed me to do something beautiful.”

Whatever spurred it — caprice or inspiration — the urge to create came early. The child of a wood merchant and the eldest of five, little Elie was something of an enfant prodige. At the age of nine he picked up a sewing kit and began making clothes for his sisters. “It was intuitive,” he says simply. He had already decided he would not live an ordinary life: “I did not want to be another person going through the motions. I wanted to succeed,” he says.

And succeed he did. At 48, Saab has boutiques all over the world, and leads a team of 190 employees running a global fashion empire. Beyond his haute couture and ready-to-wear lines, Saab has created exquisite shoes, bags, jewelry, and perfume, collaborated with MAC cosmetics, and designed the interior for the BMW X Series and three mega yachts.

Branching out in this way is natural for Saab, fervent as he is about all aspects of design. Here he is on perfume bottles: “I wanted something simple. Straight lines, the rigor of a cube...and as always, light as the overarching theme.” Unsurprisingly, he came home from the 2012 FiFi Awards — the “Oscars” of the fragrance industry — with awards for Best Fragrance, Best Bottle Design and best advertisement.

Saab is a member of France’s exclusive *Chambre Syndicale de la Haute Couture*, and was the first foreigner to be invited to present by *Italy’s Camera Nazionale della Moda*.

Collaboration with LAU

It may seem striking that a singular, self-fashioned genius with little to no art-school experience would be so keen to work with LAU to establish a pioneering school of fashion in Lebanon, but Saab has his reasons.

“Any opportunity related to young people — and passing down to them my insights — I could never pass up,” he says. “I am grateful to Dr. Jabbra for entrusting me with this,” he adds, referring to LAU’s president. Jabbra, for his part, says Saab’s involvement in the program will ensure its quality and seriousness, and “provide students with an opportunity to dream,” which is key to LAU’s mission.

Jabbra further emphasizes that the study of fashion — far from constituting a narrow vocational training — should take its place among the humanities in a liberal arts education. “It’s part of culture, part of anthropology and art history — this is a subject with meat on it,” he says. Saab — who has been central to LAU’s plans for a premier fashion program from the start — concurs. “When we began discussing this, I felt that LAU could be the first university to grant students a truly *academic* diploma in my field,” Saab recalls.

Having received final approval from the government, the fashion design program is set to open its doors in fall of 2013. The program was created by an advisory board headed by Saab, and will take its place within the School of Architecture and Design alongside programs in fine arts, architecture and interior design, and graphic design. Students enrolled in it — like those enrolled in parallel programs — will pass first through the school’s foundation studies courses.

“Fashion has placed Lebanon on the international scene, and LAU’s program will provide our youth with yet another career opportunity,” says SARd Interim Dean Dr. Elie Badr, who spearheaded the introduction of the program as well as recruitment for the advisory board. “Our engagement with Elie Saab attests to our commitment to excellence.”

In speaking about the program, Saab is mindful of his enormous influence on generations of future Lebanese designers, whom he ardently wants to see remain in the country, contributing to its cultural and economic revitalization. “It really saddens me when I hear of parents sending their children to New York or London or Brazil to continue their studies,” he says.

With his deeply anti-sectarian love of country — “Lebanon is my religion” — Saab believes this flight of talent compromises not only the family unit but also the nation’s creative and economic foundations. A serious fashion school at home, he adds, also means accessibility to a larger socioeconomic segment of society (not everyone can afford to send their children off to Europe or Asia), which in turn means cultivating a larger pool of talent.

Creative talent in fashion may be relatively uncommon, he says, and genius rare indeed, but “there are so many career tracks — from marketing to communications to branding, production and journalism — in the world of fashion,” which is, after all, a business and a profession as well as a calling.

Past and prologue

From Saab's office on the top floor of his building, expansive windows provide panoramic views of Beirut's lavishly rebuilt downtown. Looking out on the skyline, memories of the war are all but erased in a mirage of sandstone and pastels.

Asked bluntly about the effects of the war on his creative formation, he pauses, then responds, with a mixture of candor and obliqueness, about the poise of those who accept the cards they are dealt.

"Behind every success lies a challenge. There was little joy in people's lives. Beauty was not on people's minds. Therein lay the challenge," he says crisply.

"I felt like LAU could be the first university to grant students a truly academic diploma in my field."

—Elie Saab

In Lebanese women, Saab saw strength, resiliency and a willingness to adapt; they became his muse. More than most designers, he likes to dress "real" women, and his knack for tapping into and drawing out their inner selves — making it extravagant, orchid-like — has become an integral if elusive part of his signature style. Lamenting the fashion world's preference for "very skinny women, with mannequins' measurements," Saab told a reporter he would "never use a model as a hanger for my dress. Because first of all it's not an image I would want for a woman — and a woman's beauty is in her femininity, in the form that God gave her."

Though he does not consciously pursue Middle Eastern motifs, many fashion commentators are enthralled by what they perceive to be an Oriental sensibility — a "fusion of oriental and occidental style, a warmth of colors, mostly nudes and pastels with a soothing effect and Mediterranean connotations," says Saab with a shrug.

On the other hand, the Western press' designation of him as "the Lebanese designer" is one he whole-heartedly embraces. "It gives me great pleasure to be seen in that light, whether by foreigners or fellow Lebanese. If Lebanon's image is bound up with mine in their eyes, I am flattered and honored."

Saab, however, no sooner acknowledges the honor than modestly waves it off, stressing instead the collective role creative and entrepreneurial Lebanese have played around the world, working together to project a better image of Lebanon.

Acknowledging his role as a sort of *paterfamilias* to generations of young Lebanese designers, Saab exudes pride and satisfaction in their increasing international prominence. This pride is intimately connected to his hopes for the fashion program at LAU.

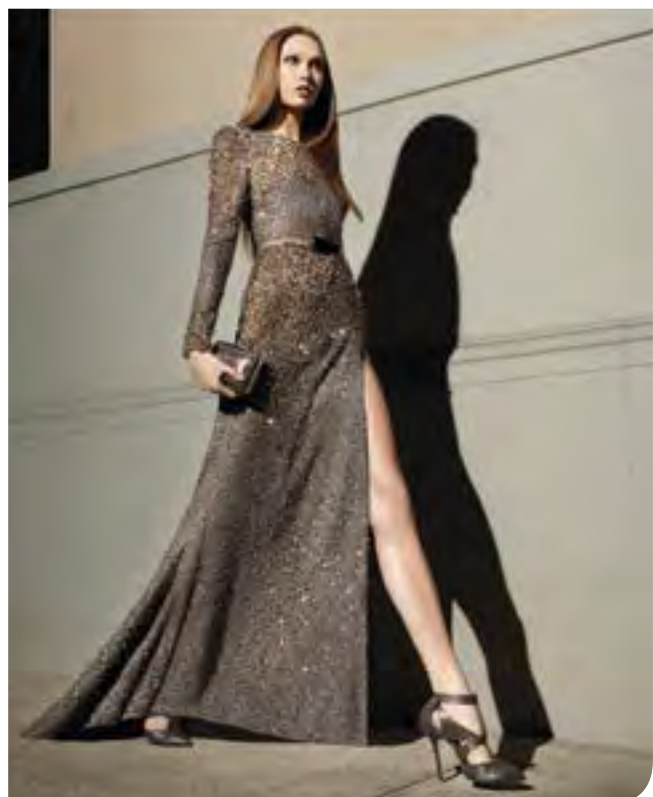
"It is going to be on par with — or even greater than — the universities abroad," he says with measured optimism.

Indeed, expectations for the program are as great as Saab's past successes. In addition to retaining Lebanese talent within the country, the ultimate goal is to attract top budding designers from Tokyo, Milan and Paris to come and study fashion in Beirut.

If you build it, they will come, goes the saying. The visionary ambition shared by Saab and LAU promises to make Fall 2013 the most hotly anticipated season of all. ■



The corporate headquarters of ELIE SAAB in downtown Beirut



From Saab's Autumn/Winter 2012-13 collection



On the International Stage

LAU Beirut hosts 14th International University Theater Festival

By Muriel Kahwagi

LAU is known for its distinguished theater and performing arts program and vibrant student theater scene, but even by its own standards July 10–14 were heady days. Around 130 communication arts and performing arts students from countries all over the region — including Egypt, Tunisia, and Morocco — converged at LAU Beirut to participate in the 14th International University Theater Festival.

Organized by the Department of Communication Arts, the annual five-day festival featured a total of 12 student-theater productions, acted and directed entirely by university students.

A Crime in a Hospital, directed by LAU communication arts student Mazen Saad El Din, was a crowd favorite.

Based on the play by Lebanese poet and playwright Issam Mahfouz, it follows Issam Mahfouz himself as he visits five mental patients, in an attempt to investigate a crime that happened in the mental institution where they reside.

"Working with people from different countries was truly memorable," said Saad El Din. "This is the first time I've received feedback from people from such diverse backgrounds — it gives you a whole new perspective."

The festival also included musical performances, several short film screenings, and a non-student performance by the International Association for Creation and Training in Egypt.

"This festival's success is entirely thanks to the students' seriousness, commitment, and determination to organize and be part of it," said Dr. Mona Knio, associate professor of theater and chairperson of the Communication Arts Department, at the event's opening ceremony.

In addition to directing, acting in and staging the plays, LAU students were also responsible for technical tasks crucial to the staging of the productions, including set construction and management, and light- and sound-checking.

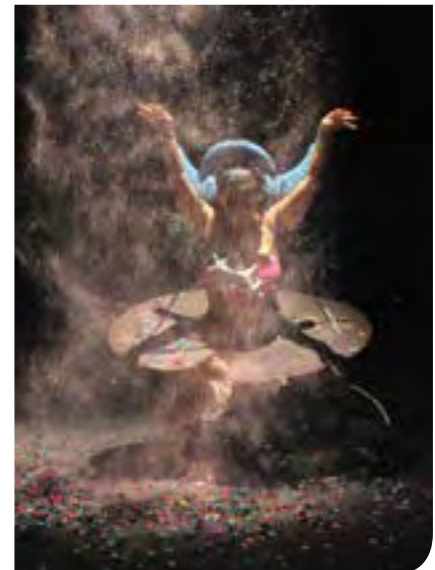
"Meeting the theatrical troupes from abroad and helping them in any way set the festival's tone — one of humility, sincerity and commitment to cultural value," said LAU Communication Arts student Alia Samman, who acted in both The Cage and Victoria Station, and directed the latter.

LAU theater coordinator Hala Masri agreed, saying the event offered an excellent opportunity for students from various countries, cultures, and backgrounds to exchange ideas about art and theater.

Masri pointed out the popularity of the festival's daily "chat room," an informal forum allowing participants to discuss, analyze, and evaluate the previous day's performances.

"You'd be surprised how much you can learn from the insights of people from other educational institutions and countries," she said. "Viewing your work through fresh eyes helps you to gain perspective, and make improvements and modifications for next time."

Dean of the School of Arts and Sciences Dr. Philippe Frossard's implored all those involved to "follow your heart — if you are passionate about what you do, you will succeed." Judging by their palpable energy, they didn't need much persuading.



1| "The Cage", an LAU student production, was noted for its elaborate set

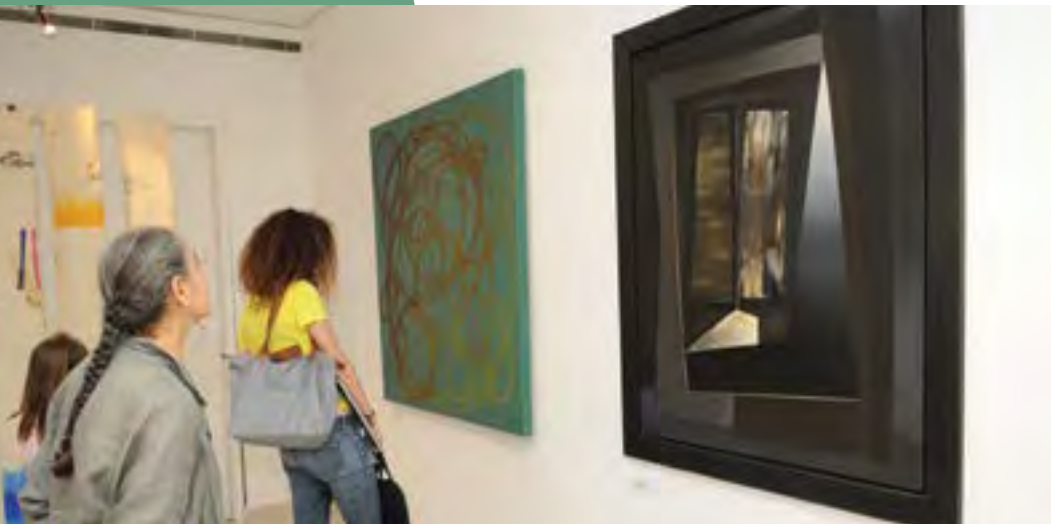
2| A scene from "He Who Is Born Is Stuck", a Beirut Arab University student production

3| LAU students in "The Chair"

First Fruits

Fine Arts and Foundation Studies Department holds first annual faculty exhibition

By Linda Dahdah



The exhibition reflected the influence of various schools, approaches and currents testifying of the richness of LAU's art scene

In a country with no real art museum, universities like LAU constitute the *de facto* national art institutions, and the Department of Fine Arts and Design faculty's exhibition *Primitia* — “first fruits” in Latin — created a buzz among art aficionados.

Hosted by the School of Architecture and Design at LAU Beirut from May 29 to June 7, the eclectic exhibition offered visitors a kind of crash course in modern art, drawing large attendance from the public as well as local journalists.

“This kind of event is important both in challenging faculty to develop their studio work and increase their production, and in stimulating generations of Lebanese to appreciate and participate in cultural life,” said Elissa Raad, visual artist and art teacher.

The 100-square-meter Sheikh Zayed Hall in the Beirut campus' fine arts building presented the work of 25 faculty members, some exhibiting for the first time. In media ranging from video, photography and ceramics to abstract painting and sculpture, the exhibition highlighted different styles, patterns, shapes, movements and lines.

“This event showcases our faculty's talent and diversity in terms of theory, technique, skill and generation,” said Dr. Elie Badr, interim dean of SaRD.

Exhibiting artist and President of the Lebanese Artists Association Chaouki

Chamoun concurred with Badr that *Primitia* “gives an idea of the richness of the school's art scene,” and extended the point beyond university walls. “*Primitia* reflects the influence of various schools, approaches and currents in Lebanon — and indeed worldwide.” Chamoun, who is fine arts program coordinator at LAU Beirut, is a significant figure in the international art world.

LAU Provost Dr. Abdallah Sfeir expressed profound admiration for the artists in his remarks at the opening ceremony. “Our artist-professors serve as a model for our students, who are in turn allowed to have a critical eye on the work of their mentors,” he said.

Noura Nassar, a first-year student in interior design, contemplated with curiosity a painting by her professor Ghassan Ghazale: *Knot/3okda*, a 124 cm x 124 cm canvas with multicolored dots of different sizes on a green and red square background, dominated by a black knot-like drawing with Arabic calligraphy inscriptions in glittery silver and gold.

“It reminds me of projects we've discussed in class,” she said. “Now I



Students contemplate the work of their teachers who exhibited together for the first time



understand where my teacher comes from, how he thinks.”

Alongside a human-sized, sculpted teck-wood column by Naim Doumit, visitors could contemplate a white and grey marble phoenix sculpture by Nabeel Basbous before moving to a table linearly displaying 40 white and blue porcelains of various sizes, by Samar Mogharbel.

According to Bettina Badr, faculty member and exhibiting artist, *Primitia* establishes a new relationship between students and faculty. “We are usually the ones assessing their work; this time it’s the other way around. We are now awaiting their reactions and feedback,” she said, adding that the dynamic breaks barriers not only with students but also between faculty members themselves.

Chamoun agreed. “As colleagues and friends we constitute the school’s art scene, and too often we collaborate without actually knowing each other’s work,” he added.

Rached Bohsali, chairman of the fine arts department, noted that the school’s annual exhibitions “always promoted student work — the product of their

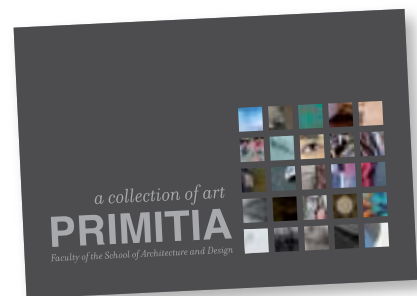
intellectual interactions, hard work and exchange with their mentors — and it is only fair now to recognize our faculty.”

“That is how we decided to launch *Primitia*, the first-ever exhibition bringing together the work of our painters, architects, graphic designers, ceramists, photographers and others who share a common basis in art,” he added.

SARd has committed to making the exhibition an annual event.

“It is our mission to show the community and the world that Lebanese artists are a special breed that can produce art incorporating different philosophies, themes and cultures,” Badr said.

Primitia featured the work of Randa Abdel Baki, Celia Abou Arbid, Bettina Badr, Zeina Badran, Nabeel Basbous, Rached Bohsali, Chaouki Chamoun, Naim Doumit, Bassam Geitani, Ghasan Ghazale, Carlos Ghossoub, Mona Jabbour, Abdallah Kahil, Donna Kdouh, Bassam Lahoud, Fadi Mattar, Samar Mogharbel, Ziad Naccache, Gretta Naufal, Christina Rahme, Albert Saikaly, Arwa Seifeddine, Hanibal Srouji, Yasmine Taan, and Afaf Zurayk.





