

VOLUME 15 | issue n° 3 | Summer 2013

& ALUMNI BULLETIN

Historical trends in Lebanese architecture

Beirut's identity through architecture

Interactions with the waterfront

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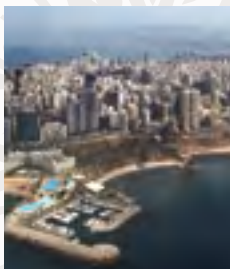
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Letters to the Editor

"I hope my story will inspire LAU students to pursue their passion like I did, follow their dreams, be bold, and be fully aware that we all share this small Blue Dot called Earth, and that we should take good care of it, and ALL the people who inhabit it. Thank you for being so articulate and informative."

—Dr. Charles Elachi, director of NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory

"Mehrnoush Shafiei's article, "Brave New Classroom", beautifully brings to light that technology is an essential tool for any relevant school education these days. Using technology in education is not only a matter of changing **how** learning takes place, but it also leads us to an essential rethinking of **what** is being learned, as well as the need for building new relationships among teachers, students and the learning environment in a classroom."

—Dr. Marjorie Henningsen, Head of School, Wellspring Learning Community

"Muriel Kahwagi's article about the LAU Choir is wonderful, heartfelt and reflects exactly what she and I talked about. Thank you and all the members of your team at MarCom for this well-needed boost."

—Leila Dabaghi, Director of LAU Choir

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Special Thanks

LAU would like to extend a special thanks to **Dr. Maroun El-Daccache**, chair of the Department of Architecture and Interior Design, for his help with this issue. His valuable expertise proved indispensable to the magazine and his passion for the subject matter inspired us all.

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Joseph G. Jabbra

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Cover: Mohammad El Rawas, *Reading Beirut, 2005 (detail)*

Once again an aerial view of Beirut is fragmented, dissected and spread all over the canvas. A new stratum of futuristic urban construction is laid upon the city, gradually burying the ugly history of its inhabitants!

This doomed city will no more be a playground for religious, sectarian and Dark Age fanatic warriors.

I chose to capsule Beirut into its triangular park of pine forest situated at the southern boundary of the city. The pine forest or Horsh Al-Sanawbar, suffered during recent history, it was bombed to burn by Israeli jet fighters during the 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon. From a pine forest over 1,250,000 m² in 1696 to a park over 800,000 m² in 1967, the time when I, as a child, used to enjoy visiting in the company of my family.

Today, Horsh Al-Sanawbar, which had always been considered as the lungs of Beirut, is only 255,000 m².

In *Reading Beirut*, I foresee this Horsh persisting to be a refuge for the futuristic Lebanese militia members to perform their "war games".

LAU Magazine is published quarterly by the Marketing and Communications Department at LAU and is distributed free of charge to alumni, students, staff, faculty, friends and supporters worldwide.

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From the President's Desk

It is often when we stand on the precipice of a mountain or observe the natural beauty of the forest that we begin to question why we surround ourselves with glass and concrete, or endure the daily grind that punctuates almost every moment of city life. The answer is by no means a simple one. It lies within our insatiable longing as humans to interact, share and learn from each other in ways that only become possible when knowledge meets proximity and cities are born.

Since its early 20th-century origins, nestled in the heart of Beirut's relentless and sprawling urban expanse, LAU has embodied the intricate social, economic and intellectual web that holds a city together. The university's programs, its ethos of inclusiveness, and its community-centered approach to expansion has breathed life into the neighborhoods surrounding the Beirut and Byblos campuses. This summer, LAU will embark on its latest addition to city learning in one of the world's greatest metropolises. With the opening of the New York City Academic Center, LAU will give students a blend of American and Lebanese higher learning and culture that no other institution can offer.

But as LAU continues to evolve, we must not forget that the present and future health, wealth and well-being of our cities are nothing more than a reflection of their communities. It is with this in mind that we lay every building block of knowledge and slab of concrete at LAU.

Today, each of the School of Architecture and Design (SArD) students must make a positive contribution at the community level before leaving us to design the cities and spaces of tomorrow. Recognition of SArD has come from far and wide. Less than a year ago, the United States' highest architecture accreditation board began considering the endorsement of LAU's architecture program. This milestone was preceded by SArD being recognized by the French Ministry of Culture, which allowed our graduates to practice all over Europe.

With such progress, however, comes commitment and responsibility. The pace and price of reconstruction in Lebanon's coastal cities has already begun to expulse those who have called them home for generations; people's relationship to the sea and priceless heritage sites have been largely morphed or sacrificed. But because LAU's legacy is intertwined with that of the cities where our campuses are housed, we will hold fast to the notion that we cannot allow their future to be realized at the expense of their past.

This issue of LAU Magazine is a call to action for all who reside in our cities to embrace a culture of sustainable development. Because if we wish to secure a prosperous future for our cities, we must be informed by a sense that where we live and learn ultimately defines who we are.

Joseph G. Jabbra
President





Not Just a Pretty Red Roof

Historical trends in Lebanese architecture

By Mehrnoush Shafiei

It's been said that good architects are bad drivers. "That's because they are always looking up at the built environment," explains architecture student Omar Said with a laugh.

Considering Beirut's architectural richness and unique urban landscape, this is one of those cities where you perhaps wouldn't want too many architects on the road.

Said, a Lebanese expatriate from Canada, takes me on a driving tour as he describes what makes his hometown so compelling. "There is just so much architectural diversity here — from the Ottomans, the French, the civil war," he says, pointing out the dizzying collage.

Like pretty much everything else in the city, architecture is complicated.

"Beirut is a city of complexities and contradictions," says Dr. Elie Haddad, dean of the School of Architecture and Design at LAU. Haddad is part of Worldview, a web-based project of the Architectural League of New York that invites architects from around the world to present reports on what is new and interesting in architecture and urbanism in their respective cities.

In a small country whose history is hotly contested by its inhabitants, Beirut's contours capture a city scarred by the past. "Dramatic paradigm shifts in architectural culture can be readily identified during moments of transition in the country's political history," says Haddad. History weighs heavily in the present reconstruction of the city; it is constantly being redefined and refashioned.

This has resulted in certain eras being favored over others. "What people generally consider 'real' Lebanese architecture is the style that was predominant during the French mandate period," explains Haddad, referring to the time between 1920 and 1943.

La Maison Libanaise

Refashioned as a national icon, the "Lebanese house" is defined as the "bourgeoisie central hall house" — characterized by its cubic form, red-tile roof and triple-arch openings at the center of the main façade. The construction material is predominantly sandstone covered by stucco in the coastal cities, limestone in the mountains.

It is these sorts of distinguishing traits that some point to as a model of Lebanon's exceptionalism. "Unfortunately, many of these ideas do not hold up when looked at more closely," reveals Haddad.

Hailed as a distinguishing Lebanese feature, the central hall is in fact an archetype that has been in constant use since antiquity. It is found in Tuscan and Venetian buildings, among other places. >





A 19th century palace in Beiteddine, Lebanon

The irony is that “La maison libanaise” was ubiquitous before Lebanon existed as an independent political entity.

“Put simply, there is no such thing as Lebanese architecture,” Haddad says matter-of-factly. “Most of the motifs and designs you find in Lebanon could be found in other places, like Palestine, Syria and all across the Mediterranean.

Concrete Arabesque

When the nation finally gained independence on November 22, 1943, a period of architectural modernism was ushered in. This is actually when we begin to see the seeds of exceptionalism sprouting, as Lebanon began to distinguish itself from its neighbors.

“Building trends that were happening in Lebanon during that time were not occurring anywhere else in the region,” says Haddad.

The term “modern architecture” refers to a specific movement in the architectural profession, which began in the early 20th century and lasted until the late 1970s. Often confused with contemporary architecture, Modernism is a school of thought that encourages architectural simplicity. It avoids ornamentation and decoration, employing a strictly rational approach to the design of space, and truthfulness to materials and their properties.