FEATURE

Tailor Soldier Seamstress Spy

The history and intrigue of Beirut's
sartorial century

By Muriel Kahwagi and Curtis Brown

In early November of 1990, just weeks after the last major battle of Lebanon's 15-year civil war, fashion designer Loulwa Abdel-Baki unveiled her fall/winter collection, "Kalabsha," at the St. George Hotel. The historical symbolism of the setting was, shall we say, multifaceted. St. George had been Beirut's most glamorous hotel before the war, ground zero for the celebrity jet-set, only to become ground zero in a different sense — the center of the war's first major front, with rocket and artillery fire raging between the iconic luxury hotels of the Minet el-Hosn district.

The show drew huge crowds, hundreds more than expected, and was seen by many — especially in the international media, which covered it extensively — as symbolizing the end of fighting. With the help of a crew of LAU (then-BUC) student volunteers, Abdel-Baki had spent days clearing up rubble in the lobby, leaving "just enough to remind people of what happened." A French photographer knelt to take low-angle shots of models on the makeshift catwalk, thus capturing the fire-blackened ceiling — which engineers feared would collapse from the mere pulsing of recorded music — as backdrop. "These shots would mean nothing without [it]," he told a *Los Angeles Times* reporter.

Six years before that show, a French travel writer had quoted an anonymous "woman in the fashion world of Beirut" telling him that during lulls in the fighting people emerge from bomb shelters to "resume browsing and buying to forget the hardship." And sixteen years after it, a Belgian journalist's photograph of five stylish young Beirutis in a red convertible coupe — taking in, through designer sunglasses, the extent of destruction in the city's southern suburbs at the close of the July 2006 war — won World Press Photo of the Year. For Western reporters, who have long loved to juxtapose rubble and romance in their depictions of Beirut, nothing says ceasefire like sartorial excess.

But the deeper connection — between the city's exuberant style and its troubled past — transcends journalistic cliché. It may be that the social history of every capital city in the world is written in the hemlines of its citizens, but in Beirut — historically positioned at a cultural, religious, economic and geographic crossroads, on the fault lines of fading empires — the narrative arc is a little more vivid.

"Nothing better illustrated the passing of an age than the revolution in dress," wrote Samir Kassir, the late journalist and historian at Saint Joseph University, about mid-19th-century Beirut. Kassir attributes the Westernization of clothing in this period — "what amounted almost to a change of skin" — in part to the assertion of Ottoman governance after a long period of self-rule. 🐞

*Hoda el Khazen with a friend - Place des Canons.
Beirut/Lebanon, 1950*
Anonymous photographer
Collection AIF/ Fayza Salim el Khazen
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*Muhamad Bizri, owner of a textile shop.
Saida/Lebanon, 1950*
Hashem el Madani
Studio Chehrazad
Collection AIF/Hashem el Madani
Copyright © Arab Image Foundation



Hashem Abed, a tailor, with a friend, Rajab Arna'out. Saida/Lebanon, 1948 - 1953. Hashem el Madani. Studio Chehrazad. Collection AIF/Hashem el Madani. Copyright © Arab Image Foundation

The imperial army switched to Prussian-inspired uniforms in the 1840s, and government officials adopted Western dress. But the influence of European style was both trickling down from the halls of power and percolating up from the classroom, with the rapid proliferation of foreign missionary schools.

French influence continued to increase over the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Christian and Muslim women alike wore the veil in 1800s Beirut, though this began decisively to change toward the turn of the century. The phrase “latest Parisian fashion” as a marketing ploy had become ubiquitous. Kassir records that the first European tailor’s shop opened in Beirut 1878; already by 1888 there were 28 of them, versus 20 traditional Arab tailors. In the twenties and thirties, local *couturières* like Madame Ra’ifa — evoking intricacy and inventiveness, her name is still spoken with nostalgic reverence by Beirut designers today — made bespoke evening dresses for city celebrities, society women and regional royalty alike.

This period saw the rise of café culture — and the flaneural dandyism that came with it, unabashedly patterned on Paris’ example. This emerging dimension of public pageant combined with the rooted tradition of morning and afternoon visits to relatives and neighbors — still *de rigueur* well through the middle of the 20th century — to create a new culture of seeing and being seen, a shadow politics powerfully attuned to the social strategies of style.

Falling fezzes and rising miniskirts

The fate of the *fez*, or *tarbush*, provides an illustrative example of political shifts in the sands of fashion in *fin-de-siècle* Beirut. Seen through contemporary eyes, the tarbush seems quaint, folkloric, a

bygone piece of Arab local color, but it was originally a modernizing accoutrement, introduced by the Ottoman authorities in the mid-19th century to replace traditional and more elaborate Arab headdress, erasing sectarian markers and identifying the wearer simply as an Ottoman subject.

It was donned in Beirut, however, by precisely the sort of men — educated, well-connected, with political and cultural capital — who were popularizing Western dress. A young traveler from Palestine in 1907, clearly bewitched by Beirut’s cosmopolitanism, commented on the prevalence of automobiles, excellent cuisine, better hotels and restaurants, the “rich and varied nightlife” (in particular its well-regulated bordellos), and worldly dress codes: “the *kufiyyeh* is rarely seen. Instead, most men wear the tarbush or a hat on top of a European suit.”

The projection of social class, in short, had simply replaced that of religious affiliation. “Black tailcoat and skin-tight, tailor-made trousers, white dress shirt, stand-up collars, bow tie, and the obligatory ruby-red fez,” writes Dr. Jens Hanssen, associate professor of history at the University of Toronto, describing the semiotics of style among Ottoman Beirut’s civil servants, produced an “appearance that radiated distinctly modern knowledge and authority.”

Meanwhile, however, radiating imperial authority was becoming problematic against the backdrop of Lebanon’s anti-Ottoman national struggle, which culminated in the 1916 execution of nationalists by Ottoman authorities in Beirut’s Burj Square, thereafter renamed Martyrs’ Square.

The Ottoman Empire itself collapsed six years later, and three years after that Kemal Atatürk, the father of the new Turkish nation and a fervent advocate of modernization, traded his fez in for an Italian fedora and passed the Hat Law of 1925, banning the former.



rook76 / Shutterstock.com



Drawing depicting traditional Maronite dress, 1860

President Nasser of Egypt followed suit a couple decades later, regarding it as a symbol of Turkish dominance.

Too Arab for Turkish nationalists, too Turkish for Arab nationalists: when the Ottoman music stopped, the fez — born in Morocco, mass-produced in Austria — found itself without a seat. In Beirut its imperial dye, so to speak, faded from ruby red to sepia brown; as the city hurtled toward its mid-century heyday as the “Paris of the Middle East,” the iconic hat went from projecting secular sophistication to evoking provincial senescence. It is presently on the verge of extinction, albeit with an ersatz afterlife as kitsch: the country’s last fez factory was shuttered in the 1990s, according to the *Beirut Daily Star*, leaving, as of 2010, one artisanal producer still plying his trade, now almost exclusively to tourists.

But if the sartorial trappings of Ottomanism declined abruptly with the end of the empire, the influence of French fashion only accelerated following Lebanese independence in 1943. Bikinis and slacks for women made their debut. Hemlines rose. Miniskirts generally — and the sharply geometric, anatomically revealing cuts of iconic French designer André Courrèges in particular — became the rage in the 1960s.

Citing the “cult of the naked knee,” the rise of seasonal beach culture in Beirut, and the 1971 coronation of Lebanese beauty Georgina Rizk as Miss Universe, Kassir argues that this period saw “freedom of appearance for the women and girls of Beirut” become central to the city’s image of modernism, indeed its collective identity. The frontlines of sartorial progressivism, in a sense, had shifted from men’s heads to women’s bodies.

The implications for feminism are still hotly contested. On the one hand, in a region where the female body is often shrouded in patriarchal taboo, the Lebanese embrace of sensuality — going strong for half a century now — seems to many exhilarating,

liberating. Others stress the difference between liberation and commodification, between enfranchising women as mere consumers versus as true political and economic subjects.

“I am disturbed by the phenomenon of ‘progressive’ women unthinkingly taking pride in their adoption of foreign dress codes, which — depending on the cultural context — can turn them into sex objects,” says Dr. Dima Dabbous-Sensenig, assistant professor of communication and director of LAU’s Institute for Women’s Studies in the Arab World. “Without local laws and cultural norms enshrining their human rights, mental capacities, and moral and economic independence, blindly following Western fashion can undermine their already weak status in Lebanese society.”

Complicating matters is the fact that the very consumerism that turns women into sex objects also erodes class distinctions and democratizes dress. For every society woman who can travel to Paris to buy her seasonal wardrobe, there are 50 bourgeois who know what they want can afford to have a few dresses made locally; for each of the latter, there are another 50 working women who, depending on their eye, can put together a strikingly individual wardrobe from outlets like Zara and H & M.

“The post-modern concept of fashion, in which *haute couture* is imitated, parodied and appropriated by international mass-production outlets,” says Dr. Yasmine Taan, assistant professor of graphic design at LAU, “actually makes fashion less a function of luxury and social class and more one of personality and taste. If the justification of fashion lies in agency — autonomy in the creation of self — then consumerism serves an ethically valid social function.” ■

Brain Trust

SArD advisory council charts the burgeoning school's future

By John MacDonald



Mohammad El Rawas



Phillipe Skaff



Johnny Mokbel



Elie Gebrail



Giovanni De Paoli

What do a fashion designer, a university dean, a construction magnate, an advertising executive, and several prominent figures from the Lebanese art community have in common? They all perform work central to the disciplinary future of design. And at LAU, they are among the select members of the School of Architecture and Design's (SArD) newly-established Advisory Council.

The eight-member body brings together prominent professionals with diverse occupations but a shared interest and expertise in nurturing SArD and its student body. In addition to its chairman Elie Saab, the prominent Lebanese fashion designer, the council consists of architect and philanthropist Elie Gebrayel, Lebanese art collector Johnny Mokbel, architectural scholar and University of Montreal dean Giovanni De Paoli, award-winning painter and printmaker Mohammad El Rawas, journalist and art critic Joseph Tarrab, and CEOs and industry magnates Mutaz Sawwaf and Phillipe Skaff.

All are confident that the Advisory Council will prove a strategic asset for SArD administrators, faculty, and students. "This school has come rapidly to national prominence in the world of design, and will remain one of the region's leading lights — no matter how many other institutions try to match us," says Saab.

Formed in 2010 by SArD Interim Dean Dr. Elie Badr, the board has a two-fold mandate: to provide feedback to improve the program's educational goals and methods, and to encourage faculty and students' professional development inside and outside the university. The group will also assist with the promotion of, and fundraising for, the school.

"The advisory council is the school's arm reaching out to our professions — and to society at large," says Badr.

Accomplished as they are in their respective fields, each member brings unique professional experience and expertise to bear on optimizing SArD and designing its future. "Input is not one-way," says Skaff. "One has to listen, understand, and evaluate the school's needs in a continuous process before voicing an opinion. An advisory board is subject to debate."

Though the council's work is in its early stages, ambitious ideas have emerged. These include an LAU museum whose collection is incorporated into lesson plans, greater integration of SArD with the cultural life of Beirut, and the cultivation of an engaged and active student body — by "encouraging LAU faculty to stir the desire of students to become global citizens with local knowledge and pride," in the words of De Paoli.

El Rawas hopes to encourage the school to "embrace and maintain a leading role in art and design education, grounded in open-mindedness and freedom of artistic expression." He says the latter is "diminishing in other institutions of art education in Lebanon, due to the pervasiveness of sociopolitical dogmas."

With SArD set for enormous growth in the coming years, what will ultimately emerge is unknown. According to Mokbel, however, one thing — if he can help it — is certain: "SArD students destined for an influential future will take a keen understanding of contemporary art into it."



Rites of Passage

Schools of Medicine and Pharmacy hold white coat and hooding ceremonies

By Mehrnoush Shafiei

Summer 2012 proved a season of transitions for graduating students honored at the white coat and hooding ceremonies hosted by the Gilbert and Rose-Marie Chagoury School of Medicine and the School of Pharmacy, respectively.

"I am considering staying in Lebanon; I want to serve my community," says medical student Nagham Faris.

"I plan to stay and work here — this is my country," says medical student Mohammad Khalife, a who describes the white coat ceremony as a "dream come true."

"I look forward to becoming a pioneer in Lebanon in the clinical pharmaceutical field," said Pharm.D. graduate Nour Khresi



Medical students don their newly bestowed white coats

White coat and hooding ceremonies are rites of passage for students on their way to careers in the health sciences, the *raison d'être* of which is to impress upon them the tenets of medical excellence and the ethical responsibilities of their chosen profession. In this sense, the ceremonies are marked by both jubilation and gravitas.

"Welcome to clinical rotations, a place where people other than your mom and dad call you doctor," said Sara Araj, a third-year medical student who addressed the crowd at the June 22 white coat ceremony, which specifically marks medical students' transition to clinical rotations.

Students are escorted to the stage by one of their instructors, and are then cloaked in a ceremonial white coat. The symbolic act serves as an unspoken vow always to put the interests of their patients first.

"Being a physician is less about curing people than about caring for people," says Dr. Lynn Eckhart, interim dean of LAU's School of Medicine. Eckhart quoted William Osler, the "father of modern medicine" generally credited with establishing medical residency: "The good physician treats the disease; the great physician treats the patient who has the disease."

Patient-centeredness was also a central theme at LAU's School of Pharmacy's annual hooding ceremony, held on July 3.

The hooding ceremony is held to honor the achievements of doctoral degree candidates. Faculty members ceremonially drape the doctoral hood over the shoulders of graduates, who then receive the Pharmacy Oath as they pledge to serve the welfare of their community and always act with professionalism.

"I am looking forward to becoming a pioneer in Lebanon in the clinical pharmaceutical field," said Pharm.D. graduate Nour Khresi, who won the Best Clinician award.

Pharmacy, like medicine, is a professional field that is highly demanding with regards to the ethical formation of its practitioners.

"Ethics should be your guiding principles," said the school's interim dean, Dr. Pierre Zalloua. "When in doubt, be ethical; when faced with difficulties be ethical; and when successful — and at the top of your career — then, above all, be ethical."

Both ceremonies emphasize empathy, selflessness and desire to serve the community at large as the ethical traits relevant to excellence in the fields of pharmacy and medicine.



Dr. Pierre Zalloua delivers dean's address at LAU's School of Pharmacy's hooding ceremony

Dr. Sfeir Returns to the Lecture Hall

Outgoing provost leaves legacy of academic excellence

By Curtis Brown

"Knowledge is humble," says Dr. Abdallah Sfeir, who has announced that he will leave his position as provost to resume his beloved work as professor of mechanical engineering.

If Sfeir's manner and bearing are modest, his knowledge and erudition are far from it. His conversation moves fluidly from physics and engineering to music, photography, and the modern history of higher education. His remark registers his professional ethos, but also a specific reason for returning to professorial duties after almost a decade in the upper echelons of LAU's administration.

"This has been a privilege because I'm interacting with brilliant people," he says, "and I love this institution. But I am ready to serve its interests from the other side again, that of intellectual exploration."

Sfeir talks with passion about university stewardship — about bringing LAU "to the top levels regionally and internationally, while maintaining the community values of the college it grew from" — but does so in terms of loyal service and shared vision rather than personal distinction. LAU President Dr. Joseph G. Jabbara praises Sfeir for "strengthening all of LAU's academic programs" and "serving as a leading and vigilant promoter of accreditation, both regional and professional," and Sfeir is widely credited with pushing the university to focus its strategic planning around academic excellence. But Sfeir himself tends assiduously to soft-pedal his own role, deflecting attention instead toward what he calls "institutional citizenship."

"This means moving everybody together," he explains. "I don't want to advance one part of the university with another lagging behind. It's something we always have to keep an eye on."

Sfeir traces his ethos to his formative years as a master's and doctoral student at the University of California, Berkeley in the late 1960s. The time was formative for higher education in America as well, as rapidly expanding access to — and belief in — liberal-arts education coincided with the social idealism of the Free Speech movement centered on the Berkeley campus.

"We should be open to new ideas, and focus on the intellectual wealth latent in all forms of diversity."

— Dr. Abdallah Sfeir

The experience left a deep imprint on Sfeir, whose recollections of the period focus on the intersection between academic excellence, cross-disciplinary interest and social egalitarianism. He recalls distinguished physics professors devoting enormous energy to their teaching, specifically with the goal of reaching non-scientists; he remembers helping a graduate student in literature develop a computer program to study scholarship on the Prometheus myth by keyword, and that friendship leading to another with Alain Renoir, the great literary scholar, son of the filmmaker Jean Renoir and grandson of the French Impressionist Pierre-Auguste Renoir; he recounts his astonishment at learning that another friend was



a Nobel laureate who had never, over the years, felt the need to mention it.

"The richness of this seeps into you unnoticed," he says. "Later you register the knowledge you've absorbed — but more than that, the forms of thinking."

Sfeir is careful to emphasize that LAU's approach to American-style higher education cannot simply mimic universities like UC Berkeley, but should rather draw inspiration from them in addressing the needs of 21st-century Lebanon.

"We should be open to new ideas, and focus on the intellectual wealth latent in all forms of diversity," he says. Underscoring student leadership and community engagement as an alternative to entrenched party politics, Sfeir welcomes the recent initiatives of LAU's Outreach and Civic Engagement unit.

Sfeir muses optimistically on the coming decades for LAU — noting, for example, the rising importance of the health sciences, and the university-wide emphasis on "going green" — but for now, there is moving back into a faculty office and professor's routine to think about. Does he look forward to it? "With extreme joy," he replies simply.

Theory, Practice, Vision

Scholar-strategist George Najjar joins LAU as provost

By Curtis Brown

"Change is the only constant," thinkers since Heraclitus have said. And yet the very institutions that house them — universities — generally believe themselves to be as timeless as the stones of their hallowed halls, as immutable as the truths their faculty set out to discover.

Dr. George Najjar, LAU's newly appointed provost and a sort of renaissance man of academic globalization, represents a sharp exception. Universities for him are not monuments in the museum of knowledge; they are mortal organisms competing for resources, capable of transformation, proliferation, extinction and evolution. If research and community service are the university's mind and soul, strategic management is the pulse, breath and body that sustain it in a fluctuating cultural and economic environment.

"We live in a world that moves at the speed of thought," Najjar muses — citing the high-tech entrepreneur Bill Gates's argument that the key truth of today's global environment is no longer that the big eats the small, but rather that the fast eats the slow.

The emphasis on institutional dynamism and competitive agility seems fitting, both to LAU's historical moment and Najjar's professional résumé. Najjar is joining LAU following a transformative twelve-year tenure as dean of AUB's Suliman S. Olayan School of Business (OSB), during which he led the school to accreditation and regional preeminence. Those years have seen comparable and parallel transformation for LAU.

"Through the exceptional leadership of its president, this university has already passed a difficult test of strategic agility — that of rapid response capability," Najjar says.

Najjar has more than three decades of academic and administrative experience at AUB and other regional institutions of higher education. He completed his doctorate at the University of Southern California in 1975, where he won the Outstanding Ph.D. Dissertation Award and

accolades for his teaching. He has since held positions at AUB and the University of Bahrain, with BOT membership at institutions in Bahrain, Sharjah and Oman. He is also a special advisor to the president of AACSB for the Middle East and Africa.

While remaining a committed and widely published academic, Najjar has distinguished himself for his larger strategic vision in areas ranging from research management and fundraising to accreditation and international networking.

"My intellectual stance narrows the distance between theory and practice," he says. "Academia has to be equally rooted in what I call the two Rs — rigor and relevance," he adds, and describes the provost position as crucial in building the bridge between scholars and administrators.

Najjar joins LAU precisely as its new five-year strategic plan focused on academic excellence is implemented, and intends to put his strategic expertise to work in augmenting faculty research as well as its bases of support. "Research is expensive — in terms of equipment, resources, and reduced teaching loads," so external funds should aggressively be sought.

"Ideally, administration understands that knowledge-generation is our fundamental commitment," he continues, "and faculty understands that performance is what we live or die by."

Najjar returns characteristically to the big picture. "The order of problems as they lay out there doesn't necessarily conform to the way we organize academia. No one can tell you exactly where chemistry ends and physics begins, where psychology ends and economics begins," he says.

With fields of knowledge in perpetual flux, says Najjar, today's theoretical research can become tomorrow's applied. LAU has a competitive advantage in that it has both "institutional memory" and a nimbleness in responding to the new: "Its modern evolution," he says, "is a purposeful movement based on a plan, seeded in a culture, and embedded in a legacy."



"My intellectual stance narrows the distance between theory and practice."

— Dr. George Najjar

FEATURE

More Than a Fig Leaf

The overlapping iconographies
of faith and fashion

By Mehrnoush Shafiei

Photo by Katia Kelly, July 2012

It is a typical summer day in Beirut, meaning of course that the sky is cloudless, the sun omnipresent, and everyone seems to be shopping.

Legendary designer Coco Chanel was raised by nuns in a convent in Aubazine, France. The stained-glass windows at Aubazine (at left) provided inspiration for the iconic Chanel logo, as the nuns' habits did for the "little black dress" (below)



The downtown core serves as the fashion epicenter of this impossibly glamorous city. Strolling past the boutiques in the downtown souks it is easy to understand why Beirut, nestled in the heart of Middle Eastern instability, has become the regional epicenter of *haute couture*.

Despite its similarities with other fashion capitals, Beirut has something — a certain *je ne sais quoi* — that Paris, Milan and New York lack. It's a quality that — difficult as it is to articulate verbally — is easy enough to hear: The Islamic call for prayer, the *Azan*, followed shortly by a melody of ringing church bells.

Newcomers are instantly seized. Beirut's phalanx of faiths — and its comfortable fusion of fashion and religion — may indeed have fueled its precipitous international rise as a capital of couture.

It is in this setting, indeed within earshot of both the Saint George Maronite Cathedral and Mohammad Al-Amin Mosque, that one approaches the imposing — and intimidatingly chic — Coco Chanel boutique, designed in stark, modernist black-and-white, echoing the fashion house's trademark *griffe* (French, literally, "predator's claw"), a pair of symmetrically interlocked black C's almost as universally recognized as the cross or crescent.

Walking leisurely in and out of the boutique, women of various ages, styles and faiths take in their surroundings, oohing and aahing over merchandise bearing that mark.

The progenitor of timeless Parisian chic, Chanel divined what women wanted to wear and drew legions of followers, but few have noted the influence of religious asceticism on her own aesthetic vision.

The inspiration for her iconic use of black-and-white came from a hardscrabble youth. Born in a charity hospital run by nuns, Chanel was orphaned at the age of 12 and spent her adolescence and teen years in a rural convent. The starkness of the setting and the simplicity, functionality and elegant austerity of the nuns' black-and-white habits left an indelible impression on the young girl.

Chanel saw in monastic minimalism a sort of Spartan sensuality, and two decades later we find her unveiling her first "little black dress." Described in 1926 by *Vogue* magazine as "a uniform for all women of taste," the iconic dress is to this day a sartorial *sine qua non* for urban sophisticates. For all the sensuousness it has come to connote, the little black dress had its roots in asceticism, a point ironically not lost on men of Chanel's generation, who — lamenting the eschewal of feminine curves in favor of sharp lines — grudgingly dubbed it the "lop off everything" look. 🧵



Photo by Zeina Abdallah, August 2012

Though it often seems relegated to the margins of academic study, fashion is in fact central to cultural history. Anthropologists say that in ancient times clothes were designed as much for their religious and magical powers as for warmth and protection.

In light of fashion and religion's shared emphasis on iconography, on the creation of lasting and universally recognized symbols, it is perhaps unsurprising to find divine inspiration in the work of designers. There is a related if more subtle dynamic at work in how religion influences the *consumers* of fashion.

One such consumer of fashion is Dr. Yasmine Nasser, assistant professor of journalism and media studies and director of the Institute of Media Training and Research at LAU.

Nasser's unique style is marked by easy elegance and poise. She has an enviable wardrobe and her *hijab* is the aesthetic focal point of her outfits. For the remaining unbelievers out there, she dispels the myth that women cannot be simultaneously modern, chic and pious.

"There has certainly been a rise of Islamic fashion in the urban landscape," she reflects. Nasser first decided to don the *hijab* in 2001, and admits that ten years ago she had trouble finding fashionable clothing that corresponded to the requirements of the *hijab*. "You really had to search," she recalls.

What a difference a decade makes. "Today, stores catering to Islamic sensibilities are everywhere," Nasser says, adding that the variety is astounding.

"Both religion and religious dress are very influenced by their local context. There is no such thing as a monolithic Islam," she says, before emphasizing the uniqueness of the Lebanese

context. "Fashion in Beirut is a distinct experience due to the multi-communitarian nature."

Nasser relates that some among her friends and family preferred she remain unveiled. On the other hand, she also has experienced criticism from those in the religious community who consider her panache somehow at odds with religious gravitas.

On the contrary, Nasser insists, fashion can reveal and project religious identity just as much as it can cultural background and social status. "Fashion, like many aspects of religion" — not all, she hastens to add — "is about interpretation."

"Secular and religious worlds are incredibly fluid," she explains. "When people talk about religion, context is everything. They might mean faith, identity, culture, or combinations thereof."

This dynamic is often overlooked in the West, accustomed as it is to a presumptive separateness of the secular public sphere from the private religious sphere.

But while fashion is personal, it can never be private.

Beirut is distinctive in that the boundary between religious and secular is so porous, shifting, and dynamic. As evinced by the women in the Souks, Beirut's cultural climate is one in which the line between the sacred and the mundane — a boundary taken for granted in other cities — is regularly blurred, challenged, and transgressed, wittingly and unwittingly.

Although this interconnectedness may have a heightened visibility in a city like Beirut, it is not limited to it; in cities around the world, we see the subtle influence of religion on fashion — on the streets and the runways alike.

The savvy fashion houses are indeed picking up on the trend. Spring 2012 saw a parade of full skirts accessorized with voluminous headscarves marching down the catwalk at the Hermes, Anna Sui and Viktor & Rolf Spring 2012 shows.

Even high-street mass-fashion brands such as Zara, Mango and H&M employ designs with a heightened emphasis on bohemian-style dresses and baggy pants, specifically catered to a particular demographic in the Middle East.

"It's all about what sells," says Nasser. She describes the range of interpretations and gradients of Islamic dress as "very healthy."

"You have room for self-fashioning and individuality; you don't have to conform."

Sartorial non-conformists have recently been dubbed *hijabistas*, signifying women who don the veil in stylish and chic ways, favoring headscarves that are layered, embellished, crumpled, ruffled, knotted, voluminous or all of the above.

No stranger to the *hijabista* culture is Hala Absi Halabi, a third-year M.B.A. student at LAU, as well as CEO and founder of Bokitta fashion, a booming boutique for fashionable hijabs.

Halabi opened her shop two years ago and is responsible for everything from production to marketing and branding. She created and patented an innovative ready-to-wear (already wrapped and stitched) headscarf. Bokitta — Arabic for a bouquet of flowers — is blossoming.

Halabi's design palette is decidedly cosmopolitan. "After traveling to various Islamic countries, I came to appreciate the degree of regional variation regarding the veil," she says. "I try to incorporate that into my designs."

Unmistakably passionate about both fashion and faith, Halabi expresses frustration with media coverage of stylish *hijabi* women which — intentionally or not — adopt an unduly surprised or patronizing tone, as if it were astonishing to find religion and modernity intertwined.

"Girls who choose to wear the *hijab* are like anyone else," she says in a tone of mock-exasperation.

At the other end of the spectrum from the condescending are the critical. Since opening Bokitta, Halabi has encountered many who tell her — in so many words — that bold, eye-catching *hijabs* are antithetical to the idea of religious modesty.

Halabi has kept her faith and good humor intact. "Fashion, after all, is a way to change people's minds," she says. "My work can make people think twice."

Indeed fashion — as much as theology — can be used as a vehicle to redefine normative conventions of piety. If contemporary views tend to overstate distinctions between sacred and secular, and misconstrue religious asceticism as the sort of joyless anti-aestheticism antithetical to fashion, there are scholars, designers, and thinkers whose work directly confronts and critiques these views — through clothing.

Dr. Azra Aksamija, assistant professor at MIT Program in Art, Culture and Technology, has developed a series of art projects she calls "Wearable Mosques" — clothes that can be fashioned into minimal but functional spaces of prayer. "The mosque may be an ephemeral space that can transform from religious to secular depending on the function," she says.

Indeed transformation is Aksamija's specialty — a transformation that is premised on the fluidity of Islam.

"Islam is not a monolithic structure, neither in terms of faith nor architecture nor fashion" she says.

The wearable mosque is a collection of clothes that when unfolded turn into a prayer mat. The specific form it takes in different settings is meant to express both the multilayered identity of the person wearing it, and the cultural context in which they are situated.

She describes the wearable mosque as a portable religious device, through which she attempts to critique and dismantle the media image — especially pervasive in the West — of a Muslim alien "other."

In fact, in coining the term "wearable mosque" she chose intentionally to move away from the term veil, with its connotations of gender-oppression. "When you say veil what ultimately happens is that the sense is reduced to a religious dimension only."

"Secular and religious worlds are incredibly fluid. Context is everything."

—Yasmine Nasser, LAU assistant professor of journalism and media studies

The deep connections between clothing and belief, work like Aksamija's suggests, are manifold. Religion and fashion both involve aspiration, inspiration and mediations on the platonic ideal. Both pivot on the power of symbols and hence require the work of interpretation.

"It is important to unpack and complicate religious identity," Aksamija says.

Aksamija has elevated the creative possibilities of the hijab by pushing the envelope when it comes to the idea of fashion and religion.

If there is any city likely to celebrate such unlikely mergers — as well as such adventurous forays into fashion — it is Beirut. ■



Bokitta specializes in ready-to-wear headscarves



Honorary Degrees of 2012

By Mehrnoush Shafiei



“In its drive toward sustained excellence, LAU recognizes the excellent contributions leaders and benefactors make to our global village,” said LAU President Dr. Joseph G. Jabbra prior to conferring the honorary doctorates on five luminaries at the 2012 graduation ceremonies that took place at Byblos and Beirut.

Jabbra bestowed the doctorate of humane letters, *honoris causa*, on Rizk Iskandar Rizk, MP Nehmé Y. Tohmé, Sheikh Abdulaziz Ali Alturki, Myrna Emile Bustani and Samih Taleb Darwazah.



LAU Byblos Honors Rizk Iskandar Rizk and MP Nehmé Y. Tohmé with Honorary Doctorate in Humane Letters

LAU presented Rizk Iskandar Rizk, entrepreneur and philanthropist, and MP Nehmé Y. Tohmé, businessman and former minister, with the Honorary Doctorate Degree in Humane Letters on July 5, 2012, on the Byblos campus before a commencement crowd that included representatives of Lebanon’s Council of Ministers, distinguished guests, and LAU faculty, staff and students. Rizk is partner and co-owner of Rizk Foundation and Sannine as well as chairman and managing director of Faraya-Mzaar Tourism and Sport Company. Tohmé is chairman of Almagani General Contractors and former Minister of Displaced Persons.

“The pursuit of higher education and cultural enrichment is a vital component of a healthy citizenry; it fosters the ability to overcome day-to-day difficulties and face future challenges with confidence,” said Rizk, echoing Jabbra’s message of the importance of giving back to society. Tohmé passed the torch to the graduates saying, “This university — one of the best — has given you the means to be flexible, and taught you to be determined.”

“Our country needs citizens like you to lead the way to a better future,” Tohmé added rousing. “You are our future.”

At the end of the Byblos convocation, the LAU alma mater was played, which was followed by the recessional of the faculty.





Class valedictorian Anibal Sanjab addresses his fellow students

LAU Beirut Bestows Honorary Degrees upon Sheikh Abdulaziz Ali Alturki, Myrna Emile Bustani, and Samih Taleb Darwazah

LAU Beirut presented the Honorary Doctorate Degree in Human Letters to Sheikh Abdulaziz Ali Alturki, Myrna Emile Bustani and Samih Taleb Darwazah at the Beirut graduation ceremonies that took place on July 7 and 8.

Alturki is group chairman of Rawabi Holding Company in Saudi Arabia, as well as founding partner of Nesma and Partners. The honorary degree was awarded in recognition of his active humanitarian work, which focuses on health and social development. Upon receiving the doctorate, Alturki challenged graduates to “add value to the places and people [they] belong to.”

“As an educated, capable and motivated university graduate your power lies in your ability to increase capabilities through civic engagement,” Alturki contended at the July 7th ceremony.

Myrna Emile Bustani was the first woman to be elected to the Lebanese Parliament. A great supporter of the arts, she launched the Al Bustan International Festival of Music and the Arts in 1994 and is today striving to give Lebanon a proper opera house.

“Music is a great help in life,” said Bustani, invoking the power of music both literally and figuratively. “With it you learn to be precise, to hit exactly the right note, you learn to be in time and in tune.”

The entrepreneur and philanthropist Samih Taleb Darwazah advised young graduates to be committed to their goals while remaining flexible in their approach.

“Keep your options open until you reach your target and achieve your dream,” said Darwazah, as he shared the challenges he encountered on the path to becoming the founder of Hikma Pharmaceuticals, one of the largest pharmaceutical corporations in the United Kingdom.

The ceremony ended on a triumphant note, as fireworks illuminated the night’s sky and graduates threw their graduation caps happily in the air.





Touch of Class

Gift initiative allows Class of 2012 to leave its mark

By LAU Staff

Leave your mark at LAU was the message echoing across Beirut and Byblos campuses this June and July, as the university's development office launched its first "Plant your Class Tree" senior-class gift initiative.

The appeal was a success, attracting donations from more than 500 graduating seniors and raising over \$5,000. Participants expressed enthusiasm about creating a legacy for the Class of 2012, boosting the university's financial aid resources for disadvantaged and deserving students, and making the campus more verdant.

"Our graduating students came through with flying colors, a testimony to LAU's success in its implementation of its core values," said Dr. Mars Semaan, Dean of Students in Byblos campus.

Students made their donations during cap and gown collection and commencement exercises rehearsals on both campuses. They received a symbolic souvenir and will later attend a ceremonial tree-planting and pose for class photos. The donating students' individual names will be listed in the President's report under a special category, "Senior Class Gift", and LAU President Dr. Joseph G. Jabbra will be sending personal letters of acknowledgement to all contributors.

The university hopes to make the event a tradition, further bonding graduating classes with their alma mater, and preparing them to become LAU ambassadors to the world. Rayan Zgheib, a contributor to the campaign, appreciated the opportunity to give something back to the university: "LAU has offered me a lot, from education, extra-curricular activities, friendships, and much more. It is time for me to say thank you."



In Memory of Mrs. Wadad Khoury

On Friday, July 20th we bade our last farewell to an eminent member of our LAU Alumni Athens Chapter, Mrs. Wadad Sabbagh Khoury. She was widely loved and admired, and will be profoundly mourned.

Wadad was very close to my heart and a more than loving friend to LAU alumni. Her ebullient personality warmed all who knew her.

She was always the backbone of our fundraising events and the dynamo behind all our chapter's activities. With her radiant smile, piercing foresight, organizational acumen and gracious humility, she was not only our point of reference but our source of energy and spirit.