In the Lebanese context, the movement began with the introduction of concrete in the 1920s — it was first imported and then locally produced after the 1950s. Concrete was more economically attractive compared to stone carving, leading to its widespread use in home construction. Modernism took off in the years between 1943 and 1975, a period of radical

transformation in both the landscape of Beirut and the life of its urban dwellers.

Brutalism, a subgenre of Modernism, also found many manifestations in the Beirut of the 1950s. The term comes from the French *Beton Brut* (rough concrete), and the trend is characterized by buildings that exhibit a stern, almost fortress-like character composed largely of concrete façades. This style can be frequently seen in Hamra, where the Central Bank serves as a prime example.

“The best architecture was produced during this time,” enthuses Dr. George Arbid, architecture professor at the American University of Beirut (AUB). Arbid rallies against an increasingly outdated notion that Lebanon’s architectural history is confined to the traditional and red-roofed.

A champion of the modernist movement, Arbid notes with regret that many people view Lebanese modernist architecture as an almost alien imposition. “On the contrary, this was the period when architecture became very much linked to the idea of state-building and nationalism.”

The 1940s and 1950s were formative years for the Lebanese state, and such architecture was used to build an image of Lebanon as a modern nation, open to innovation and capitalism.

The movement peaked during the 1950s, a highly romanticized period referred to as the Golden Age of Lebanon, when Beirut earned the nickname the “Paris of the Middle East.”

Some reject assumed uniformity that accompanies Modernism, but according to Arbid, modernist architecture in Lebanon did in fact take local nuances into consideration. “Though Modernism was accompanied by capitalism and a globalized economy, there was always room for tradition,” explains Arbid. “Lebanese modernist buildings still accommodated Lebanese climate topography, life-style and culture,” he adds.



A more recent building in downtown Beirut, characterized by multiple arches

For example, elements were incorporated into the façade of some buildings to protect the interior from the strong beams of an oppressive sun. The Central Bank building in Hamra and the Presidential Palace in Baabda bear such modifications.

The outbreak of the civil war in 1975 all but ended the modernist craze. When the last shot was fired 15 years later, the city began constructing anew, and the past became somehow distained.

The 1980s brought a reaction against modernism — there seemed to be a panic about identity and there was a longing for a bygone era. “The past was romanticized,” explains Haddad, “and you see this in the Presidential Palace, which was designed in a more ‘Lebanese’ way, with arches, arcaded galleries and central halls. Many architects began looking for ways to design in a way that would reflect the French mandate period. Red-tiled roofs and triple arches became very much in vogue... and still are.”

Indeed, the building at the beginning of Rue Gouraud in Gemmayze has a triple arch on the façade facing the street and a triple arch on the perpendicular façade. Traditionally, buildings with central-hall plans only had one set of triple arches — the second set was glued onto the Rue Gouraud building to increase its “Lebanese-ness.”

What we see is a particular narrative and rediscovery of history changing the trajectory of architectural trends.

At the end of the 1980s, as war loosened its grip on the city, the cracks of gunshots were replaced by the loud bangs of construction.

The 1990s essentially marked the last nail in the coffin of the Modernist movement and brought forth a crisis of the state and of nation-building. In the fog of war and its aftermath, the urge to “recreate” Lebanon’s architectural legacy was strong. Leading the

way was Solidere, which was given a *carte blanche* to demolish and reconstruct downtown Beirut.

Critics say the reconstruction, while repairing Beirut’s “history,” actually ripped out the historical heart of the city. The development company has elicited a sanguine response from some circles and provoked an outright *cri de cœur* in others. Though built in the shadow of war, traces of the violence are all but erased (with the exception of the Holiday Inn), and the area known as Solidere almost exclusively caters to the well heeled.

The post-war tendency toward regression to the past may discomfit students of architecture, explains Said. “Too much historical consideration can limit innovation for young architects who do not want to feel constrained by the distant past.”

How does the new generation of architects feel about their predecessors? Said plays off a quote attributed to philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein, who says ideas are like ladders; they get us to a platform, but once we arrive there, we need to kick the ladder away. “This is how we should view Lebanese historical trends,” he says. “We don’t want to feel trapped or constrained by history; we want to do something new.”

Otherwise, all we will be left with is pretty red roofs. ■



Beyond Medication

Clinical pharmacy services at UMC-RH offer holistic approach

By Paige Kollock



Gone are the days when a pharmacist was seen solely as a dispenser of drugs.

"The practice of pharmacy has evolved tremendously over the last few years, shifting from dispensing medication to a more patient-centered, holistic approach," says Dr. Aline Saad, assistant professor and chair of LAU's Department of Pharmaceutical Practice.

Clinical pharmacy is the branch of the field in which pharmacists optimize the use of medication to promote health, wellness and disease prevention. Clinical pharmacists care for patients in all healthcare settings, but the clinical pharmacy movement initially began inside hospitals and clinics.

"Two major shifts in the American pharmacy profession precipitated the emergence of clinical pharmacy in the 1960s: a shift in the focus of pharmacy education from chemistry to biology, and in pharmacy practice from product to patient," says Dr. Imad Btaiche, associate dean of the School of Pharmacy.

"The medical community had just begun to understand the costs and consequences of inappropriate use of medications, and the nascent field of clinical pharmacy — with its emphasis on patient education — made itself immediately valuable in this area."

LAU-affiliated University Medical Center-Rizk Hospital (UMC-RH) is the first hospital in Lebanon to establish clinical pharmacy services. Dr. Nibal Chamoun is coordinator of the program, which consists of five medical professionals specialized in the fields of cardiology, infectious disease and outpatient care. Chamoun is hoping to add more staff in the fields of internal medicine, nephrology, and medication safety and discharge by the fall.

"As clinical pharmacists we're that second set of eyes. As drug experts, we can give recommendations as to a more appropriate drug, notice if there's a drug duplication, or screen for negative drug interactions," she says.

Members of her team meet with doctors in the morning and listen to patient cases, focusing on drug therapy.

As clinical pharmacy becomes standard in hospitals worldwide, LAU students will be prepared. "At UMC-RH, they're doing rotations in the ER, the intensive care unit, so they're responsible for most of the groundwork, and they discuss it with their clinical faculty."

For physicians like Dr. Georges Ghanem, head of the Cardiology Department, the benefit of clinical pharmacists is demonstrable.

"They integrated actively into the team, participating in the rounds, discussing the charts, looking closely at the medications, pointing out potential drug interactions or dosage problems, helping us adjust the treatment according to many variables such as the renal function, body weight, age, etc.," he says, recalling the case of a severely obese patient with a bilateral pulmonary embolism, where the right dosage of anti-coagulation medicine necessitated deep and complicated research.

"It was a complex life-saving approach where the synergy between the clinicians and the clinical pharmacists offered the patient the best quality of care."

According to Saad, there's a draft law in Lebanon that would require hospitals to hire a clinical pharmacist, but for now, UMC-RH is playing a unique, pioneering role with the implementation of such services.



"The practice of pharmacy has evolved tremendously over the last few years, shifting from dispensing medication to a more patient-centered, holistic approach."

—Dr. Aline Saad, chair, Department of Pharmacy Practice



360-Degree Care

Inter-professional education optimizes patient-centered care

By Paige Kollock



“Healthcare students have been in silos, and they don’t know how to work together when they get out.”

—Dr. Nancy Hoffart, dean of the Alice Ramez Chagoury School of Nursing

Millions of people worldwide are dying or suffering harm every year as a result of medical errors and healthcare-associated infections. In the U.S., more than 40,000 die needlessly each year from medical mistakes, according to data from the Institute of Medicine.

Those and other startling facts were revealed to an auditorium packed with LAU students on March 20, at one of LAU’s inter-professional education seminars, called “IPE Days,” in which students from the schools of medicine, nursing and pharmacy, as well as social medicine and nutrition students, teamed up for enhanced education. The day included lectures, a video on medical errors and case studies, in which students from different disciplines worked with one another to solve a medical dilemma.

“Healthcare students have been in silos, and they don’t know how to work together when they get out,” says Dr. Nancy Hoffart, dean of the School of Nursing who helped establish the concept of inter-professional education at LAU. “We have different languages. We speak differently. There are status issues as well,” she explains. To combat these tendencies, she is spearheading the IPE Work Group, a team made up of 11 faculty members who meet regularly to discuss ways to improve interdisciplinary communication, as well as to organize relevant IPE days.

“We started clinical learning experiences such as the Volunteer Outreach Clinic at the Shatila camp, where students from various schools visit and provide care,” says Hoffart. Since last year, students have also been working together at University Medical Center-Rizk Hospital doing medication rounds.

“The trend now in healthcare is moving beyond disciplines, beyond one entity, and finding the best way to work together for the good of the patients,” says Dr. Mona Haidar, faculty member at the School of Medicine and one of the IPE facilitators.

LAU has been observing inter-professional education for the past four years, says Haidar, and is a pioneer of the concept in Lebanon and in the region.

Students are responding enthusiastically to the initiative.

“I find it really enriching,” says fourth-year pharmacy student Patrick Tannous.

“When we learn this process early on in our education, cooperating with a medical team becomes a habit, and we’ll be better prepared in our careers.”

IPE also facilitates relationships between students and faculty that don’t typically meet.

“It’s encouraging interaction between the students and faculty on a social level,” says Haidar.

The rise of inter-professional education is the result of a desire to optimize patient-centered care. Teaching students to think together in an academic setting enables them to work together more efficiently in a hospital or clinic.

Previously, pharmacists were confined to the hospital pharmacy, says Dr. Rony Zeenny, clinical assistant professor at the School of Pharmacy.

“Now they have an integral role on the floor, at the patients’ bedside” he says. Doctors are appreciating the value of pharmacists making rounds with them, providing them with information about drugs — the best combination, or efficacy, or safety information — so, medical teams are changing.”



Rue Allenby, Beirut, circa 1910. Anonymous photographer. Image courtesy of Peter Matar

Makeshift Memory

Re/Deconstructing Beirut's identity through architecture

By Muriel Kahwagi



Martyrs' Square, Beirut, circa 1930. Anonymous photographer. Image courtesy of Peter Matar

“The prevailing obsession among contemporary artists to portray Beirut almost exclusively through the prism of war” — that egomaniacal infatuation and narcissistic fascination with the romanticized capital that Lebanese architect Bernard Khoury spoke about in 2010 — has glamorized phoenix-like Beirut to no end.

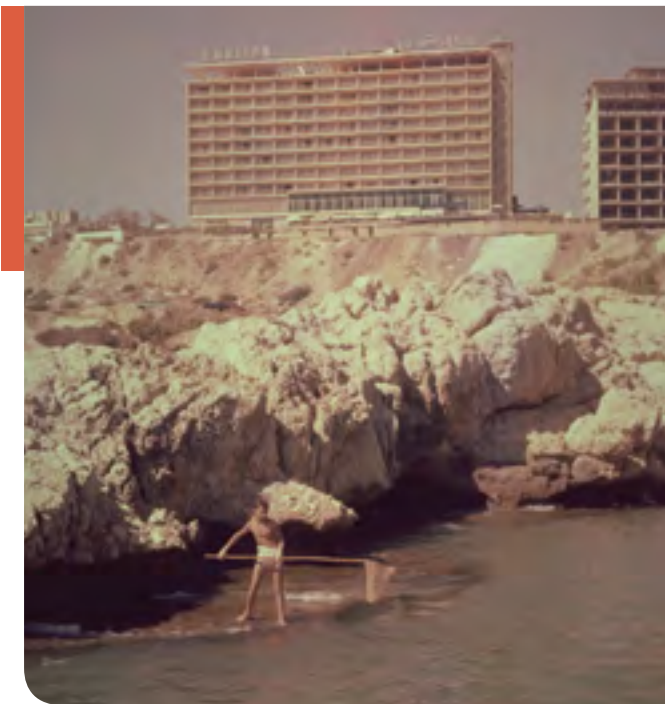
Legend has it that the city was destroyed seven times in its long history, making it all too beguiling to depict as a damsel in distress. Indeed, the city's mercurial composition — corporeal and spiritual — has enabled it to not only survive, but arguably to thrive on, the many metamorphoses it has undergone.

Having been practically razed to the ground and fiercely re-erected after over a decade of armed conflict, an almost inherently entropic Beirut attempted — much like its own residents — to recreate itself.

In the face of perpetual reconstruction and relentless transformations, however, Beirut has become a tableau of architectural mishmash. The urban sprawl the city was subjected to in the mid-1990s was instrumental in demolishing much of its cultural heritage, thus altering its unique architectural makeup.

Cities — like love and war — are a man-made thing, and are thus almost as intrinsically vital and animate as their creators. You cannot analyze a city without anatomizing the people who live in it first; metropolises are a reflection of their inhabitants, and this is particularly true in the case of Beirut. But a city's identity is also built on memory, and Beirut's architectural amnesia hinders its maturation.

“Change, almost by its very nature, is and should be drastic. All cities change, not just Beirut. But the pace and forcefulness of this change in Beirut is phenomenal,” says Mazen Haidar, conservationist, architect and lecturer at LAU's Department of Architecture. “The city is constantly recreating itself, but this is actually preventing it from establishing a true identity. For Beirut to have a distinct identity, it has to protect itself against these >



The Carlton Hotel, Raouche, circa 1950. Anonymous photographer. Image courtesy of the Ministry of Tourism (Lebanon)

constant transformations” — the most recent one of which materialized in the early 1990s, after the conclusion of the civil war.

Ironically, the war proved to be immensely chivalrous toward Beirut’s architectural heritage. The city was in a ruthless state of stagnancy, during which construction seldom took place, and many of its urban paragons were preserved. Post-war reconstruction, however, cast an entirely new veil over the city, causing it to be completely detached from — and, some would argue, untrue to — its history.

“Beirut’s current architectural makeup doesn’t reflect its people’s collective experience,” explains Haidar. “It’s a city that is rejecting its own past.”

Beirut’s post-war reconstruction may reflect the desire of its inhabitants to blank out years of warfare and start their lives anew. However, “Space,” writes French philosopher and sociologist Maurice Halbwachs, “is a reality that endures: since our impressions rush by, one after another, and leave nothing behind in the mind, we can understand how we recapture the past only by understanding how it is, in effect, preserved by our physical surroundings,” and thus, “every collective memory unfolds within a spatial framework.”

But a city’s architectonic landscape — indeed, its very identity — is not defined exclusively by, nor is it the sole property of, its creators. Whatever house, building or edifice an architect devises is almost inherently an orphaned creature, and will remain so until it is adopted by the inhabitants of the city; only then does it acquire true value. Its worth lies not in the identity or intentions of its creator, but in its uses, its historical context, the relationship and the intimacy that the people establish with it, and how they can relate to it.

Martyrs’ Square, argues Haidar, is a notable example of the intertwining of a city’s identity with its people’s. Known as Place des Canons in the 19th century, it witnessed the execution of many Lebanese nationalists during World War I, giving it the

name Martyrs’ Square. During the 1940s and 1950s, the square, strategically located in the very heart of Beirut, was the “center of the city geographically, physically, socially and politically,” writes Lebanese architect Sandra Rishani.

But what was once Beirut’s sweetheart was a sealed and frozen wretch during the civil war, both in space and in people’s memories. “The whole area was frozen in time — and equally importantly, it was guarded from forgetfulness,” says Haidar.