To her family, she was the pillar that provided strength as well as tranquility. She was the dedicated wife, the loving mother and the tender and caring grandmother. To her friends, she was humble and profoundly selfless. To her staff, she was the most generous and understanding boss. To the poor, she was their biggest loss. To all, she was a paragon of love, wisdom and generosity. She was a believer in the Almighty and His mercy. Nothing could keep her from attending mass every Sunday and receiving the Holy Communion.

Wadad, in peace you left the world and until we meet again, you will always be remembered as an Angel in Heaven.

Yours forever,

Sana, and on behalf of every member of the Athens Chapter.

Sana Cherfan

President, Athens Chapter
LAU Alumni Association

Op-Ed

Beirut's Sign Language

Dr. Yasmine Taan makes the case for urban “tagging”



Whether they reflect on it or not, Beirutis inhabit a city that is virtually a text. Whether they study, skim-read, or skip over its lines, they stroll streets whose walls are palimpsestic pages, stenciled, sprayed, painted or otherwise inscribed with verbal messages. These inscriptions thicken the city's surfaces with layers of meaning, quickening its dialogue with itself — a dialogue by turns poignant, probing, and antagonistic.

This culture of “tagging” has grown fast in Beirut in recent years. In the absence of a trusted, properly functioning public sphere, candid civic discourse has in a sense migrated to the walls of the city. The dialogue is raw and many-voiced, with anonymous inhabitants expressing — among other things — discontent over the stark urban transformations that have occurred since the civil war of 1975-1990. Terse as they are, the proliferating “Beirut is not Solidere” and “Beirut is not Dubai” tags in fact represent a multi-pronged critique — of the corporatization of urban space, the privileging of real estate speculation over community cohesion and continuity, and the demolition of Beirut's architectural heritage.

Tagging, with its characteristic ambiguities of authorship (tags are technically anonymous, but their highly individualized and recognizable styles make them function like signatures) foreground questions of representation: Who thinks? Who acts? Who speaks for whom?

Regionally the phenomenon is by no means limited to Beirut. During the recent revolution in Egypt, a stenciled blue bra began to appear in Tahrir Square and on walls all over Cairo, signifying the revolutionaries' solidarity with women against the rise of religious fundamentalists. In this case the walls of

the city were used to address concerns across borders.

Similarly dissident messaging has been elicited in Lebanon by the struggle to pressure legislators to recognize marital rape as a crime. Taggers took their stencils to the streets to “FIGHT RAPE” and urge the government to amend the law. The stenciled messages were in Arabic as well as English, some with blood-red paint dripping from their sharply angular black letters. Other stencils cry out for green space, and concrete sprawl calls attention to its own metastasizing self.

The “meaning” of any act of tagging always reflects the sociopolitical context in which it arises. In particularly dense parts of the city, for example, tagging can signify territorial dispute. Everywhere the half-veiled, semi-anonymity of the taggers' art provides cover for political expression in a city that — as a result of its painful history — tends to shun it. Walls built to divide (sect from sect, private from public, haves from have-not) instead become porous spaces where the vulnerable, marginalized and powerless suddenly have a civic voice. By marking territory, inhabitants take at least symbolic control of their city.

Lebanese identity is entangled in webs of religious belonging and social

class. The latent but palpable aggression in urban tagging is evidence of a crisis of representation, a struggle over who possesses the future and history of this city. I would argue, however, that tagging should be seen not as morbidly pathological but vibrantly therapeutic, even cathartic. Better paint sprayed than blood shed, and the battle lines drawn by taggers are — for the most part — not about parties and sects, but rather about competing ethical visions for the future of the country. In the absence of a clearly defined national identity, the walls can be seen as ideal spaces for inhabitants to articulate, negotiate and redefine their identities and that of their city.

Ubiquitous graffiti can shock the eyes and suggest a city in crisis, which Beirut may very well be. In every crisis, however lies an opportunity. Despite the occasional tremor and aftershock, the Lebanese civil war ended 22 years ago. We should not lament that a symbolic struggle over Lebanon's fate has replaced it, and continues today.

Yasmine Nachabe Taan is assistant professor of graphic design in the School of Architecture and Design, LAU-Beirut.

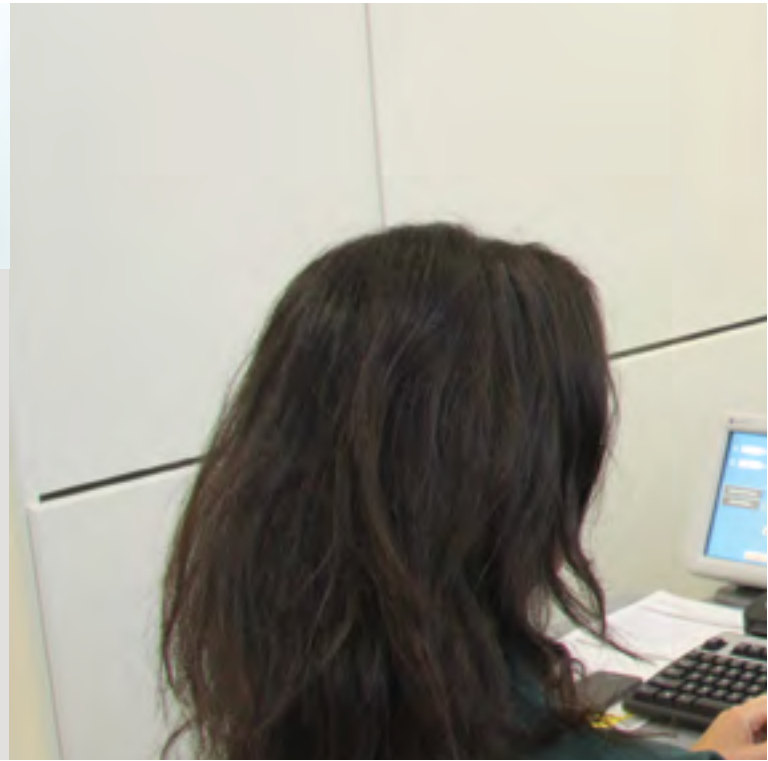




Raising the Bar

UMC-RH unveils cutting-edge radiology center

By Mehrnoush Shafiei



Since partnering with LAU, the University Medical Center – Rizk Hospital (UMC–RH) has undergone a major evolution, even a revolution. The newly unveiled radiology center is the latest manifestation of these sweeping changes.

“You don’t have an opportunity like this every day, in which state-of-the-art technology combine with top-notch expertise. We are embarking on an exciting journey,” says Dr. Joe El-Khoury, chief of the radiology center at UMC–RH. Characteristically resolute, Khoury lives by the mantra “failure is not an option.”

He explains that radiology is widely considered the cornerstone of healthcare and preventive medicine, and UMC–RH’s “center of excellence” boasts an impressive suite of innovative equipment.

“The trend in top American medical facilities has been to establish centers of excellence,” explains Dr. Tony G. Zreik, chief medical officer at UMC–RH.

This allows patients to have all their needs met at a single location, and specialists to consult one another with ease. “It is important to give physicians access to a wide variety of specialized equipment in a single facility,” he adds.

Khoury notes with palpable pride that the center is also a top research hub and has been designated a “reference center” by the leading company in medical equipment, General Electric. “The latest technology to hit the market will come to UMC–RH before it goes anywhere else in the region,” he explains.

The radiology department has acquired the most advanced CT (computed tomography) scanners, which offer high image resolution while emitting considerably less radiation than earlier models. “This is important, especially with younger patients,” he says. “It allows much faster — and more accurate — diagnosis and subsequent treatment for the patient.”

The hospital has also acquired the 3 Telsa MRI, which offers unprecedented magnetic resolution, allowing faster scans and sharper detail. It differs from similar equipment in its open design,

“making MRIs much more comfortable, especially for patients with claustrophobia,” explains Khoury.

This kind of thinking accords with the hospital’s commitment to patient-centered care. Dr. Daniel Mahfoud, an OB-GYN and a specialist in body imaging and ultrasonography, stresses that the new equipment is more than the sum of its parts: the synergistic interplay of advanced capabilities allows more precise diagnostics and interventions — a process known as “navigation.” Such advanced equipment and methods benefit not only healthcare actors — such as third-party payers and practitioners — but also patients themselves, whose hospital stays are reduced. More than convenience is at stake, Mahfoud points out, since “many patients may not be able to afford long hospital waiting times.”

No high-end imaging tool is needed to detect Mahfoud’s passion for his work. “When you can do better diagnosis, you are able to detect pathologies at an early phase — which can dramatically alter the course of the disease and end up by saving someone’s life,” he says.

The manager of the radiology department, Rhea Abboud, has an eagle eye for detail. She is responsible for capacity building, training, recruitment and overseeing operations within the department, as well as ensuring that the entire staff of the radiology center complies with the high international standards followed at UMC–RH. “We bring aboard only highly exceptional professionals,” she emphasizes.

Dr. Raghid Kikano is a recent appointee to UMC–RH specializing in neuroradiology and interventional radiology. He brings with him a wealth of international experience from the University of Chicago and the Cleveland Clinic, and looks forward to the vibrant research hub established by LAU. “Technology, expertise, multi-disciplinarity and diversity of services form a powerful combination serving students of LAU’s schools of Medicine, Nursing, and Pharmacy, all of whom will use this center to obtain practical experience. The



premises have been custom-designed both to meet international standards for patient care, and to play a substantial role in our health sciences curricula,” Kikano says. “UMC–RH, after all, is an academic facility as well as a medical center.”

“One of our objectives is to encourage more medical students to push the boundaries of medical knowledge with research in experimental medicine,” adds Dr. Julie El-Ferzli, a pediatric radiologist at UMC–RH. “We are an academic hospital, and our core responsibilities include not only the safety, satisfaction and well-being of patients but also proper training and expansive research horizons for future physicians.”

There are designated reading rooms on-site for LAU students, designed to both prioritize patient privacy and maximize student field exposure. Students will also be able to take advantage of the knowledge and expertise of hospital staff and physicians.

That expertise extends beyond the walls of UMC–RH, even crossing the Atlantic to New York State, home of White Plains Radiology, one of the most advanced radiology centers in the United States.

“Whenever we may require a second reading or an advanced opinion, we can get it immediately via tele-radiology,” says Zreik. “Patients can rest assured that they are in expert hands,” Khoury chimes in.

The facility’s management is also informed by the patient-centered model of top clinics such as White Plains. “We too strive to provide comprehensive care to our patients so they can have all their needs — paperwork, procedure, diagnosis and follow-up — met in one place,” Abboud emphasizes.

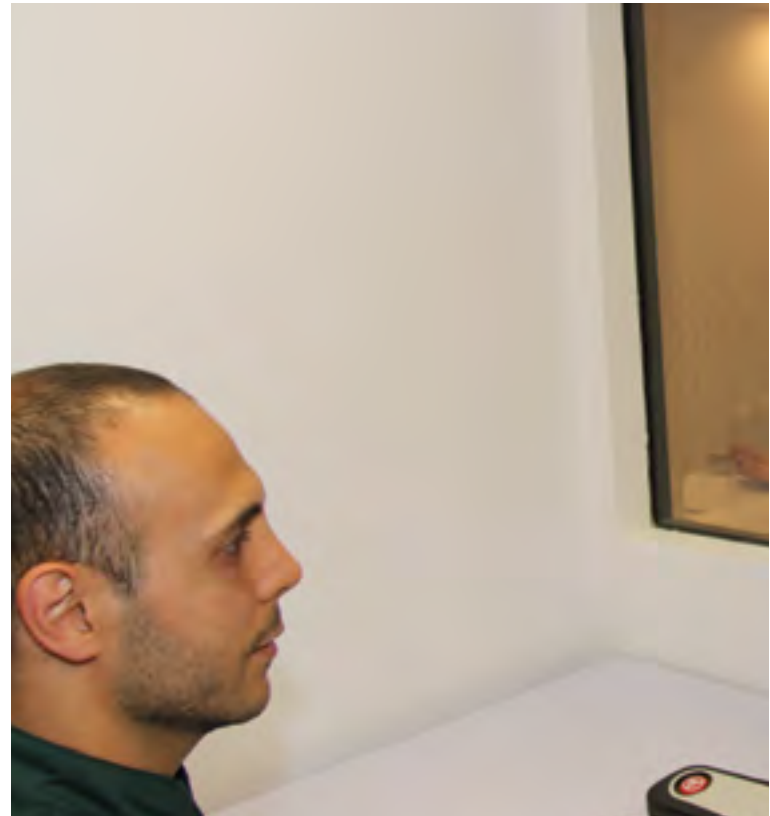
Like many leading medical facilities around the world, UMC–RH aims to be more responsive to the community in which it practices. This concern was addressed literally from the ground up — even, that is, by the architects renovating the hospital.

The emphasis on patient care was the guiding principle of the

design of the newly renovated unit. UMC–RH board member and Interim Dean of the School of Architecture and Design Dr. Elie Badr, who heads the team responsible for structural renovations, describes the design team’s goal of “creating a nuanced space that puts the needs of the patient first and foremost.” The center was thus designed to be airy and modern, fashioned in soothing pastel colors, and in subtle ways to take into account the social milieu of the patient community.



Patient comfort and safety at the core of the center’s mission



“We know that many of our patients want privacy,” Dr. Tamina Rizk, who heads the women’s health component of the radiology department, explains by way of example. “The Breast Imaging Unit is designed so as to place the patient in a comfortable as well as secluded space.”

The two-floor department has a separate elevator reserved only for patients, and most of the rooms are connected by inner doors and entry ways, minimizing the need for patients to cross hallways and stroll through corridors.

It is hoped, moreover, that the more relaxing environment will trigger more regular screening, in turn increasing the number of early detections. “Early detection saves lives,” Khoury says simply.

The emphasis on early detection is part of UMC – RH’s general goal of raising public health awareness. The hospital launched its own breast-cancer awareness campaign last fall, and there are plans to focus similarly on prostate and liver cancer.

Indeed an integral component of patient-centric medicine is education. Many patients need not only up-to-date information but help in navigating complex medical jargon. Reader-friendly educational material will be available in modern waiting rooms equipped with televisions and other amenities to help make the time spent more enjoyable.

“We want patients to feel that they are at home,” he stresses. His sense of family bonds extends to colleagues and staff. “We all act as a unified team,” he says. “We work together.”

That team is defined by superior expertise, commitment to excellence and compassionate care. Working on a foundation of state-of-the-art technology and robust international affiliations, they make the radiology department a world-class medical facility.

MEET THE TEAM

Dr. Joe El-Khoury is head of the radiology department, specializing in interventional medicine. He received his M.D. at St Joseph University in Beirut, and postgraduate training in vascular and interventional radiology at Paul Sabatier University in Toulouse and Rene Descartes University in Paris, France. Despite time spent overseas, his commitment to his country has been the guiding trajectory of his career. “I never even thought about leaving,” he says, gesturing to his surroundings, “Here is home, here is family.”

Dr. Daniel Mahfoud is a physician in the radiology department, specializing in OB-GYN and body imaging and ultrasonography with new field of interest in MSK Ultrasound. He has volunteered in projects concerning quality management, hospital practice, and internal auditing. He has infused the department’s halls with enthusiasm: “Everyone is rediscovering the hospital — everything is fresh, and it’s exciting.” He received his M.D. from St Joseph University and his specialty training degree from Rene Descartes University.

Dr. Raghid Kikano is a recent appointee to the UMC – RH, specializing in neuroradiology and interventional radiology. Kikano gained wide experience in oncologic and vascular interventional radiology as a fellow at prestigious hospitals and medical centers in France and the United States, including the University of Chicago and Cleveland Clinic Foundation. “I am happy to join LAU for its prestigious reputation as well as the professional and research-oriented environment it provides,” he says.



The radiology department is equipped with state-of-the-art equipment

Dr. Ahmad Yatim is a nuclear medicine specialist, who pursued his postgraduate studies and fellowships at Universite Claud Bernard and Hopital Edouard Herriot in Lyon, France. He works at the radiology department part-time.

Dr. Julie El-Ferzli is a physician specializing in pediatric radiology. "We have a very close-knit team; our interdisciplinary approach to patient care makes the whole difference," she says of UMC-RH staff. Ferzli obtained her medical degree from the Lebanese University in Beirut, and pursued postgraduate studies and fellowships in neuroradiology and cardiac pediatric radiology at CHU Rouen and CHU Amiens in France, as and cardiac MRI in CHU Leven Belgium.

Dr. Tamina Rizk heads the women's health component of the radiology department, specializing in breast imaging and oncology. She obtained her medical degree at St. Joseph University in Beirut, and undertook postgraduate fellowships at Henri Mondor UH Créteil, Paris in breast imaging and oncological imaging. She is proud to join the staff at UMC-RH, where "the comfort, well-being and dignity of our patients come first."

Rhea Abboud is the manager of the radiology center at UMC-RH. She holds a master's in management and finance from Ecole Supérieure de Commerce de Paris (ESCP-EAP), and a bachelor's degree in telecommunication engineering from ESIB -University St Joseph, Lebanon.

Lebanese Doctors Without Borders

Step number one to solving a problem? You first need to identify it. Raising awareness about common health problems was the name of the game as American physicians of Lebanese origin practicing in the United States touched down in Lebanon to partake in a two-day conference, "Healthcare Beyond Borders," organized with local physicians June 29-30 at University Medical Center – Rizk Hospital (UMC-RH). In addition to discussing ways to increase the public's understanding of health problems, the participants share new advances in medicine and breakthroughs in treatment.

The event was jointly hosted by LAU, UMC-RH and the American Lebanese Medical Association (ALMA), and was held under the patronage of Prime Minister Najib Mikati.

"What ALMA has been doing is connecting physicians in the West to their homeland in Lebanon," said Issam Raad, president-elect of ALMA.