The architect explains that the square’s perfect detachment from the vicissitudes of everyday life catalyzed its glorification in people’s memories, rendering it a place where they would want (and want their children to want) to build further recollections. “One generation was constantly communicating its memories of the square to a younger generation. Martyrs’ Square became a lionized entity,” he says.

But the significant changes the square was liable to in the mid-1990s altered its topography — and consequently, its identity — significantly, compromising the relationship between the city’s past and its present as a result.

“The relationship between these two generations was also severed because the older one had built its identity around a city that the younger one could not quite relate to anymore,” explains Haidar. “The older generation’s memories were somewhat aloof to the younger one because the city itself had changed, and the hope of building an identity around it was adrift. The city’s past and its present need to be reconciled.” And the first step toward achieving this unification, according to Haidar, lies in preserving as much of Beirut’s heritage as possible.

The concept of architectural heritage and preservation gained momentum in the 19th century and acknowledges a certain acceptance of any given city’s past. But the very flexibility of the word “heritage” makes it difficult to determine what constitutes heritage and what does not. In other words, it makes it difficult to determine what should be preserved and what should not.

“You cannot reduce architectural heritage to a single building. If you want to preserve a city’s heritage, you have to preserve the identity of certain districts as a whole, not just specific buildings.”

—Giorgio Tarraf, spokesperson of Save Beirut Heritage

“When people think of architectural heritage, they often think of pre-18th century architecture — they think of arches, red tiles and wooden windows. But modernist architecture [the 1930s through the 1960s], which is often neglected, is just as important to preserve,” says Giorgio Tarraf, spokesperson of Save Beirut Heritage, a Beirut-based cultural heritage organization. Founded by activist Naji Esther in 2010, the group aims to preserve the architectural heritage of Beirut, which is being increasingly imperiled by unchecked construction.

True enough, modernist constructions like the Union building in Hamra (designed by Lebanese architect Antoun Tabet), the Horseshoe building in Hamra, and the Carlton Hotel in Raouche (designed by Polish architect Karol Schayer) tend to be overlooked as iconic architectural edifices — but not by everyone.

Tarraf maintains that the importance of saving Beirut’s heritage lies in the fact that it is first and foremost “a witness — a witness of history, of the past, of the people’s misadventures. And to kill



The Horseshoe café, Hamra, circa 1970. Photograph by Fulvio Roiter. Image courtesy of the Ministry of Tourism (Lebanon)

a witness is an offense.” But saving Beirut’s witnesses is no easy task. Out of 1,600 buildings (most of which are from the Ottoman period or the French mandate) that the Ministry of Culture listed as historical landmarks in Beirut, only 200 remain unscathed today.

Still, “We have managed to save over 150 heritage houses in Beirut in the past three years,” says Tarraf with palpable pride. “Among them are seven historical buildings on Lebanon Street, three heritage houses in Zokak el-Blat, and, most recent of all, the Egg,” referring to the oval-shaped Beirut City Center, which was designed by Lebanese modernist architect Joseph Philippe Karam in the 1960s.

Despite Save Beirut Heritage’s remarkable achievements, Tarraf stresses that “you cannot reduce architectural heritage to a single building. If you want to preserve a city’s heritage, you have to preserve the identity of certain districts as a whole, not just specific buildings.”

Be that as it may, Raya Daouk, president of the Association pour la Protection des Sites et Anciennes Demeures au Liban (APSAD), believes that saving Beirut’s heritage transcends sheer romanticism and takes on a utilitarian role as well. Co-founded by Lady Yvonne Sursock Cochrane, Assem Salam and Camille Aboussouan in 1960, APSAD is a non-profit public interest organization that promotes the protection and restoration of ancient historic buildings, and encourages investors to participate in this preservation in view of, among others, its economic benefits.

“Preserving Beirut’s heritage preserves the city’s soul; it safeguards the people’s pneuma,” says Daouk. “And more than that, it provides visual and aesthetic respite from the congestion of the city. These historic sun-flooded constructions are built on great open and green spaces — and these things are quite scarce in Beirut.”

Echoing Tarraf and Haidar, Daouk stresses that a city “should mirror the people who live in it; it should cater to their needs. We should look after Beirut’s architectural history, because it is also our own.”

Indeed, Beirut’s longing for — and willfulness to search for — its identity bears a striking resemblance to Berlin’s quest for self-reinvention post-reunification. Both cities, in fact, have peculiarly parallel histories. Having witnessed years of conflict, they were divided into East and West and were finally reunified in 1989 — the year the Berlin wall fell and the Lebanese civil war came to an end.

In her essay entitled “Collective Memory, Identity And Place Making In Reunified Berlin,” German entrepreneur Luise Heidenreich writes that Berlin “appears as a fragmented landscape, in which all discontinuities, all historical and ideological breaks are visible ... [It is] a city always in search of erasing some parts of the past, while simultaneously maintaining others.”

Concurrently, one could argue that the same could be said of Beirut, as well. ■

Late 19th century architecture, Achrafieh. Photograph by Pierre Zabbal. Image courtesy of the Ministry of Tourism (Lebanon)



LAU *Gala dinner* 2013

Partnered for Excellence

Fashioning a Brighter Future

LAU's second gala dinner celebrates new Elie Saab fashion design program

By Dalila Mahdawi



"Just as the first law school and the first Arab university were in Beirut, and because Beirut is always at the forefront of new disciplines, it is natural that the first academic fashion design program in the Arab world should be in Beirut too."

—Elie Saab

As the erudite playwright Oscar Wilde once noted, "You can never be overdressed or overeducated."

At LAU's second annual fundraising gala dinner on March 16, where the Elie Saab Bachelor of Arts in Fashion Design was formally launched, the worlds of fashion and education came together seamlessly.

The sold-out event drew over 900 people to BIEL, including an impressive constellation of Lebanese dignitaries, major donors and international celebrities. The extravaganza also marked the formal launch of LAU's second major fundraising campaign, Fulfilling the Promise.

In his welcoming remarks, LAU President Dr. Joseph G. Jabbara thanked those in attendance, noting that LAU's ascent from a small women's school to a major regional university had been made possible thanks to the unwavering support of donors like them.

Such support has empowered LAU to grow into a formidable educational institution anchored by a commitment to serve the community, he said. "As

part of that commitment, LAU and internationally acclaimed fashion designer Elie Saab have joined hands to provide what is expected to become one of the region's most highly sought-after academic degrees." The Fashion Design program will be spearheaded by Saab and taught in collaboration with reputable fashion schools in the United Kingdom. Merging fashion and the liberal arts, it is the first program of its kind in the Middle East to be led by such a high-profile figure.

"Just as the first law school and the first Arab university were in Beirut, and because Beirut is always at the forefront of new disciplines, it is natural that the first academic fashion design program in the Arab world should be in Beirut too," said guest of honor Elie Saab.

"The fact that this degree will carry my name is both a tremendous honor and a great responsibility," he told the audience. "I will sign a degree when I myself never went to university. For that reason, I would love to open a door that was closed in my face for young people wishing to pursue

Aileen Agopian, senior vice president and international senior specialist in contemporary art at Sotheby's, and Gala dinner MC, TV host Jourmana Bou Eid, preside over the evening's auction



careers in fashion." Entry to the program is expected to be highly competitive.

LAU's accomplishments in recent years have been a "dream come true," said Jabbra, noting that the university's 8,000 students in Beirut and Byblos will soon also have access to a third campus in the heart of New York City. The new mini-campus, to be inaugurated in September 2013, will provide students with an opportunity to study in the U.S. It will also allow American students to draw upon LAU's unique expertise in Middle Eastern studies, Islamic banking, Arabic language and conflict resolution.