LAU President Dr. Joseph G. Jabbra told an audience of conference participants that their presence represented two "shining realities" — the importance of roots and love of one's country, on the one hand, and on the other the "passionate commitment" of Lebanese doctors worldwide to finding cures.

"They are committed to tackling, taming and finding cures to some of the most intractable diseases affecting not only Lebanese society, but society the world over," Jabbra said.

During the event, ALMA presented \$3,000 scholarships to five students, selected on the bases of academic excellence and social need.



Unity Through Diversity

Third annual NGO fair stresses solidarity in student activism

By Muriel Kahwagi

Under the theme “Unity is Strength,” LAU held its third annual NGO fair on the Byblos campus in late May, introducing students to the importance of community service and volunteerism.

The fair allowed the students to learn about various NGOs' role and activities by setting up informational booths all over campus



The Byblos campus hosted around 80 NGOs at this year's fair

Organized by LAU's Outreach and Civic Engagement unit (OCE), the fair gathered around 80 NGOs representing various sectors, who set up informational booths to inform students of their objectives and invite them to participate in their activities.

“We hope this fair will bring NGOs and students into close contact, allowing them to harness their creative talents, education and energy for the improvement of society,” said LAU President Dr. Joseph G. Jabbra at the event's opening ceremony, which was attended by Minister of Environment Nazem el-Khoury.

El-Khoury's speech stressed the role of NGOs as pillars of sustainability and continuity in society. “This wouldn't be the case if the Lebanese youth weren't so hardworking and dedicated to improving this country,” he said.

Executive Director of OCE Elie Samia also expressed his respect for the NGOs' work and constant efforts to make Lebanese society more humane and more creative.

“We at LAU consider civic engagement to be integral to our mission, and we believe that encouraging students to volunteer not only sharpens their leadership skills but prepares them to become fully committed citizens,” he said.

The annual fair indeed highlights the general importance of cooperation between government, civil society, and academia in improving the social, educational and environmental conditions of areas in need.

This year's fair introduced roundtable discussions, bringing together stakeholders, decision-makers, representatives of various ministries and students to tackle four broad issues: health, citizenship education, social work, and the environment.

At the citizenship education roundtable, Director General of the Ministry of Education and Higher Education Fady Yarak described a current proposal to

require that school students complete 40 hours of community service in the course of their school years, which would eventually become a prerequisite for university admission.

“This would really push school students to engage in community service,” Yarak said. “We need youth to be more proactive in our community.”

The citizenship education roundtable also featured Antoine Zakhia of the Ministry of Social Affairs, who spoke about the need for a tripartite union between government, civil society and the private sector in order to produce full-spectrum civic engagement.

“Ten years ago, a physical disability would simply elicit sympathy — today, we've turned it into potential,” said Zakhia. “Our job is to see how we can maximize their contributions,” he added.

Vanessa Issa, a student at the Champville school, agreed.

“It's up to our generation to make the big changes now. We should be engaged in social work so we can learn how to be responsible vis-à-vis society, and empower those in need,” she said.

Academic institutions are not outlying, independent entities, emphasized Sarah Bou Ajram, coordinator of leadership and civic engagement at OCE. They constitute only one piece of the puzzle.

Train/Train, an NGO that aims to raise awareness about the importance of railways and preserve Lebanon's railway heritage, held a booth at the fair.

“One hand can't clap, and it's very important to spread the word among youth about these kinds of projects,” said Elias Maalouf, founder of Train/Train.

“Railways stopped operating in Lebanon around 40 years ago — but decent public transportation could help the government become more sustainable, which is our ultimate goal,” he explained.

Weaving Networks

LAU students found AIESEC's fastest-growing chapter

By Muriel Kahwagi

With over 60,000 members spread over 110 countries, Association Internationale des Étudiants en Sciences Économiques et Commerciales (AIESEC) has earned its reputation as the world's largest and most distinguished entirely student-run organization.

As a global, non-political, independent NGO, AIESEC acts as a mediator between spirited university students on the one hand, and businesses and non-profit organizations on the other, creating professional and community-based internships lasting anywhere from six weeks to 18 months.

AIESEC also provides a platform for youth leadership development, offering opportunities for young people to travel abroad and participate in internships and conferences in culturally rich contexts.

Thanks largely to the efforts of five motivated university students, AIESEC Lebanon joined the AIESEC network in August 2011, by becoming an official expansion at the AIESEC International Congress in Kenya.

AIESEC Lebanon went on to become a full member of the network within six months, making it the fastest national chapter to reach that status, with an impressive growth level of 5000%.

The students behind AIESEC's Lebanon expansion are LAU students Afkar Barakeh, Mounes Shibly, Mira Daher, and Ahmed Shaaban, and Hadeer Shalaby from the American University of Cairo.

"It was very difficult for all of us when we first founded AIESEC here in Lebanon," admits Barakeh.

Indeed, with no initial funding and close-to-nil publicity, AIESEC Lebanon was off to a rocky start, but the team's drive and initiative kept them going.

Things soon started looking up for the

group with the launch of their pilot project, "Explore Lebanon."

Drawing 19 students from Egypt and one from Hong Kong, "Explore Lebanon" allowed participants to engage in travel writing, reporting on the touristic sites they visited and the cultural knowledge they gained.

The aim of the project, according to Barakeh, was both to enhance the participants' writing skills and familiarize them with Lebanon's customs and heritage.

"It's very important for us to foster transcultural exchange and understanding," explains Shibly.

"It's not just about pursuing an internship in another country. It's about being exposed to different cultures and mindsets, and promoting tolerance," he adds.

Drawing students in increasing numbers AIESEC Lebanon soon began to take off, signing its first partnership with ArabNet, an annual summit that brings together digital executives and entrepreneurs to discuss new trends and technologies in web and mobile. Students from Egypt, the Netherlands, Canada, and Denmark were actively engaged in ArabNet Digital Summit 2012.

"We hope students from Lebanon will pursue internships abroad through AIESEC International, which will help them gain new knowledge and experience they can then take advantage of in the Lebanese market," says Shibly.



Designing Designers

Graphic design department seeds graduates across the globe

By Muriel Kahwagi



Lama Assaf's mega toy, 001, is inspired by the dashboard of a MINI car, and represents an extraterrestrial being that comes from an alternate universe

As the academic year comes to a close, senior graphic design student Cynthia Douaiher has more to celebrate than her long-awaited graduation. She's been accepted into a graduate program at the Pratt Institute, a prestigious art college in the heart of New York City, and will begin in the fall. She can barely contain her enthusiasm.

"My whole life plan has changed. I will be in the capital of the art world, surrounded by brilliant artists and designers," says Douaiher, who attributes her success so far to ample resources and inspiring faculty in LAU's graphic design department.

She will be joined in New York by recent graduate Dounia Alexandra Nassar, who designed various posters for both student and major theater productions, including last spring's *Fantasia Opus 3*. Nassar will also be attending Pratt this fall, pursuing a master's in packaging design.

She is as excited about New York as she is about Pratt. "I'm looking forward to immersing myself in the culture, people and everything else the city has to offer," she says.

Several graphic design students found themselves in the enviable dilemma of having to decide between multiple elite schools' admission offers.

With letters of acceptance from both the Rhode Island School of Design (RISD) and Kingston University in London, Yara Khraibani agonized over the choice before opting to pursue her master's in communication design at Kingston now, and defer her master's in industrial design at RISD until the 2013-2014 academic year.

Khraibani attributes her development of a distinctive style — "simple and straight to the point" — to her time at LAU.

"My main aim now is to take what I have learned in the past three years," he says, "and push it further in graduate school."

Across the board, this is a banner year for post-graduate placement of LAU's graphic design students. While students like Douaiher, Nassar and Khraibani go on to enroll in the world's most competitive graduate programs, others have secured coveted positions in renowned advertising and design companies.

Since its establishment in 1994, the department has been shaping generations of design professionals. The ethos and vision of the program is centered on producing visual communicators whose technical skill and savvy is balanced by broad cultural understanding.

"We aim to to graduate critical thinkers, designers with hands-on experience who can come up with creative solutions to present-day design challenges, who can project their ideas clearly," says Randa Abdel Baki, assistant professor of graphic design and departmental chair.

Tarek Khoury, assistant professor of graphic design and the associate departmental chair on the Byblos campus, agrees.

"Our students are taught to be intelligent visual communicators with both creative intellectual vision and practical resourcefulness," he says.

The curriculum comprises a wide array of theoretical and practical courses, as well as workshops on typography, illustration and animation. But the strength of the program, stresses Yasmine Taan, assistant professor of graphic design and former



Cynthia Douaiher will be pursuing her graduate studies at the prestigious Pratt Institute



Dounia Alexandra Nassar, who will be attending the Pratt Institute in New York, designed posters for various student and major productions



Patricia Farah (at right) attended a fully funded two-week course at NABA this summer

departmental chair, derives as much from what it offers outside the classroom as within.

"It is also a function of extracurricular activities organized by the department — workshops, presentations and the like — which are geared toward building on students' skills and helping them to become future professionals," she explains.

Recent graduates Hayat Zock and Carine Teyrouz, both of whom were immediately offered positions at the renowned advertising agency Leo Burnett, are prime examples of the fruits of this approach.

While Teyrouz aims to invest the practical and theoretical knowledge she gained at LAU in her work for the firm, Zock hopes to continue the learning process she began in university, with the goal of eventually resuming her studies in a future graduate program.

Patricia Farah, also a recent graduate, distinguished herself at LAU with Lebanese War Prisoners, an interventionally acclaimed video-cum-campaign on civil-war POWs, and with

her close collaboration with Japanese designer Hiroki Yamamoto. After winning first prize in a Nuova Accademia di Belle Arti Milano (NABA) competition on the "art of traveling," Farah was granted a full scholarship for a two-week summer course at NABA.

Graduating senior Lama Assaf meanwhile won first prize for a different kind of competition — the "Mini Mega Toy," hosted by the iconic automobile manufacturer Mini Cooper.

Students from various Lebanese universities were provided with a "mega toy," a white, plastic object — a sort of blank slate — and asked to create a mascot for the Mini Cooper out of it.

Participants were free to tinker with the toy as they wished, and the criteria for judging was based on concept, creativity, originality, skills, and technique.

"In making the toy I was inspired by the Mini Cooper's black and orange dashboard," says Assaf, adding that it helped her to think of the car as more of a spaceship than an automobile.

Fuelled by a passion for fashion design, Sybil Layous interned for two months

at *Plastik*, one of the region's premiere fashion magazines, later taking up the position of junior graphic designer.

Having earned the respect of *Plastik's* creative director, Layous was given the inspired albeit demanding task of designing new layouts for the magazine from scratch.

She has recently been accepted into Istituto Marangoni's Fashion Promotion and Communication program, with a 50% scholarship.

"My master's degree will give me the chance to stay true to my graphic design background, while pursuing my dream of contributing to the international fashion scene," she says.



Yara Khraibani will be pursuing a master's in communication design at Kingston University in London this fall



Rasha Fattouh was selected to represent LAU at the Lynx academy in Dubai



FEATURE

Looking-Glass Selves

Cultural consciousness and clothes

By Natalie Shooter



‘Fashion is not something that exists in dresses only. Fashion is in the sky, in the street, fashion has to do with ideas, the way we live and what is happening’ – Coco Chanel

The impact of collective experience on fashion is incontestable. Fashion is a prism refracting the self, which in turn is always a function of history; consciously or not, style is reflective of everything from war to social and technological change. This is most apparent in times of upheaval.

Hence the rise of “power suits” and prominent shoulder pads in the 1980s, precisely as women fought to assert themselves in a male-dominated workplace. It may have been the American soap opera *Dynasty* that popularized the look, but it was Margaret Thatcher — the U.K.’s first female prime minister, ramming through the glass ceiling of British political life clad in thick-foam-shouldered blue blazers — who canonized it.

At the opposite end of the cultural spectrum from power dressing we find punk, which — in its 1970s incarnation, pioneered by designers Vivienne Westwood and Malcolm McLaren — was a spirited rebellion against capitalist ambition and corporate culture. By turns angry and ironic, punk blended offensive t-shirts, brightly coloured Mohawks, studded leather jackets, intentionally ripped garments and playfully repurposed military wear. (Punk and consumerism have long since made amends; you can buy your ripped top from a high street store for \$50, and Vivienne Westwood *prêt-à-porter* suits begin at \$1000.)

The vast mosaic of Lebanese fashion, for its part, seems a function not so much of economic and corporate orientation (as it so often is in the West), but rather of the country’s religious and cultural diversity, its geographic and historic position as a gateway between the Mediterranean and the Middle East. Eighteen religious sects have all left their mark, from the traditional dress of the Druze with *sherwal* trousers and a *tarboosh* wrapped in white cloth, to the numerous variations of the veil. Add to that the outside influences brought home by a diasporic population, and Lebanon becomes a country of schizophrenic identities: East meets West, tradition meets modernity, religion meets secularism. “We are not living in one country, we’re living in a kind of federation of countries,” says Lokman Slim, an independent political activist and founder of Umam Documentation and Research Center. “But mobility and ease of circulation between them creates a kind of patchwork effect, which looks very colorful and diverse.”

This surface motley can be a bit deceptive, some say. “The Lebanese are not actually very experimental when it comes to fashion — they prefer to be part of a group,” says Dr. Loulwa Kaloyeros, a psychologist and instructor at LAU Byblos. It’s an opinion shared by Tala Hajjar co-founder of the Lebanese fashion boutique STARCH, who stresses that the “group” as such may be defined by sect, class, level of education, and so on. “Lebanese society can be very tribal at times, with very few daring to stand out,” she says. Slim concurs; adding that tribalism of a sort — “the need of identities to find ways to differentiate themselves from each other” — is crucial to the business of fashion. 🌸



Lara Khoury (at left) and one of her designs (at right)

The role of history and politics in fashion is usually subtle and oblique, but it can be overt. Lebanese designer Lara Khoury, for example, conceived her spring/summer 2011 collection as a direct response to global warming. Titled “Grow on You,” the collection featured clothes spored with fungus farms to reflect the Earth’s rising water levels. ‘Fashion doesn’t solve problems, but I do use it to talk about things that have marked me,’ Khoury explains. Her autumn/winter 2013 collection “Gluttony” is conspicuously excessive in its use of fabric. “Our primordial need to *consume* — always wanting more — breaks down the distinction between our biological bodies and their material adornments,” she says.

One might fairly ask if fashion in Lebanon reflects collective amnesia regarding its civil war, an escape from an inner sense of turmoil. LAU alumna Rayya Morcos’ (’03) “Bird on a Wire” collection feature delicate wire-framed designs evoking a “soul in motion” against the backdrop of a horror-burdened past. In her fall/winter 2012 collection “Heterotopias” (named in homage to the late French philosopher Michel Foucault), inanimate objects appear in mid-movement like “ghost dancer figurines”: ‘It’s a reflection of the human condition — the body is not as free and wild as the imagination.’ For her, the only escape for the trapped soul is for the latter to “express itself with that body and know how to manipulate it. Dancing is one such outlet.” Morcos suggests that while Lebanese fashion is often a flight from history, it can just as well be an engagement with it.

One cannot speak of fashion in Lebanon without touching on the love of luxury — of designer labels, big cars, botox and bodily metamorphosis, a milieu in which getting new breasts is as casual a deed as getting a manicure.

‘Lebanon is a very small country, the circles of the rich even smaller, and the display of fortune contagious,’ Kaloyeros says. “People pay to appear on the society pages of magazines. No dress can be worn twice — it would be a scandal! — and yet they all look alike.”

Morcos thinks the term “luxury” itself is a misnomer, since in Lebanon it is marketed for the masses, thereby “defying luxury’s essence.” High demand for luxury leads to its ubiquity and vulgarization. “No inspiration is needed,” she says with a dry laugh. “Just a bit of bling and a corset that reshapes the woman for the occasion.” Indeed the love of pseudo-luxury — of designer labels and plastic surgery — is a trend that transcends sectarian lines. “Under the veil there is botox,” Slim says pithily.

Wissam Charaf, director of *It’s All in Lebanon*, a documentary exploring the role of image in Lebanon’s political campaigns and pop videos, cites Lebanon’s Mediterranean character: “we like to show off, exactly like the Italians.” Luxury-loving Lebanese go abroad, he says, and bring their shopping back. Proximity to the Gulf has turned Lebanon into a sort of “luxury hub” for visitors, with Gulf tourists bringing Gulf money. “It’s no coincidence that designers like Elie Saab, Rabih Kayrouz or Reem Acra are so successful abroad,” Charaf says. “They know the game, they know Western fashion and they have the ingenuity to adapt it to the Arab market.”

If designers like Saab are the gods of Lebanese fashion, then pop stars are its icons of influence. Images of Nancy Ajram and Elissa flood the country’s consciousness, filtering into fashion with a nation of followers attempting to replicate the pop star look. A Haifa Wehbe cosmetics tutorial demonstrating how to



Lokman Slim of Umam Documentation and Research Center



A t-shirt from Venus Vania's collection

achieve the singer's smoldering, smoky-eyed look receives over 2 million hits on YouTube. Charaf suggests that Lebanon's style of "aggressive femininity" comes from "the influence of Arab pop icons that have flourished through satellite channels, and the lack of indigenous female cultural icons in post-war Lebanon."

A conspicuous recent example of the trend of "aggressive femininity" is the chest-brandishing t-shirt. Collections such as Venus Vania's flaunt deliberately tawdry slogans like "My Boyfriend's a Billionaire" and "I'm so Plastic Barbie Would be Jealous." If the trend seems to invoke the in-your-face rebelliousness of punk, it's a deliberately distorted invocation; where punk's breaches of etiquette were always latently political, these constitute a defiant disconnection from politics and ethics, a statement of hedonism verging on nihilism.