Closer to home, the university continues to grow, both in stature and in academic prowess, Jabbra noted. LAU continues to introduce new courses in response to emerging needs in the region, and to add highly qualified international professionals to its faculty. Fall 2013 will mark another achievement: The graduation of the inaugural classes from the schools of Medicine and Nursing.

The generosity of LAU's alumni and supporters has been crucial to every

milestone in the university's history, said Jabbra. Their faith in LAU reveals an "unshakeable commitment to the well-being and welfare of society, and an obligation to our beloved sons and daughters, who are our only beacon of hope in a region that is becoming more and more bereft of hope."

The evening raised over \$1 million toward scholarships for needy and deserving students. Supporting the education of academically gifted students is a top priority for LAU; this academic year alone, the university has provided over \$15 million in financial aid to 30 percent of its student body.

The gala dinner, which was organized by a committee chaired by Jabbra, was hosted by media personality Jourmana Bou Eid. Aileen Agopian, senior vice president and international senior specialist in contemporary art at Sotheby's, flew in from the U.S. to preside over an exciting auction of antique and contemporary artwork.

Critically acclaimed opera singer Tania Kassis delivered beautiful renditions of

Nassib Nasr, Assistant Vice President for Development, MENA and Europe, Dr. Paul Boulos, Chairman of the Board of Trustees, Mrs. May Ogden-Smith, Dr. Joseph Jabbra, HE Dr. Raymond Audi of LAU's Board of International Advisors



HE Mrs. Leila El-Solh Hamade, HE Fouad Siniora and his spouse Huda, HE Mr. Michel Pharaon



the Lebanese national anthem and LAU's alma mater song, while Manal Mallat provided the evening's entertainment. A short film outlining LAU's vision for growth over the next few years was shown. As the evening drew to a close, guests were offered ELIE SAAB perfume.

The evening's splendor was made possible thanks to the generosity of the following friends: ELIE SAAB GROUP, Makhzoumi Foundation, Suad Hussein Juffali Foundation, Amal and Rima Hourani, Amer and Tania Hourani, George and Suha Farha, Wael Hourani, Salwa Said Khoury, Medgulf, Safadi Foundation, Dar al Handasah, Mzaar Ski Resort and Mazaar 2000, AL MABANI General Contractors, Jamal Trust Bank, Khayreddine and Dina El Jisr, IDM, Caretek, Eva Farha, George Doumet, Aramex, Sophie's Choice, May Khalil, and Sotheby's.

To apply to the Elie Saab Bachelor of Arts in Fashion Design, visit:
www.admissions.lau.edu.lb/apply

Fondation Louis Cardahi

Bringing Byblos' Treasures to Life

Cardahi family donates Byblos heritage foundation and museum to LAU

By Dalila Mahdawi

The picturesque coastal city of Byblos has long been cherished for its cobbled streets, charming port and idyllic beaches. A UNESCO World Heritage site, it is believed to be the oldest continuously inhabited city in the world.

In order to extend quality education to students outside Beirut, LAU opened a campus in the Byblos hills in 1991. Thanks to a recent donation, the university now has a presence in the heart of Byblos' old city too.

In February, the Cardahi family announced the donation of the Louis Cardahi Museum and Foundation to the university. Comprising a beautiful stone house and surrounding land with extensive views of Byblos, the Cardahi premises and mission will now be under LAU's charge.

Born in Byblos in 1929, Louis Cardahi was an engineer who established the Entreprise de Bâtiments et de Travaux Publics. His passion for preserving his home city's history, architecture and culture led him to co-found the Cultural Council of the Jbeil [Byblos] Region.

He was committed to the social, cultural and economic development of Byblos, said his son and former Telecommunications Minister Jean-

Louis Cardahi, who noted that his father initiated and financed the building of Byblos' first secondary school in the 1960s, believing an "educated and cultured youth would contribute positively to establishing a pluralistic and tolerant civil society."

The museum and foundation were set up in his memory by his wife Mona, Jean-Louis and daughter Suzy following his death in 1992. It holds a number of historical artifacts, works of art and documentary films about Byblos. The premises also contain a library with over 1,500 works charting the city's historical evolution. "It encourages heritage conservation by providing visitors with an appreciation of the port city's past," said Jean-Louis.

"Tonight is a very exciting night because two institutions are coming together to pursue most noble causes," said LAU President Dr. Joseph G. Jabbra at a donation ceremony held on the Byblos campus attended by foreign and Lebanese dignitaries. "The Louis Cardahi Foundation has long been dedicated to education and to the pursuit of knowledge about our beloved Lebanon."

A slideshow presentation by LAU graphic design student Joyce Khalifeh

provided a history of the foundation and the treasures it houses.

As part of the agreement, a governing board of five LAU representatives and two Cardahi family representatives will be established to oversee the foundation's strategic planning. LAU will provide the budget and the human resources, including financial aid students, to run daily operations. Students from the School of Architecture and Design and from the School of Arts and Sciences' Humanities Department will have the unique opportunity to do internships at the museum.

"We will be indefatigable in our efforts to ensure that the foundation continues to grow, expand and benefit our community, our youth and our beloved Lebanon," said Jabbra.

Jean-Louis Cardahi expressed his hope that the LAU Louis Cardahi Foundation, as it will now be known, will continue to encourage Lebanese youth to respect their country's rich heritage. "After all, culture is what remains when we have forgotten what we learned in the classroom," he said.

Located in the heart of Byblos' old town, the Cardahi foundation holds a number of historical artifacts, artworks and documentary films





Building Blocks

SArD final year projects breathe innovation into communities

By LAU Staff

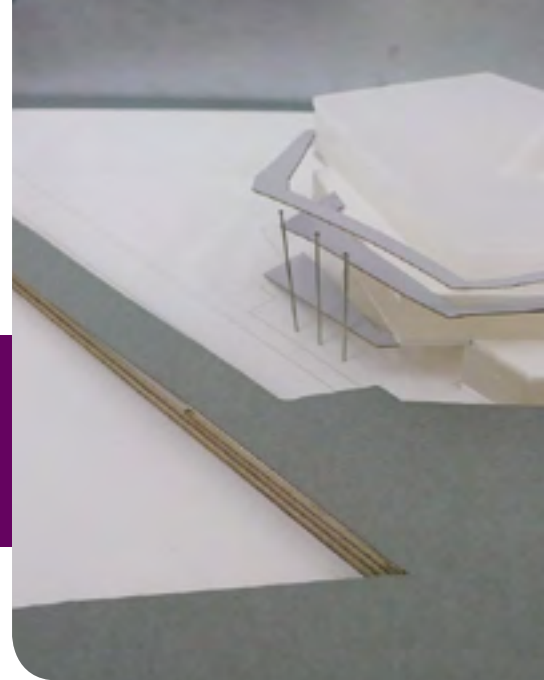
"Since 2006 when we started this initiative, we have been working with the municipalities in order to encourage our students to build a relationship between practice and theory. This allows students to see the city from a different point of view and better assess how to reconstruct the public space given the area's laws and regulations. Our hope is to really implement these projects one day."

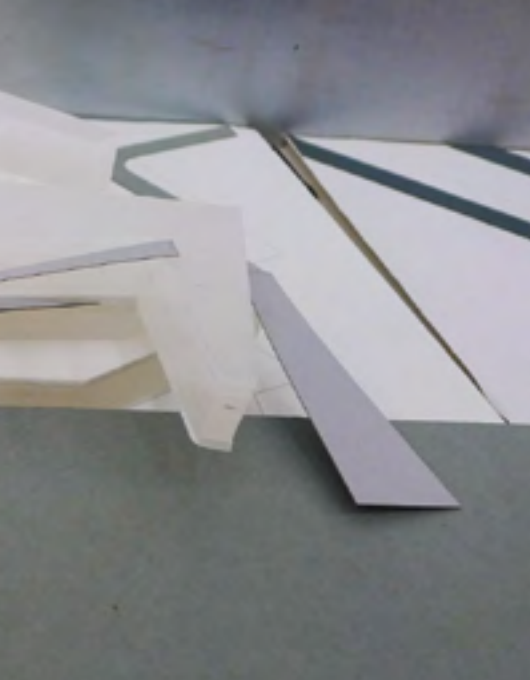
—Dr. Maroun El-Daccache, chair of the Department of Architecture and Interior Design

What do mythology, biology and erratic weather patterns have in common? The answer: They are all sources of inspiration for LAU architecture students' final year projects.