The irony of the statement — is it a critique or an embrace of "plastic" culture? — is an open question that Vania herself does little to resolve: "I created the collection to express my thoughts on what I think is the basic truth of humanity. Reading the quotes provokes the truth. Wear it and be aware of it." The t-shirt's mixed clientele include people "whose lives the slogans reflect" and those who wear them "for the irony," she says — not to mention those who do so because "everyone else is."

Charaf says the obsession with materialism — ironic or not — is a generational response to the trauma of war. "Shallowness follows us like a shadow. The more money-orientated, plastic-surgery-orientated you are the more you convey the message: 'I'm afraid of seeing bad things in life, I'm afraid to die. I'm afraid of war.'" The civil war, he says has left a "profound wound" that continues to "haunt our psyche."

For Slim, Vania's t-shirts are a salutary flouting of taboo. He is particularly struck, however, by their use of English, noting that it's part of a pattern: in times of protest the multilingual Lebanese like to switch tongues. "It seems easier to invest in slogans that are not in Arabic," he says. "It's as if finding the freedom to express yourself is enabled by a shift of linguistic register."

Still in its relatively early stages, the Lebanese fashion industry likewise may be in searching of an identity. Lara Khoury — whose work is often identified as Japanese, English or Belgian — thinks Lebanese fashion may be in for a shift of direction after pursuing "bling-bling, sequins and volume" for so long. "I'm Lebanese and if I work on something quite remote from this stereotype, then Lebanese is still my identity," she says. "Lebanese style needn't be — and shouldn't be — fixed to this mold. We're still growing, and I think we need a push from the young generation of designers."

Morcos points to role of globalization in homogenizing trends and ideas worldwide. "We're citizens of the world — we don't have a sense of belonging to a country anymore," she says. "Sure, we are inspired by the West — but more importantly, we inspire the West. There are no borders anymore. We are all one."

As the gaps between different fields narrow, moreover, the possibilities and potential of fashion grow. "Fashion cannot be its own entity anymore," Morcos says. "Fields interact now. You cannot be a fashion designer without collaborating in some way with industrial design, architecture, photography, even chemistry." As more daring young designers emerge — and Beirut becomes a capital not only for consumers of fashion but for producers, students and scholars of it — the synergy between fashion and other disciplines will only accelerate. 🧩

New Faculty



DR. JULIAN PÄNKE

Dr. Julian Pänke recently joined LAU as visiting assistant professor of history and international relations. Pänke earned his master's degree from the Humboldt-University in Berlin, and later received a grant to pursue his Ph.D. in cultural studies at the Europa-Universität Viadrina (Oder) Frankfurt. His doctoral dissertation focuses on westernization and nationalization in Central Europe. Pänke hopes to give students at LAU an understanding of the social and political forces that shape one's identity, while encouraging them to question the means by which people come to adopt their current beliefs.



JILL ALEXANDRIA

Jill Alexandria recently joined LAU as visiting assistant professor in the Fine Arts and Foundation Studies department. Alexandria earned her M.F.A. in painting from the Cranbrook Academy of Art, and her work has been showcased in various venues and art festivals, including the Newport Art Museum, the Convergence Art Festival, and the Decordova Museum. Alexandria has previously taught at Bristol Community College in Massachusetts and the American University of Kuwait. She hopes to learn from her students at LAU and grow as an academic.



DR. JORDAN SROUR

Dr. Jordan Srou recently joined the School of Business as assistant professor in the Department of Information Technology and Operation Management. Srou holds a Ph.D. in Logistics Management from the Rotterdam School of Management, Erasmus University, with a background in both mathematics and transportation. Her research, which has been published in various prestigious academic journals, focuses on network models for operational problems within the freight-transportation sector. As she joins LAU, Srou hopes to foster a greater appreciation for both operations and supply chain management through her hands-on teaching style.



DR. PHILIPPE W. ZGHEIB

Dr. Philippe W. Zgheib recently joined the School of Business as assistant professor in the department of Management Studies. He holds doctorates in both economics and a civil engineering from Utah State University in the United States. He lectured at Utah State, and has also taught at the American University of Beirut. Zgheib's areas of professional interest include conflict optimization, advanced negotiations, gender autonomy through entrepreneurship, and business ethics. Beyond academic practice and business consulting, his affiliations include active NGOs and civic associations, both in the Middle East and the United States.



YERASIMOS VAMVAKIDIS

Yerasimos Vamvakidis recently joined LAU as visiting assistant professor in the Architecture department. Vamvakidis holds a B.Sc. in civil engineering and a diploma in architectural engineering from the National Technical University of Athens. He later earned his master's degree at the University of California, Los Angeles. Vamvakidis, who describes Beirut as a "petri dish for architectural experimentation," hopes to bring LAU students in touch with current global architectural design concepts, while exploring the possibilities of grafting these approaches into a local idiom for young and groundbreaking architects.



DR. WISSAM ALHUSSAINI

Dr. Wissam AlHussaini recently joined the School of Business as assistant professor in the Department of Management Studies. AlHussaini earned his Ph.D. in strategy from Concordia University in Canada, where he also worked as an assistant professor of strategy and international business. AlHussaini is an active member of the Montreal Local Global Research group (an association that brings scholars from top Canadian business schools together), and is also the co-founder and senior vice president of business strategy at the Canadian Business Strategy Association. With the School of Business aiming to acquire AACSB accreditation, AlHussaini looks forward to contributing to the effort.

**DR. HANINE MANSOUR**

Dr. Hanine Mansour recently joined the School of Pharmacy as clinical assistant professor of pharmacy. Mansour received her Doctor of Pharmacy from LAU in 2002, and completed her post-doctorate training at the Bayfront Medical Center in St. Petersburg, Florida, where she developed protocols for investigational drug studies, and designed continuing education sessions for pharmacists and technicians in the pharmacy department. Mansour aims to contribute to the School of Pharmacy by training future pharmacists to play a vital role in the healthcare system.

**DR. MAHMOUD WAZNE**

Dr. Mahmoud Wazne recently joined LAU as associate professor in the Department of Civil Engineering. Wazne earned his master's in civil engineering from Columbia University in New York, and holds a Ph.D. in environmental engineering from the Stevens Institute of Technology in Hoboken, New Jersey, where he worked from 2005 to 2012 as assistant professor in the Department of Civil, Environmental and Ocean Engineering. Wazne has published several articles in peer-reviewed academic journals, including the Journal of Chemical Technology and Biotechnology and the Journal of Industrial and Engineering Chemistry. Wazne hopes to contribute to the Environmental Science and Engineering programs at LAU through continuous education and research.

**DR. NISREEN BAHNAN**

Dr. Nisreen Bahnan recently joined the School of Business as assistant professor in the Department of Hospitality and Management. Bahnan earned her B.Sc. from LAU, and holds a Ph.D. in business administration – marketing from Temple University in Philadelphia. She has previously served as assistant professor of Marketing at the Webber International University in Florida, and has published several articles under her name in various academic journals, including the Journal of Applied Business Research, and the Journal of International Society of Business Disciplines. Bahnan hopes to deepen the students' understanding of — and appreciation for — the marketing discipline and practice, while expanding her own research agenda.

**GÖKHAN NUMANOGLU**

Gökhan Numanoglu recently joined the School of Architecture and Design as visiting assistant professor of graphic design. Numanoglu received his M.F.A. in Graphic Design from the University of Illinois at Chicago, and is currently completing his Ph.D. in art and design at the University of Art and Design, Linz. Numanoglu's interest in Arabic calligraphy and art in the Middle East encouraged him to come to LAU, where he hopes to “play a part in shaping the fundamentals of a new oriental understanding of visual communication,” while experiencing Lebanon's rich heritage, and familiarizing himself with various traditional art forms in the Middle East.

**DR. HAITHAM TAMIM**

Dr. Haitham Tamim recently joined the School of Business as assistant professor in the Department of Information Technology and Operation Management. He completed his Ph.D. in business administration at the John Molson School of Business in Concordia University in 2011. Prior to joining LAU, Tamim held various academic positions at Concordia University, University of Ottawa, and Carleton University. His research interests include information systems strategy, information technology outsourcing, information technology governance, the impact of information technology on performance, and the adoption of information technology in health care settings.

**DR. ZAFAR U. AHMED**

Dr. Zafar U. Ahmed recently joined the School of Business as a professor of marketing in the Department of Hospitality and Marketing. He earned his MBA in international business from the Texas A&M International University, and a Ph.D. from Utah State University. Prior to joining LAU, Zafar was a tenured professor of marketing and international business at the Texas A&M University-Commerce. Zafar has 25 years of academic experience to his credit, accumulated at six different universities across the US, in addition to over 10 years of experience in industry, working across Africa as an exporter and global entrepreneur. Zafar has been adviser and consultant to numerous governmental organizations, including the Singapore Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the United Nations Development Program, and has published more than 150 refereed scholarly articles under his name.

A New Cycle

Student project wins international sustainability competition

By LAU Staff



After a visit to Dahr el-Megher LAU students take the hand-made products to present and sell them in Beirut

WEcycle, an LAU student-led project aimed at empowering local women in North Lebanon by training them to turn waste materials into saleable handicrafts, took first place in Lebanon — and ranked among the top five internationally — in “Ripples of Happiness,” a sustainability-initiative competition.

Designed by Coca-Cola and INJAZ Al-Arab, Ripples of Happiness fosters social entrepreneurship and leadership skills among university students across the Arab world. Students from several universities competed to develop initiatives responding to critical needs in their respective communities.

WEcycle — the “WE” stands for women’s empowerment — was the fruit of close collaboration between the Outreach and Civic Engagement (OCE) unit and the University Enterprise Office (UEO).

With the help of local high schools, WEcycle collects solid, recyclable waste (including glass, wood and plastic) from Tripoli’s economically disadvantaged Dahr el-Megher neighborhood, which local women use as raw material for handicrafts such as necklaces, bird cages, trays and tissue boxes.

Each product has a tag bearing the name of the woman who made it. Proceeds from sales go to the artisans themselves, as well as the schools.

Students involved in the project have both helped reduce local pollution and learned the importance of youth leadership on environmental issues.

“They are the future of this region,” says project coordinator Reem Assi, a recent LAU graduate in psychology. “We want them to realize that change is in their hands.”

They are left with more than a moral lesson. Thanks to revenues generated, one Dahr el-Megher school was newly equipped with a small library.

“Using the yield of WEcycle in improving the situation of public schools in Lebanon is a significant added value,” says executive director of the OCE unit Elie Samia, adding that involving youth in local development stimulates the economy.

For LAU students, the project is an opportunity to give something back to society, and develop practical skills as they prepare to enter the international workforce.

“If a group of university students can accomplish so much with so little, imagine how many lives could be changed with real resources,” says George Ayoub, a team member from LAU Byblos.

Students in WEcycle have been given two months to implement the project, recruit an entrepreneurial trainer and find a viable market.

The pilot project gave the women total freedom in choosing what to make. As the project is officially implemented, however, there will be greater entrepreneurial emphasis on assessing and meeting demand.

According to Assi, the grant will go toward building a sustainable organization committed to spreading environmental awareness, to inculcating recycling practices in Dahr el-Megher, and to improving the livelihoods of the women involved.

“WEcycle will give these women a source of income,” explains Assi. “This is not your average job. It employs housewives who never previously had the opportunity to work.”

“To be able to be part of this makes me feel proud and gratified,” says Inaya Taleb, a mother of five in her late thirties.

More importantly than the financial rewards, says Assi, is the boost WEcycle provides to participating women’s morale, confidence and sense of productivity, while at the same time instilling local students with a sense of social and environmental responsibility.

“This project has transformed trash into treasure, built a school library, helped the environment, and brought hope and smiles to women in Dahr el-Megher,” says UEO Director Dr. Walid Touma, who is confident that WEcycle can create small ripples of happiness spreading through Lebanon and the region.

A contributing woman proudly presents some of the hand-made products



Pants in the Family

RIP Joseph Haggar, Jr., scion of the Lebanese-American slacks dynasty

By Greg Houle



That the term “slacks” became a household word in post-World-War-II America for a casual pair of trousers — comfortable in fit but a notch more formal than jeans — is largely thanks to the Lebanese immigrant Joseph M. Haggar and his son, Joseph Haggar, Jr. “Haggars” indeed means a pair of slacks as surely as “Levis” means a pair of blue jeans.

This summer saw the passing of Joseph Jr., who was popularly dubbed the “king of slacks” and served as CEO of the Dallas, Texas-based Haggar Corporation since his father’s death in 1987. The two men built a Lebanese-American dynasty, one that helped usher in the “baby boom” generation’s predominant dress code, “business casual.” It will be remembered equally for its innovations in marketing and manufacturing.

Joseph Marion Haggar (known as “J.M.”) was born in Lebanon in the late nineteenth century. He sailed for Mexico at the age of 13 and moved to the United States a few years later. Initially finding work as a dishwasher and window washer, he ended up in the oil and cotton businesses, where his prowess as a salesman became legendary. He founded his company in 1926 and — with the help of “Joe Jr.” — soon turned it into one of the most recognized men’s clothing manufacturers in North America. The Haggar Corporation is responsible for such marketable innovations as “wash ‘n’ wear” slacks, wrinkle-free slacks and stain-resistant fabric.

The rise of Haggar Co. coincided with that of mass media in the United States. It was prescient about the possibilities of relentless marketing, and was in fact the first clothing company to advertise on television in the 1950s. It was ahead of its time in intuiting that the typical American male was fashion-shy, preferring to delegate wardrobe responsibility to his wife, mother, or significant other. A \$10-million “American Generations” series of TV ads in the 1990s — featuring bumbling would-

be Romeos proposing marriage while scrabbling around on the floor and in the pockets of their Haggar khakis looking for missing engagement rings — was characteristic of the company’s canny approach to marketing.

“If you don’t want me running around the White House naked you better get me some clothes,” former U.S. President Lyndon Baines Johnson once bellowed down the phone at Joe Jr. in a direct call from the Oval Office. Buttonholing the king of mass-produced slacks as if he were a custom tailor, the famously micro-managerial Johnson complained of feeling like he was “riding a wire fence,” and demanded half a dozen pairs of trousers with extra-deep pockets and a roomier crotch. Haggar and Johnson both proved ahead of the curve on the fit of men’s trousers, which if anything has only further eased and slackened in the decades since that phone call.

The younger Haggar had joined the family business at 14, and — aside from his World War II service and student years at the University of Notre Dame — worked continuously for it until his retirement in 1995. His role became central during the 1940s, when the company — in the increasingly casual America of the post-war years — redefined what it meant to dress like a man. The “Haggar Harmony Chart” showed men how to “triple your wardrobe” through mixing and matching.

With the younger Haggar at the helm, the company achieved what in retrospect seems a branding coup, marketing style to the fashion-averse with spectacular success. This strategy, along with corporate partnerships forged with retail outlets across North America, effectively turned a comfortable pair of slacks into a corporate empire.

Campusnotes

Edited by Linda Dahdah Douaihy

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

Science and technology



LAU and Benta join hands

On June 12, LAU signed an Experiential Education Agreement with Benta SAL, the prominent Lebanese pharmaceutical and medical manufacturing company. Described as linking theory to practice, the collaboration will provide students and faculty of LAU's School of Pharmacy with access to Benta's facilities, equipment, personnel and services. LAU President Dr. Joseph G. Jabbra also announced the launch of a collaborative first-of-its-kind Industrial Pharmacy Program. Bernard Tannoury, chairperson and CEO of Benta, explained that the company will serve as a training platform for LAU pharmacy students pursuing experiential education and committed to recruiting SOP graduates in the future.

Crucial conversations for leading nurses

Under the name Crucial Conversations, the Alice Ramez Chagoury School of Nursing organized a half-day symposium targeting nurses and nursing leaders in Lebanon on April 20. The symposium aimed to facilitate the ongoing dialogue among international and Lebanese nursing leaders on various issues, and to share information about innovations in nursing education both at LAU and in Lebanon generally. The event provided a platform for all parties to explore three main topics: the role of spirituality in health care, the importance of community outreach in nursing education and practice, and the implementation of inter-professional education in healthcare.



Molecular biology poster conference

The Department of Natural Sciences at LAU Byblos hosted the fifth Annual Poster Conference in Biology and Biomedical Sciences on May 18. The event brought together natural sciences students, faculty members as well as three prominent figures in the field. The conference allowed students an opportunity to get away from their laboratories and promote their research through posters they design themselves. Research topics ranged from cell biology and molecular microbiology to proteomics (the study of proteins).

Business

Family Business round table discussion

The Institute of Family and Entrepreneurial Business organized a roundtable discussion that explored and perused a case entitled "The Crowne Inn: A classic case of a family business in turmoil" on June 26. The event was attended by various members of the institute's Family Business Leaders Network, the first network in the Middle East that allows young family business leaders to converge in order to discuss issues related to the proper functioning of family businesses.



Engineering

Design and Manufacturing Day

The Department of Industrial and Mechanical Engineering organized its fifth annual Design and Manufacturing Day on May 4 on the Byblos campus. Around 150 engineering students from different classes gathered next to the fountain area to display group projects they devised based on their courses. The 50 exhibited projects included solar collectors, a plastic bottle shredder, a solar car, and an electrical car. A major attraction was the Red Rocket, a competition raceboat that had won the American University of Beirut's Remote Control Boat Competition. Another noteworthy project showcased at the exhibition is the Jal el-Dib and Nahr el Mot interchange design. The project was presented to the municipality of Jal el-Dib.