"The final year project is a time of high pressure," admits School of Architecture and Design Lecturer Antoine Lahoud, explaining that the fourth-year students had total free reign over the design of their projects. Such freedom can be both liberating and stress-inducing as the students put their hearts into their last major undertaking before they graduate.

The product of a partnership between the university and the public sector, final year projects combine academic musings with practical considerations. As such, a member of the Byblos municipality interacts with students and sits on the jury that judges their projects. "We want an architect from the municipality present to make sure the students' ideas are contained within real codes," explains Lahoud.





Nathalie Spendjian's project, dubbed "The Nest," was inspired by the myths that define the ancient city of Byblos, a UNESCO World Heritage site. "Many of the anecdotes of this city prominently feature mythic birds such as Osiris, Isis and the Phoenix," she says, adding, "This is when it hit me that the bird itself is an architect — creating an intricate nest for herself and her family." In addition, the Lebanese, like many bird species, are typical migrators — they travel abroad and then come back to their home country. This is how Spendjian's idea for building a cultural center for Lebanese expatriates came about. Her design features a museum, a dormitory and a learning center to help expats cultivate a sense of Lebanese identity. Like a bird's nest, the various compartments of the center are divided in a radial manner, and Spendjian envisions a ramp, like twigs, that guides visitors to different corners. The building would also feature an open space for exhibitions and theatrical performances.



Student Rana Hatem also drew inspiration from nature, but only after conducting exhaustive analyses of the city of Byblos. "I discovered there were many layers to the city — an urban fabric level, a street level and a house level," she says. As she analyzed these layers, she found they had different spatial variations and that some areas had life, while others were essentially stagnant. When she honed in on the parts of the city that were dynamic she discovered that a curious analogy could be made with a cyclone — and so she began to study phases of cyclone formation, aiming to replicate the natural phenomenon's life cycle, but also avoid the final stage, which is destruction. Hatem chose a patch of virgin land near a roundabout for her project site. Inspired by the flow of movement, her concept comprises a social and cultural center for the older generations of Byblos to enjoy. "A sort of therapy center, but through art," she explains. A circular courtyard that embodies the ideas of energy and movement sits in the middle of the center for optimal socialization. The material Hatem selected for the structure — corten steel — would also age with time. "The building itself would not be static," she says.

Favoring more a hands-on approach, lecturer Dr. Joseph Kiprianos prefers to steer his students toward a less abstract methodology for coming up with their ideas. "We encourage students to do a thorough analysis of the urban tissue and design according to the needs of the people." Consequently, his pupils undergo rigorous research and analysis before they start designing.

After analyzing the chaotic expansion of the urban tissue of Habboub over the past 20 years, Kiprianos' student Jessica Khayat decided to create a public service for the city's inhabitants. Since the area, which is a suburb of Byblos, lacks outdoor public spaces, Khayat chose to work on a site characterized as a green zone by the Department of Urban Planning. Situated between two hills, she envisioned transforming the space into a park where residents can come together and participate in recreational activities. The idea is to create a space where children and adults can be entertained while also communicating with one another, creating a family spirit. The 145,000 square meters of parkland will include functions for adults, such as a library and clubhouse, and some for children, such as playgrounds, video-game spaces, and skateboard and bicycle lanes. It will also include common spaces such as picnic areas and restaurants. The main goal of the project is to foster intimacy through public spaces, focusing on visual and spatial interactions.



Student Georges Abiaad had an unexpected challenge to overcome when he proposed his project, a countryside performing arts complex located in Ehmej. The village he decided to base his project in had virgin land that was the subject of local superstition. "If you build on this virgin land, something tragic will happen to your family," villagers told him. After some cajoling, he managed to break the taboo and convince residents of the benefits of his project. While conducting interviews with many of the village's 4,000 residents, he found they had a keen interest in having a space to hold yearly festivals to support musical talents and local artisans. Fittingly, Abiaad's complex, which was inspired by renowned international projects, would accommodate dance, music and theatre and would help infuse money into the local economy.

On Cities

By Elie G. Haddad

“Today’s citizen is a person who has retreated from the public sphere, which no longer affords the space for meaningful and significant interactions among strangers.”

—Dr. Elie G. Haddad, dean of the School of Architecture and Design



Left: Beirut's Weygand Street
Courtesy the Daily Star



Right: Pericles, an eminent Athenian politician, delivers a funeral oration at the end of the first year of the Peloponnesian War (431-404 BC). One of the hallmarks of Greek civilization was the polis, or city-state.

American sociologist Richard Sennett wrote several works on cities, among them *The Fall of Public Man*, published in 1977, in which the author observed that today's citizen has lost much of what the cities of the 18th century had to offer: the possibilities of social intercourse. Today's citizen is a person who has retreated from the public sphere, which no longer affords the space for meaningful and significant interactions among strangers. Instead, a fearful, introverted individual has replaced the outgoing and exploratory city dweller of previous times. If Sennett were to update his work today, his findings would be even more alarming, as so much of the “progress” in the digital world has effectively stripped public space of its significance, reducing it to transient space rather than a “place” for the exchange of ideas and the celebration of rituals.

Indeed, few places around the world have survived this tendency. I remember landing on the shores of the great city of Boston in 1985 as a stranger, and how much of that original city spirit was still in the air. For me, Boston offered not only a haven, but also an unlimited space for social interaction and exploration. That great green part of the city, so aptly named the Commons, was on weekends and holidays a bazaar of ideologies and ideas, perhaps reminiscent of what the Greek agora was at the time of Socrates, a space of debates and a market of ideas. Members of various civic organizations, religious sects and political parties marketed their ideas and arguments, sitting at small tables that were transformed into temporary political platforms. There, I was exposed for the first

time to Buddhism, to Tibetan aspirations for autonomy, to Amnesty International and myriad other organizations. The city was obviously much more than a center of commerce or industry; it was a political space, in the original sense of the term.

Back to Beirut. The city in which I grew up has lost much of what used to characterize it. While the war had a saving effect on many zones that were frozen in time, after the war, instead of an aggressive approach of preservation, laissez-faire policies surrendered the city to the profit-driven economic imperative. The once continuous street-walls — formed by buildings of harmonious scale, with their uninterrupted sidewalks that provide the primary space for urban life — gave way to the erratic growth of competing structures, each one claiming primacy of presence. The continuity of the urban fabric collapsed under the multiple perforations of new developments, irreversibly changing the character of whole neighborhoods.

In Beirut, the dissolution of the urban fabric has inadvertently brought with it the erasure of memory, which may be the reason behind the proliferation of nostalgic publications documenting the history of the city through old photographs. Yet photography cannot recreate urban space, with its constituent artifacts and memory. This remains an urgent task for urban planners, architects and, most importantly, for citizens. In a country where urban planning is considered an offshoot of transportation engineering, and where heritage is considered a surplus value that can be injected into new developments, the problem of reconstituting a genuine public space is indeed a difficult task.

Yet some hope remains in the increasing awareness of young people, who are waging battles against the desecration of historic landmarks and neighborhoods, and by these actions reasserting their right to the city. Perhaps, through these acts of resistance, the idea of the city can be reborn.

Dr. Elie G. Haddad is the dean of the School of Architecture and Design at LAU.