Engineering for a green future

Around 150 mechanical engineering students from the Middle East and South East Asia converged at LAU Byblos on May 11-12 to participate in the American Society of Mechanical Engineers' (ASME) Student Professional Development Conference (SPDC), hosted by AMSE LAU chapter. Under the title "Earth Needs You," the two-day conference created networking opportunities for the participants, supplying a forum for technology and knowledge transfer for both undergraduate and graduate students from renowned universities. The conference provided a forum for students to show their engineering skills and technical know-how in a total of six student competitions.

Sports

LAU Byblos basketball varsity team wins USC Championship

The LAU Captains, the Byblos-campus basketball varsity team, celebrated their victory in the final of the Men's Basketball University Sports Conference (USC) championship on June 2. For the second year in a row, the Captains lifted the prestigious cup, defeating AUB, USJ, Balamand, Antonine University, USEK, Haigazian University as well as the LAU Beirut Basketball team. According to coach and Director of Athletics at LAU Byblos Joe G. Moujaes, the LAU Captains' fighting spirit and aggressive defense strategy early on in the game overwhelmed their adversary's offense. The historic win was a fitting end to a record-breaking year; the LAU Captains suffered only one loss during the regular season.



LAU, Champion of the EuroIbiza Tournament

More than 14 countries and 750 athletes competed in Ibiza, Spain, on April 29 at the EuroIbiza 2012 Student Sports Tournament, where LAU was crowned "Champion University." LAU proved it was a force to be reckoned with as LAU Beirut students competed in a plethora of sports including basketball, volleyball, futsal, football, tennis and table tennis. With exceptional results in nearly all categories and capturing first place in both women's tennis and men's table tennis, LAU accumulated enough points to be honored with the highly prestigious "Challenge Cup" during the closing ceremonies.

Alumni

Farewell to Tomorrow's Leaders

An alumni welcoming ceremony was organized on June 13 to newly graduates who had been studying under the Middle East Partnership Initiative's Tomorrow's Leaders (MEPI-TL) program. Managed by the University Enterprise Office, the program currently hosts 55 students, including 12 graduating students, and hailing from 11 Arab countries. Over the years, the MEPI-TL group has earned a collective reputation for their philanthropic efforts. One of their earliest campaigns was organized in response to the devastating 2010 earthquake in Haiti, raising money to contribute to the relief effort.



Arts and literature



Honoring Chaouki Chamoun

On June 22 LAU honored the life's work of Chaouki Chamoun, renowned painter and coordinator of LAU's fine arts program. In the presence of colleagues, family and friends, LAU President Dr. Joseph G. Jabbara praised the artist's broad vision, universal appeal and ability to transcend fractured communities through art. "I am honored to have received such recognition during my lifetime," Chamoun said. Chamoun, who is president of the Lebanese Artists Association, expressed personal and collective gratitude for the role LAU plays in cultivating and promoting the work of Lebanese artists.

Haas Mroue second annual writing workshop

The Department of Humanities at the School of Arts and Sciences hosted the second annual Haas Mroue Creative Writing Workshop on May 12 at LAU Beirut. The event was coordinated by Samira Shami, an LAU English instructor, and brought together students and faculty from various Lebanese universities. It gave participants an opportunity to sharpen their writing skills as they engaged in four creative writing activities: vignettes, travel carnet, portraits, and image and text. The demand for the workshop was high this year, with many more applicants than open spaces.



Dialogue Under Occupation

Scholars from three continents took part in the "Dialogue Under Occupation VI" conference, hosted mid-May by the Department of Humanities at LAU Beirut. The three-day event showcased a wide range of scholarly research – from disciplines in the humanities as well as the social sciences- on the legal, moral, military, historical and humanitarian dimensions of occupation. According to its founder Dr. Lawrence Berlin, chair of the Department of Anthropology at Northeastern Illinois University, Dialogue Under Occupation began as an idea and has evolved into a sort of movement. Since 2006, the annual conference has been held in locations all over the world, from Chicago to the Palestinian Territories, Bogotá to Okinawa.

Springtime of the poets

LAU's School of Arts and Sciences hosted the awards ceremony for the Spring Poetry Prize on May 16 at LAU Byblos. The event took its inspiration from and followed the framework of Le Printemps des Poètes, an annual international francophone celebration of poetry. In accordance with this year's theme, "Enfances," participants were asked to submit poems on childhood memories. Students of all majors were welcome, as were submissions in Arabic, French and English. A total of 10 poems in Arabic, 21 in English and five in French were submitted and subsequently evaluated by a selection committee that comprised LAU faculty members and Lebanese poets and writers, including the renowned novelist and critic Alexandre Najjar.



International Dance Day Festival

More than 1000 participants from the Lebanese and international dance community gathered at LAU Byblos for the second annual International Dance Day Festival on April 23-28. Workshops, lectures and dance performances the weeklong festival drew dance lovers of all ages. Over the course of the week some sixty-four workshops were conducted by local and international experts, all free of charge. The styles of dance included hip-hop, jazz, break dancing, belly dance, rhumba and salsa. The IDDF in Lebanon is supported by LAU's School of Arts and Sciences and is organized in partnership with the municipality of Byblos.

On the Arab Spring

As part of the Political Science and International Affairs's two-week intensive course on Middle Eastern politics and the Arab Spring, Egypt's Ambassador to Lebanon Mohamed Tawfik gave a talk about the Egyptian revolution and the factors that gave rise to it. Under the title "Middle East Politics and World Affairs," the course focused on the current rise of popular protest movements and collapse of several autocratic regimes in the MENA region. The intensive course lasted from June 11 to June 22, and was jointly delivered by Dr. Imad Salamey, associate professor of political science and international affairs, and Dr. Tamirace Fakhoury, assistant professor of political sciences and international affairs.



CEP



CEP goes to Nabatiyeh

LAU President Dr. Joseph G. Jabbra signed a memorandum of understanding with Lebanese MP Ali Osseiran on April 30 to begin planning for the establishment of a Continuing Education Program Center in partnership with Adel Osseiran Vocational School in the southern city of Nabatieh. Osseiran, son of the late-Lebanese statesman Adel Osseiran, represents the southern district of Zahrani. He said he hoped the establishment of a CEP center in Nabatieh would focus on teacher training. Earlier this year CEP established satellites in Tripoli and Zahle.

Institutes

Art, justice, and societal transformation

The Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World (IWSAW) organized a lecture on May 3 on the role of art in a country or community's social transformation process after a period of gross human rights violations. Gender studies expert Dr. Rosemarie Buikema examined the shifting relationship between legacies of oppression and feminist and post-colonial theories focusing on the case of post-apartheid South Africa. Buikema tackled well-known cases of women murdered under apartheid that inspired South African artists to use art to commemorate their deaths and re-tell their stories.



Learning the free word

LAU's Institute for Media Training and Research (IMTR) hosted a broadcast journalism workshop for 13 Iraqi journalists on the Beirut campus from May 26 to June 6. The seven-day workshop, funded by USAID, allowed participants to enhance their reporting, writing and production skills as well as prompting them to reflect ethical principles relevant to journalistic practice. The workshop comprised daily lectures tackling four main topics: storytelling through images, the importance of research and preproduction, the challenges of working on a visual story if it is picture-poor, and the importance of neutrality and objectivity.

RAYYA MORCOS
B.S. Interior Design '03

For LAU alum Rayya Morcos, fashion was always a part of life. Her mother, a fine arts graduate of LAU (then BUC) infused her life with creativity and inventiveness. "My mother's eccentric style was my early source of inspiration."

She cites LAU as another source: "At LAU I met many interesting people—dynamic classmates and inspiring professors."

Morcos' designs have a kinship with the architectural sensibility she developed at LAU. "I construct clothes," she says, crediting her LAU degree in interior design and the architecture courses she took as fundamental to helping her achieve her signature style. "I design in 3-D."

She launched her "Bird on a Wire" collection in March 2012. "The brand is still young but enthusiasm has been strong," she says brightly. Her clothes are available at downtown boutiques.

RANA ABBOUT
B.A. Communication Arts '02

Rana Abbout's style is anything but ordinary. The LAU alum's eclectic taste manifests itself in her work as a freelance set decorator and wardrobe stylist. Her mother's love of all things artistic — their home was filled with music, film and dance — sparked her interest in fashion.

Her signature look strives to accentuate the strength of women by coupling heightened femininity with rough edges.

Her earliest foray into design was creating costumes for the LAU theatre festival in her final year at the university. "It was the first time the public was going to see my creation, and I was given full freedom to do as I wished. I had only myself to satisfy, and it certainly wasn't easy," she admits. "I turned out to be a very difficult client!"

"My studies at LAU really helped me figure out who I was — and what I wanted to do" she reflects.



RAYYA MORCOS

Alumni Profiles

By Mehrnoush Shafiei



MOHAMMAD KHADRA



KAREN FATTEH

MOHAMMAD KHADRA
B.A. Communication Arts '02

Mohammad "Moe" Khadra is a Lebanese-Omani fashion designer whose path to fashion — and to the founding of the MOK label — took a number of interesting detours. In 2001, while taking courses in communication arts at LAU he found himself drawn to the theater. "Acting and the long rehearsals were the most rewarding aspects of LAU," Khadra recalls.

While still a student he was busy working at Future TV in Beirut, presenting and writing about lifestyle, arts and culture. During this time his passion for fashion ignited.

In addition to a whirlwind of collections and initiatives, MOK recently launched a jewelry line for men. Khadra's upcoming collection will be called "RED" to express solidarity with individuals living with HIV/AIDS. MOK designs are promoted in various department stores and mokmeonline.com.

His advice to budding designers is "love what you do, work hard, but don't take yourself too seriously."

KAREN FATTEH
B.A. Fine Arts '83

A former model, BUC alum Karen Fatteh first became interested in fashion as a hobby. As an advertising student, Fatteh modeled for the LAU fashion show, and her experience at LAU fostered her independence and belief in herself.

Fatteh is the designer behind the brand SKANDI, as well as general manager and CEO of Natuzzi Italian Furniture Group. As a furniture designer, she has a store in Jal-El Dib where she sells and promotes her work.

Fatteh credits her B.A. in Communication Arts for exposing her to a multitude of different fields: "It has opened up many different doors — to advertising, radio, television, fashion, and now furniture design."

"Simplicity, comfort and class" is her fashion mantra. Her advice to budding fashion designers? "The most important thing is to obtain a good education and pick a major that interests you — the rest will just come."

MIRNA HAYEK
B.A. Graphic Design '05)

Mirna Hayek studied graphic design at LAU graduating with honors in 2005. She is a Beirut-based designer who draws inspiration from electronica and 80s-era music.

A longtime freelance graphic designer and fashion illustrator, in 2011 Hayek launched her own label, mirahayek, with a ready-to-wear collection. Fresh out of fashion school in Milan, she went on to prestigious internships at Elie Saab in Beirut and Erdem in London.

"Fashion design was always something that I wanted to pursue, but I studied graphic design at LAU in order to gain a solid foundation in the design world," she says. It was at LAU that she began experimenting in digital illustration — specifically, drawing female figurines — and soon that discovered her true calling was fashion. Her graphic design background is unmistakable in her design style, which is described as playful with geometric cuts and graphic details.

RANIA TOUMA
B.A. in Communication Arts '02

Rania Touma may have studied journalism at LAU, but since her youth she had a more abiding passion for, well...buttons. She began collecting buttons from her family members, and years later had amassed a collection of over half a million vintage buttons of all sizes and shapes.

When Touma launched her fashion accessories collection in 2007, those very buttons were matched with equally eclectic materials to make RaWa — her brand of refined fashion accessories for women.

"I consider each piece as a work of art that tells its own story," she says, adding that her fashion philosophy is ultimately to make women "feel like themselves." She traces this attitude to her university years: "The most distinctive memory from my days at LAU is the very open atmosphere, where everyone is accepted as he or she is."



MIRNA HAYEK



RANIA TOUMA



AMAL SARIEDDINE



RAMY DALLY

AMAL SARIEDDINE
B.A. Interior Architecture '00

LAU alum Amal Saredidine is an acclaimed fashion designer best known for her extravagant evening dresses and bridal gowns. Her mother established her own fashion house forty years ago, and Saredidine has been attracted to fashion ever since.

She says that her LAU education not only oriented her towards marketing and made her savvy about media and branding, but "opened my eyes to the world."

Saredidine says LAU campus life is a microcosm of the real world, "preparing graduates to confront all the challenges and difficulties they'll face in the real world." Today her work is sold in the Middle East, North America and Europe.

RAMI DALLY
B.A. Graphic Design '10

Rami Dally was drawn to LAU's graphic design program for its excellent reputation.

Now visual merchandiser and visual designer for the regional eyewear chain, The Counter, Dally looks back and says the decision to enroll at LAU "had a huge influence on my future career."

His studies at LAU gave him a deeper understanding and appreciation for design. He cites Dr. Yasmine Taan's course on the history of graphic design as being particularly influential in broadening his understanding of the field.

His love of handmade artisan pieces was apparent in his recent exhibition (with other celebrated Beirut-based artists) of a line of crochet products and embroidered caftans.



Trophy Case

MarCom wins CASE award for innovative ad series

By Linda Dahdah



“Acquiring knowledge is not where education ends. It’s where it begins,” is a tagline in a series of creative ads that won LAU’s Marketing and Communications Department (MarCom) an award from the Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE) in its annual District II Accolades.

The series, which highlight LAU’s points of distinction and appear regularly in *LAU Magazine* and *Alumni Bulletin*, won the bronze for the individual advertising category.

Created in partnership with Mind the Gap, a branding consulting agency, the ads are part of a MarCom initiative to enhance LAU’s brand identity.

“The main idea behind these ads was about keeping the best of tradition while embracing the future of LAU,” says Nayla Moujaes, Marcom’s assistant director in charge of the initiative.

Karl Bassil, partner and creative director of Mind the Gap, was pleased by news of the award, saying his firm has “very high hopes for the branding initiative’s ability to shed light on the university’s strengths and improve perceptions of it.”

LAU Magazine had previously won an honorable mention in the category of Visual Design in Print — Illustration for the front cover of its Spring 2009 issue on the global economic crisis, designed by Joelle El Achkar.

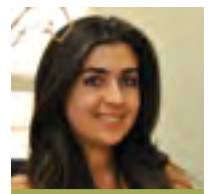
The Council for Advancement and Support of Education is the largest international association of education institutions, a leading resource for professional development, information, and standards in the fields of education fundraising, communications and alumni relations.

One Departure, Two Arrivals

After 18 months of distinguished editorial service for MarCom, content developer **Emily Morris** could not resist the call of the motherland. Morris, who received her bachelor’s degree in broadcast journalism from Boston University, had been globetrotting for six full years. First traveling to Scotland to pursue her master’s at the University of Edinburgh, Morris then set out for Kenya, where she volunteered at a non-profit, before landing in Damascus to work as regional news editor for an English-language newspaper. She brought rich experience and a worldly sensibility to LAU in general and to MarCom in particular. It is with great regret — and fond wishes for her bright future — that the MarCom editorial team bid her farewell.



A Montreal-based Canadian of Iranian descent, **Mehrnoush Shafiei** joined the MarCom team in May 2012 as writer and content developer. An avid writer and political analyst, Mehrnoush has written extensively about Middle Eastern politics and culture. Prior to joining MarCom, she worked in the communications department of a leading think tank in the Middle East. She has also worked at Save the Children Canada in Toronto, where she was responsible for social media and community outreach activities. In 2009, she founded an editing company providing copywriting and translation services to university students and industry professionals. Of her new role chronicling the happenings around LAU, she says, “I look forward to capturing the energetic spirit of campus life.”



Muriel Kahwagi had worked part-time as a MarCom writer and content developer for ten months before becoming full-time in June. A voracious reader and budding journalist who plans eventually to pursue a doctorate in English literature, Kahwagi has written feature articles for Beirut’s Daily Star as well as the arts and culture magazine *F/I/M²/P*. She recently graduated in with a major in nutrition and dietetics from the American University of Beirut (2011, with distinction). Kahwagi says writing for university publications allows her to bring together her science interests and her love for humanities.





Welcome Home

Homecoming 2012 and class reunions gather hundreds of LAU alumni and friends



The LAU Alumni Relations Office hosted over 800 graduates, family members and friends from around the world to the 2012 annual reunions and homecoming events that took place from July 11-15.

The week of gathering and celebration kicked off with the Alumni Dinner at the Phoenicia Hotel in Beirut. "Our Alumni Chapters all over the world play a vital role in strengthening the ties between the alumni and their alma mater," said LAU President Dr. Joseph G. Jabbara at the dinner, adding that the university is taking bold steps toward providing the community with the future it deserves.

That night, two prominent LAU alumni, Lamis Alami and Ahmad Farroukh, were presented with special awards.

Earlier this year, alumni around the world were asked to nominate individuals from among their fellow alumni who have accomplished noteworthy achievements in their respective fields for these awards. The selection committee, consisting of representatives from the Alumni Relations Office, the Alumni Association Board, Student Development and Enrollment Management (SDEM) and Academic Affairs, then selected the award recipients.

The Recognition Award was presented to Lamis Alami (BCW, '64), an exceptional alumna who dedicated her life to teaching, particularly Palestinian refugee women.

Alami has also worked at various NGOs and human rights organizations, and is currently the Minister of Education and Higher Education in the Palestinian Authority.

"I believe in the continuous relationship and collaboration between LAU and civil society," said Alami, before adding "I am proud and honored to be a graduate of this prestigious educational institution."

The Achievement Award was granted to Ahmad Farroukh (BS '83/MBA '90), who is currently group chief operating executive and vice president of the West and Central Africa region at MTN Group Limited. Farroukh is also the founder and owner of Starbow, a regional airline focused on the West African market.

Praising LAU's history and notable achievements, Farroukh extended his gratitude to the university's teachings, attributing his successful career to his years at LAU.