Dance on Vaseline

LAU celebrates International Dance Day Festival in Lebanon

By Muriel Kahwagi

"[Dance] is a universal language. No matter where performers come from, no matter what language they speak, they can communicate through dance."

—Dr. Nadra Assaf, lecturer of English and dance

In a 1985 interview with The New York Times, American modern dancer and choreographer Martha Graham was quoted as saying, "Dance is the hidden language of the soul, of the body. To me, the body says what words cannot" — an ethos that Dr. Nadra Assaf, lecturer of English and dance at LAU, devoutly consigns to.

"[Dance] is a universal language. It's the common denominator among performers," says Assaf. "No matter where they come from, no matter what language they speak, they can communicate through dance."

From April 25 till May 2, hundreds of local and international dancers and dance enthusiasts flocked to LAU Byblos and spoke the unifying language of dance during the International Dance Day Festival in Lebanon.

International Dance Day is celebrated worldwide on April 29 and was introduced for the very first time in 1982 by the International Dance Committee of the UNESCO International Theatre Institute. Propelled by her amaranthine fervor for dancing, and disheartened by the lack of dance and cultural awareness in the country, Assaf launched the festival in Lebanon in 2011 — a tailored form of its 1982 precursor — to encourage the creation of new artistic endeavors by both established and emerging choreographers in

the region, and to preserve Lebanese dance heritage through the continuous reproduction of classic performances.

Now in its third year, the festival aims to foster a lusty understanding of the cultural and historical significance of dance by providing a sound, scientific and aesthetic foundation for the professional education and training of young dancers. It also intends to broaden dancers and choreographers' exposure to international dancing prowess by hosting workshops delivered by artists and performers from Europe, the United States, Canada and Russia.

"These workshops are open to dancers and non-dancers alike — anyone who appreciates this form of art, or is simply curious to see what the festival is about," says Assaf. "People are often insecure about their own dancing skills, but it's important to stress that anyone can dance. Passion is the only thing you should worry about bringing to the table."

This year's eclectic workshop selection ranged from jazz, hip-hop and salsa to dabkeh, ballet and tap dance.

Paula Peters, a dance instructor at the University of Washington, gave multiple jazz dance workshops at the festival, one of which was attended by more than 90 people. "It was such a remarkable sight," said Peters. "Some participants knew very little about jazz prior to the workshop, but the energy and enthusiasm that filled the auditorium were palpable. As a dance teacher, this can be very encouraging. It makes me want to give my all."

"I've always admired jazz, but I never quite had the time to take up classes," says Maya Saleh, a student at the University of Balamand. "Jazz makes you feel every muscle, every limb. When the workshop was over, I felt like my body suddenly came to life, like it had been sleeping all my life."



FEATURE

The City and the Sea

Beirut's interactions with its waterfront

By Brooke Grasberger



Though the sea is not visible from the seventh floor of a Ras Beirut apartment building, its presence in the hazy distance is palpable. Between the concrete towers and the sky hovers an emptiness, the point at which the city drops off and gives way to its greatest boundary: the Mediterranean.

Seen from the center of the city, the sea first appears as a blue haze on the horizon, a darker version of the sky that seems to hang above the city like a wall. As you walk down toward the coastline proper, the vista that greets you could be anything from a wide-open sea view to a wall covered in barbed wire; large portions of the coastline are private clubs, military installations, cafes or otherwise restricted areas.

For a city that is in great part surrounded by water, Beirut's coastline acts as more of a closed border than a space for human and marine interaction. Dr. Nicola Santini, a visiting professor at LAU's School of Architecture and Design, recently co-curated a Beirut-themed issue of architecture magazine *Area 120*. "The relationship that exists between Beirut and the sea is more of a disconnection," he says, noting that the seaside highway acts as a band of separation between much of the city and the waterfront.

Nonetheless, there are designated areas from which city residents and visitors can view the sea, the most broadly accessed of these being the Corniche, where joggers, fishermen and families congregate. Even here, though, the presence of the railings serves as a visual delineation, differentiating the sea from the land. The dean of LAU's school of Architecture and Design, Dr. Elie Haddad, remarks that though the seafront is restricted in many areas, "there are loopholes and gaps that people can slip through." Through certain channels, people can directly access the sea from Beirut. But, Haddad says, "These routes are defined by class and serve to separate the city's population further from itself." This is in contrast, he says, to the normal role of the coast, which is to bring together people from all classes.

The coastline has not always been so sharply delineated from the city, however. Photographs of Beirut harbor from the late 19th and early 20th centuries reveal the harbor's past — quays lined with small fishing boats, a skyline dotted with the spars of larger ships, and clusters of landlubbers gathered at the port to step onto small boats for transportation or pleasure cruises along the city's watery borders. Other photos, from later in the 20th century, show crowds gathered at the beach that used to adjoin the St. Georges Hotel. Now much of the waterfront is either cut off or devoted to an access to the sea that is visual >

only, the tactile element having long since vanished. Though there is still a working port, it is not accessible to the public and is mostly invisible to it, and many of the fishermen and boatmen who depended upon the sea for their living have been edged out by restricted access and new developments, an issue explored in a recent art and research project.

Abir Saksouk-Sasso is an architect and urban planner as well as a member of the Dictaphone Group, a collection of artists that conducts extensive research projects on various areas of culture and history. She recently led an effort to investigate the relationship that exists between Beirutis and their sea, the fruits of which were displayed in an interactive live performance entitled “This Sea is Mine,” in which members of the Dictaphone Group brought their audience on a boat ride between Ain el-Mreisseh and Ramlet el-Baida beach. They showed areas of the coastline and their various borders and restrictions, how they’ve been developed over the years since the end of the civil war, and what the future may hold.

“The relationship that exists between the city and the sea is more of a disconnection.”

—Dr. Nicola Santini, visiting professor of architecture at LAU

“The goal,” says Saksouk, “was to explore ownership of these places as well as the laws that govern their usage,” laws which, she notes, are not being followed. The question of ownership of the waterfront has become even more relevant in recent months with the striking of public sector workers. The strikers demand that hotels and other institutions built on the waterfront be taxed, as they contest the land was stolen from the public domain.

Saksouk’s research reveals an increasingly large disconnect in the relationship that people of Beirut feel with the sea that surrounds them. As the shape of the land has changed, with new towers and roads springing up along the coast, ordinary people have been cut off from the water. They see it as scenery now, something to watch and not to interact with too closely.

Hala Younes, an architect and former professor at LAU, has sought to repair at least a portion of this disconnect. Her installation “Waterfront,” which was displayed last year at the Hangar at UMAM, played sounds and sights from the ocean as it interacts with the seawall of the “Normandy” landfill near Beirut’s downtown area. She believes part of the reason for the disjointed relationship between Beirut and the sea is caused by the fact that there is “no memory” associated with the coastline; the landfill area is an entirely new space with no cultural significance attached to it. Her exhibit thus came with an appeal to her fellow Beirutis: “You have one and a half kilometers of a new shoreline that you don’t know, so please go and get acquainted with this place.”

She wants people to strengthen their connections to the parts of Beirut’s waterfront that are still public, forming new memories and associations, if there are none there already. In this way, the city will be able to salvage and repair the relationship that has in some ways been damaged over the course of the years.

The landfill is slated to return to the public domain in a few years, to be maintained by the Beirut municipality, but Younes is skeptical of the efficacy of the project. “Look at Beirut’s park,” she says, “it’s maintained by the municipality and it has been closed for over ten years.”

Toward Beirut’s downtown area, the seafront has been shaped by Solidere, which has constructed, or given permission for the construction of, numerous buildings along the tract that separates the city from the sea. The company is in the midst of a project called the “New Waterfront District,” which will further develop sections of the city’s coast adjacent to the central district. A new marina, shops, restaurants and walkways are all in store for the new district, which the firm hopes will bring a sense of vitality to the area surrounding the sea.