On July 12 and 13, both campuses hosted all-class reunions. This year, the classes of 1962, 1967, 1972, 1977, 1982, 1987, 1992, 1997, 2002, and 2007 were presented with jubilee pins for, respectively, their 5th to 50th graduation anniversaries.

The following days, alumni enjoyed a brunch organized at LAU Beirut and an excursion to the northern city of Douma before the LAU Alumni Association Board honored the 50th Anniversary Graduates at the President's residence on July 16.

In the presence of chapter representatives in Lebanon and around the world, an LAU Alumni Association Board meeting was called to order by its president Leila Saleeby Dagher the next day.

The meeting discussed issues related to the welfare of the alumni, and encouraged more participation from the community.



Alumni Events

April

Alumni Lecture - "Transactional Analysis"

The Alumni Relations Office organized its third lecture for this fiscal year, entitled "Transactional Analysis," as part of its "Keep Learning" lecture program on April 20, 2012 on the Beirut campus. Dr. Hady Safa, who runs STANDARDS – Human Resources Consultants, gave the lecture. Safa is a public management trainer, life coach and motivational speaker. Over 200 alumni and friends attended the event, which was followed by a reception.

Detroit Alumni Chapter - premiere of the Lebanese film "Khallet Wardeh"

On April 18, 2012, the Detroit Chapter organized the premiere of the Lebanese film "Khallet Wardeh" at the Ford Performing Arts Center.

May

BCW Chapter Luncheon

The LAU Alumni Association – BCW Chapter organized a luncheon on May 26, 2012 on the Beirut Campus. Over 150 BCW graduates enjoyed the reception.

Beirut Chapter Lecture By Johnny El Ghouli

More than 150 alumni attended a lecture organized by the Alumni Association's Beirut chapter on May 18, 2012 on the Beirut Campus. The lecture was delivered by life and executive coach Johnny El Ghouli, and entitled "Neuro-Linguistic Programming: A Model of Communication and Personality".

Houston Chapter Family Get Together and Barbecue

The Houston Chapter organized a family get-together and barbecue on May 20, 2012 at Reem El Wali's and Doc's Residence, the Woodlands.

Jordan Chapter Lecture

The Jordan Chapter organized a lecture about nuclear energy on May 9, 2012 at the AUB Alumni Club in Abdoun. The lecture was presented by Dr. Ayyoub Abu Dayyeh, and was attended by more than 50 alumni.

New York /New Jersey Alumni Chapter Walking Tour

The LAU Alumni Association – NY/NJ Chapter organized a Walking Tour on May 20, 2012 in Greenwich Village.

North California Chapter Family picnic

In conjunction with the Lebanese American Association, the North California Chapter organized a family picnic on May 20, 2012 at the Lake Elizabeth Park, Fremont.

North Florida Chapter Family Day

The LAU Alumni of the North Florida Chapter organized a family day on May 6, 2012 on Lake Eola in Orlando.

Riyadh Chapter Comedy Night

The Riyadh Chapter hosted a Comedy Night on May 9 and 10, 2012 at the Lebanese Embassy in Riyadh. The event was a great success, gathering 580 alumni and friends over two nights.

Seattle Chapter get together

The Seattle Chapter organized a dinner and get together on May 5, 2012.





Seminar for Senior Students "Decisions make Destinies"

The Alumni Relations Office organized a seminar entitled "Decisions make Destinies" for senior students on May 17, 2012 on the Beirut campus, and on May 22, 2012 on the Byblos campus.

The seminar addressed the importance of emotional intelligence and the role of one's emotions in taking the decisions that forge one's destiny and life.

The seminar was presented by Dr. Hady Safa, who holds Ph.D. in Talent Management and an MBA in Human Resources Management from Fairfield University.



South Lebanon Alumni Chapter Second Annual Family Picnic

More than 150 alumni, family and friends of the South Lebanon Chapter enjoyed their second annual family picnic on May 20, 2012 at the wild river, Elman area, South Lebanon.



Washington DC Chapter - A Family Bowling Party

Strike! The LAU Alumni Association – Washington DC Chapter organized a family bowling party on May 18, 2012.

June

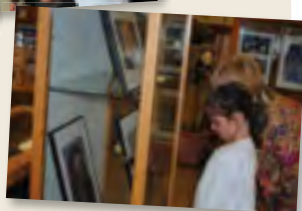


Bahrain Chapter Water Fun Day

The Bahrain Chapter organized a day of water fun at the Lost Paradise of Dilmun Water Park on June 9, 2012.

Beirut Chapter Lou & Lo Puppets Show

On June 9, 2012, the Beirut Chapter organized a puppet show entitled "The Red Balloon" on the Beirut campus.



Southern California Chapter Exhibition

The LAU Alumni Association – Southern California Chapter organized the opening and reception of the Veils Exhibition on June 3, 2012 at the San Diego Public Library.



Toronto Chapter Breakfast in the Park

Around 200 alumni and their families attended the annual Breakfast in the Park on June 3, 2012 at Thomson Park, Toronto, organized by the Toronto Chapter of the Alumni Association.

July

50th Anniversary Graduation

The LAU Alumni Association Board honored the 50th Anniversary Graduates at the residence of LAU President Dr. Joseph G. Jabbara on July 16, 2012, where graduates were presented with 50th Anniversary medals.



Alumni Association Board Meeting

In the presence of chapter representatives in Lebanon and around the world, the LAU Alumni Association Board meeting was called to order by the President of the Alumni Association Board Leila Saleeby Dagher on July 17, 2012 on the Beirut campus.

The meeting aimed to discuss issues related to the welfare of the alumni, and encourage more participation from them.

All chapter representatives reported on their activities during the year, and pitched in ideas to enhance the operations of the chapters.

The Alumni Relations Office reported on the Office's activities during the academic year 2011-2012, and emphasized the University's gratitude for the efforts of the steering committee of the Alumni Association Board.

The Office also thanked the members of the executive committees of chapters for their hard work and dedication to the Alumni Association and the University, promising to provide the necessary support to strengthen the ties between the alumni and their association.



Alumni News



Wafa N. Ghawi Richeh (B.A.'61) celebrated her daughter Alma's graduation ceremony at the American University, Washington College of Law 2010 where she specialized in international legal studies.

Lamia Saab Muhtar (B.A.'72) recently started her own business from home as a freelance artist. Her artwork has been exhibited at various expositions. Previously, Muhtar taught at the Choueifat National School and the International College (IC). She also contributed to the start-up of Busy Box Arts and Crafts Lounge in Hamra and was their art director and consultant for two years.



Helen W. Travis (B.A.'73) is a clerk at Liro Engineering in Syosset, New York. Her career has included work in various sectors such as non-profit, education, law and advertising. In her spare time she manages an estate on Long Island that has been in her family for over 100 years.

Hadia Tabri Muasher (B.A.'74) is the proud grandmother of 15-month-old twins, Karma and Faris Junior. Muasher is an accomplished artist with two successful oil exhibitions to her credit. She has been nominated to be the president of the Friends of Jordan Society, a non-profit organization that helps the poor in Jordan through various community-based initiatives. She is working on becoming a professional yoga instructor.

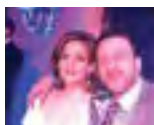
Talal El Khalil (A.A.S.'82) is the Vice President of a 60 billion dollar business, PepsiCo Inc. Khalil received the Donald M. Kendall Award early this year in recognition for the outstanding results obtained by the unit he heads. He currently lives in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia where he manages the PepsiCo Foods business in the Middle East. He earned an M.B.A. in finance from Columbia University Graduate School of Business.

Houda Naccache Akkari (B.A.'87, A.A.S.'85) is the founder of House Maid Services, a local business in Beirut. She married in 1994 and welcomed a son, Bassam Akkari Jr. in 2008.



Dr. Jamal Dardouk (B.A.'86) is the founder and Managing Director of New Frontier Learning Microsoft IT Academy and has been teaching Information Technology and Management studies for several years. Dardouk is the President of the LAU Alumni London Chapter and is a member of the Lebanese Festival Day London Committee, as well as a member of the National College for Leadership of Schools and Children's Services. He holds a bachelor's and master's degree in Hotel Management and International Tourism from Schiller International University and holds a P.G.C.E., Ed.D. in Business Studies and Education from University of London.

Souzane Abdelkhalek (B.A.'91) returned to Lebanon in 2006 after living in Montreal for 14 years and now works in the travel industry. She opened her own agency last year called SUZY TRAVEL. She is married to Nader Abouchacra and has two children, Firas and Lyne.



Ibrahim Zeitoun (B.S.'91) lives in Sydney, Australia, where he is a tax agent at his own accounting company. He is married with two kids, Hassan and Layla.

Amin Younes (B.S.'91) has successfully opened and operated Café Younes in Hamra, Sodeco, Aley and Abdel Aziz. He will be opening his sixth outlet in August 2012 in Byblos off-LAU Campus. The first franchised outlet is due to open at the end of 2012 in Dubai.

Safwan Kaskas (B.S.'93) is married to **Samah Freij ('07)** and they have two children, Omar and Serena. Kaskas has been working as an assistant manager at the Lebanese Islamic Bank.

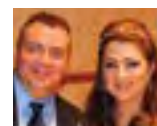


Aline Samoury (B.S.'94) has worked in various local and international organizations, and currently holds the position of Human Resources Manager at USEK University in Kaslik. She is married to Slavy Ghazal and they have twins.

Marwan Sahab (B.A.'97) is currently working as a training and development manager in Cedar White Bradley, an intellectual property firm based in Lebanon.

Bruno Salwan (B.E.'98) is a Deputy Project Manager at Solidere and welcomed a baby girl named Calina on March 2012.

Nada Bazih (B.A.'99) married her lover and companion **Sari El-Jarrah (B.S.'95)** on June 14 in Allen, Texas.



Haytham Yassine (B.S.'93, M.B.A.'00) joined the Central Bank of Lebanon in 1997. He is currently the Assistant Deputy Director of the Special Investigation Commission (SIC)'s Anti Money Laundering Unit. In 2003 he obtained his Ph.D. in Banking & Finance and currently teaches at Morgan International. Yassine is married to Rania Itani and they have two children, Tarek and Mazen.



Malek Mawlawi (B.S.'01) is currently the Head of Program Acquisition in Al Jazeera Media Network in Doha, Qatar. He and his wife, **Ghida Sinno (B.A.'01)**, had a baby boy, Ziad, in May of this year.

Nadine Harfouche (B.S.'01), who graduated with a double major in Biology and Chemistry, currently dedicates some of her time to the occasional translation of documents from Arabic to English.



Ibrahim Serhan (B.S.'02) was recently elected on the Board of Directors of the Arab Federation for Freight Forwarders and Logistics (AFFFAL). This will allow the Gulf Tainer Group, of which Serhan is the representative, to participate in the transportation and logistics policy making in the Arab World.

Linda Noah Dahabra (B.S.'03) gave birth to a healthy baby boy, Omar.



Faisal J. Abbas (B.S.'03) is the new Editor-in-Chief of the English website of the Al Arabiya News Channel. He is also the recipient of the 2009 International Media Council's Cutting Edge in Journalism Award. Abbas is also the member of the Cambridge Union Society, the British Society of Authors and the British National Union of Journalists.

Wassim Mahmoud (B.S.'05) married Sally Yehia who graduated from LAU in June 2008 with a B.A. in Interior Architecture. In June 2011, they welcomed a baby girl, Lamar. He currently works as an assistant investment manager at Injazzat Real Estate Development Company.

Joelle Bassily (B.E.'05) has recently graduated with an M.B.A. from the University of Washington in Seattle. She has contributed as a researcher in partnership with the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation to investigate social development issues.



Hamdan Hamdan (M.S.'05) has obtained his Ph.D. in Physiology and Neuroscience from the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences in the spring of this year. He has received a prestigious postdoctoral fellowship in Baylor College of Medicine. Hamdan looks forward to returning to Lebanon in the future.

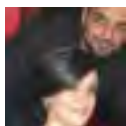
Jony Matta (A.A.'06) is a successful photo stylist and designer. She has worked in the fashion world creating unique accessories, ranging from handbags to hats.

Christine Audi (M.B.A.'06) is moving to Alberta, Canada with her family.



Ali Halawi (M.B.A.'06) earned a Ph.D. in management from Paris II University in June 2012 and is beginning a career in teaching.

Wissam Chehabeddine (M.B.A.'07) wed Mayssa Kassar in June 2012.



Khaled Abdul Ghani (B.S.'08) has recently celebrated his first wedding year anniversary. He has recently promoted as Sales Capability Development Manager at Shaker Group in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia.



Ziad Mroueh (B.E.'09) graduated from LAU and then moved to Barcelona, Spain to complete a Master's Degree in International Business at Universitat Politecnica de Catalunya. Currently, he is one of the leaders of FlyKly in Barcelona, which is dedicated to selling and renting electrical vehicles.



Haytham Ghaddaf (B.S.'06, M.B.A.'09) got married on June 2012.



Said Abou Kharroub (B.S.'10) is currently working as a geographic information systems specialist for the Lebanon Reforestation Initiative, a project implemented by the United States Forest Services - International Program.



Rachad Atat (B.E.'10) earned his M.S. degree in Electrical Engineering from the King Abdullah University of Science and Technology (KAUST), Saudi Arabia in July 2012. He also traveled to China, Australia, India, and the United States to complete various academic internships for the completion of his degree. Atat recently received an admissions offer to pursue his Ph.D. in Wireless Communications at the KTH Royal Institute of Technology in Stockholm, Sweden.

Reham Darwish Ali (B.S.'11) was appointed as the Community Manager of Seeqnce S.A.L. upon graduation. In January of this year, she married Bilal Ali, a business analyst at PNC bank, in Ohio, US, where she is currently pursuing her M.B.A. at Cleveland State University.



Jinan S. Al-Habbal (M.A.'11) is pursuing her Ph.D. at the University of St. Andrews in Scotland in International Relations. Her current research focuses on the institutional impediments for democratization in postwar Lebanon and Iraq.



Dalia Itani (M.A.'11) received her master's in June 2011 after which she got married and moved to Zurich, Switzerland. She is teaching part-time at a Language Center and also taking courses in NLP Coaching.



Hamza Kamil Mohtar (B.S.'12) is a recent graduate of LAU and welcomed a baby girl, Hoda, this year.

Amine A. Fahel (B.S.'08, M.B.A.'12) completed his M.B.A. this year and also got married in February 2012.

In loving memory of



Mrs. May Said Hamadeh (B.A. '69) who passed away on June 21, 2012. She was the loving wife of Dr. Riad Hamadeh and the mother of Ghassan, Leila and Nadim. Earning a Master's degree in English literature from A.U.B., Hamadeh served as the principal of the Shouf National College in Baakleen (1956-1980) where she worked on a voluntary basis. She was also the president of the Board of Trustees of the school (1985-2000). Hamadeh not only served her community of the Shouf area, but also made remarkable changes in the lives of so many. She championed education as a means for creating better society. A true pioneer in her field, she was decorated three times by the Ministry of Education. She will also be remembered for her great love of music and particularly the piano. May her soul rest in peace; she will be greatly missed by all those who knew her.

Leila Costandi Bordcosh (B.A. '64) It is with great sorrow that Rima, Lana, Samer and Lulwa announce the untimely passing of their sister and aunt, Leila. Her memory and reputation as a woman of integrity, generosity, intelligence and good humor will live on and will remain a torch—a beacon of light to those who knew her. To the extended family, Leila was a confidante. To her friends she was supportive, loyal and trustworthy. And towards the world, she contributed an unmatched sense of justice, as demonstrated to her passion and unwavering support to the Palestinian cause. Leila excelled in her career and will be remembered as the first female executive to work in the insurance industry in the Arab world. Leila fractured her pelvis in the winter of 2012, was in and out of hospital since, and ultimately succumbed to a bacterial infection. She will always be remembered for strength and kindness. Visit her memorial website at <http://www.gannonfuneralhome.com>

WHY I GIVE BACK

Dima Ghossaini B.S.'97



What degree did you receive from the university?

I completed my B.S. in business (banking and finance), along with an A.A. in business management.

Where do you live now?

I live in New York City.

What is your occupation? What have you been up to since your university years?

I am the treasurer at Geneva Factors, a company that offers accounting solutions to businesses in a diverse set of industries.

How would you like to see your donations used by the university?

I would like my donations to go to needy but gifted students, to help them pay their tuition and fees. Financial aid is vital for all students and universities, particularly in the current economy.

If you were talking to a freshman enrolling at LAU today, what advice would you give to him or her about the university?

Be wise in choosing your major. Do it thoughtfully, after real reflection on intellectual and economic levels — not just for the sake of getting a degree and because everybody is doing it. Network with friends and professors, have fun while learning as much as you can, and make friends for a lifetime. Get the most out of your university years!

Why do you give back to LAU?

I give to LAU for two simple reasons: Firstly, I have a great love for the university that gave me the education, knowledge, and the tools to succeed in my field. Secondly, I continue to be drawn in by the excellence that LAU provides in so many fields.





Fulfilling the Promise

LAU Campaign for Academic Excellence



✧ EDGAR & DANIELE DE PICCIOTTO ARE FULFILLING THE PROMISE.

Edgar de Picciotto is recognized for bringing vision, ambition and humanity to his business.

He is founder and chairman of the Board of Directors of Union Bancaire Privée, one of the premiere Swiss asset-management banks. His passion for education — and his belief in the importance of finance in today's world — have led him and his wife Daniele to affiliate with LAU.

The de Picciottos recently established a Scholarship Endowment Fund to provide financial assistance to deserving LAU students majoring in banking and finance, and will name a facility at the School of Business' Finance and Accounting Department.



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