Solidere has been instrumental in reclaiming land from the sea over the years, land that is in large part composed of the crumbled wreckage that was left behind after the civil war. At the moment, their best-known mark on the face of the waterfront is Zaitunay Bay, a protected inner harbor that houses a cluster of yachts and restaurants, as well as a pedestrian walkway.

Joe Chemali, general manager at LeoComm, the communications arm of advertising agency Leo Burnett, ran the campaign that introduced Zaitunay Bay to the world. The development project, in his words, embodies “the new modern façade of Beirut” and is “a destination rather than a real estate project.” It is in essence designed to act as a conduit between the city and the sea.

Solidere does, however, face criticism from many corners, the most visible incarnation of which is the enormous banner that hangs from the landmark St. Georges Hotel and Marina. Shaped like a stop sign, the white text in the center reads simply, “Stop Solidere.”

The hotel’s website elaborates further on this sentiment, contesting that Solidere has illegally cut it off from the sea and limited its access to the waterfront. This dispute is emblematic of some of the deeper forces at work within the city: a desire to rebuild Beirut stronger and more lasting, but also to protect and save the city’s built and natural environment. In addition, it throws a small amount of light on the complexities of the laws that govern the use and development of space, not just on the waterfront, but in the city in general.

In the face of further privatization, the Beirut waterfront has long since lost the defining trait of a coastline: its ability to be “the great leveler of social divides.” Caught in the midst of arguments over what should be done with the coast, Beirutis do not feel the strong sense of communion with the sea that one might expect from a city nearly surrounded by it. But, as Haddad says, “People long for the sea, always.” Beirutis are no exception to this, as evidenced by the crowds that every day gather along the Corniche to gaze into the endless blue of the Mediterranean.

If this natural longing continues to search for outlets, the future of Beirut’s coastline could be bright, and its harmonious connection with the sea restored. ■



1	2
3	4
	5

- 1| **Beirut port.**
Beirut/Lebanon, 1930
Jibrail Jabbur
Collection AIF/ Norma Jabbur
Copyright © Arab Image Foundation
- 2| **Beirut port.**
Beirut/Lebanon, 1860 - 1870
Tancrede R. Dumas
Collection AIF/Nawaf Salam
Copyright © Arab Image Foundation
- 3| **The Saint Georges Hotel bay.**
Ain el Mreisseh/Beirut/Lebanon,
1960 - 1969
Manoug
Collection AIF/Jorge Abud Chami
Copyright © Arab Image Foundation
- 4| **Beirut port.**
Beirut/Lebanon, 1930
Jibrail Jabbur
Collection AIF/ Norma Jabbur
Copyright © Arab Image Foundation
- 5| **Port of Beirut.**
Beirut/Lebanon
Unidentified photographer
Collection AIF/Jorge Abud Chami
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Beirut, Interrupted

A portrait of the city as a seesaw

By Maroun El-Daccache



The serpentine convolution of the urban transformation that Beirut has undergone in the past 15 years can be chiefly attributed to the development of its infrastructure — not only as a materialization of urban reconstruction, but as a symptomatic manifestation of the shifting relationship between time, space and territory in the city.

The urbanization of Beirut has radically transformed the city in its entirety, changing its topography and configuration, and ultimately redefining the urban space through new infrastructure that controls and demarcates its territory. Beirut has morphed into a city that is painfully self-conscious of its dichotomous disposition. Though the city center is virtually held incommunicado, Beirut nonetheless acts as a middleman between other coastal cities — Jounieh and Tripoli in the North, and Sidon and Tyr in the South.

This phenomenon has created an elemental rupture in the city's urban coherence, a break between Beirut's collective memory — contingent upon its people's shared past and history and the city's erstwhile function as a communal space — and its individual memory, which limits itself to the immediacy of physical space, independent of the historical and societal values attached to it.

The city center — rejecting the metropolitan and urban activities that found a fitting home in the suburbs — has lost its prestige and status as a bona fide public space that allows merchants and customers to congregate. The citizens of Beirut thus can no longer identify themselves with it, as the new commercial, administrative and cultural centers are now dispersed throughout the city.

As a result, the exchange between the

city center and the suburbs, when it does occur, does so on the basis of mercantile and speculative logistics that reject every previously set grid of functions. Beirut of today is a metropolis that refuses and denies the potential embodiment of "place."

The city is everywhere; we no longer live in Beirut, but in its territory, and the very possibility of delineating the city's boundaries today is almost inconceivable. Beirut has become a purely technical and administrative entity, its borders a sheer artifice, its terrain a cartographic landscape, devoid of any architectural witness to the people's collective history.

There is no doubt that the Beirut we currently live in constitutes a radical challenge to any traditional form of communitarian life, and the city's refusal to conform to standard urban benchmarks sets it apart from its coastal counterparts. But living in a city transcends the mere occupation of its immediate space and necessitates a heartfelt embrace of its history in relation to its present.

On that account, the inhabitants of Beirut have lost faith in its authenticity. The space they occupy is viewed as temporary, and they are unable to relate to or empathize with it in its present form. Such is the price of globalization and urbanization. Is it time we questioned our adopted values and social movements? Should we look at Beirut as an educational institution without dogmatic and ideological biases? Perhaps the answers to these questions lie in the city itself.

Dr. Maroun El-Daccache is the chairperson of the Department of Architecture and Interior Design at LAU.

"The urbanization of Beirut has radically transformed the city in its entirety, changing its topography and configuration, and ultimately redefining the urban space through new infrastructure that controls and demarcates its territory."

—Dr. Maroun El-Daccache, chair of the Department of Architecture and Interior Design

Investing in Human Capital

Recruitment challenges in the Middle East

By Mehrnoush Shafiei



LAU Provost Dr. Najjar shared his insights with the audience

Not so long ago, the concept of human resources was synonymous with simple payroll management. “Unfortunately, in the Middle East region, this elementary understanding of what human resources is still persists,” says LAU’s dean of the School of Business, Dr. Said Elfakhani.

In a bold leap forward, the business school has taken the lead to ensure that a culture of investing in human capital takes hold in the region.

Come this fall, students will have the opportunity to pursue an M.B.A in Human Resources, a unique offering that is sure to attract talented applicants from Lebanon and the region.

“The key to a successful business is to have the right people in the right position.”

—Dr. George K. Najjar, LAU Provost

“There is a dire need for this to occur, especially in light of the significant recruitment challenges that are faced by employers in the Middle East,” continues Elfakhani.

Indeed, those very challenges were the topic of discussion during a lecture hosted

by the Department of Management Studies at LAU Beirut on March 7.

The event was in line with the department’s mission to familiarize students with the knowledge, skills and abilities required to build a fruitful career path.

“The key to a successful business is to have the right people in the right position,” said Dr. George K. Najjar, LAU provost, as he kicked off the event. “The old employment paradigm was based on land, capital and labor, but there is a recognition now of the importance of investing in human capital.”

According to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), youth unemployment in the region hovers around 26 percent, the highest in the world. In Lebanon, youths aged 15 to 24 represent half of the country’s unemployed population.

Speaking at the event, Deloitte Regional Talent and Communications Partner Rana Salhab said there is a genuine talent paradox in the Middle East. “There is high unemployment, yet employers face major challenges in recruiting qualified talent,” she explained.

On the other hand, employers are also facing challenges keeping top employees and offering them meaningful and fulfilling work. “Retaining A-plus employees is a

priority. If they don’t feel like the work adds meaning to their lives they will walk out the door,” she insisted.

Echoing Salhab’s observations, Jihad Njeim, assistant vice president for human resources at LAU, stressed the importance of building a culture of employee retention. He also advised students to link their personalities with their chosen career paths. “Your career starts at the age of eight,” he said provocatively. “That is when your personality unfolds and it becomes clear what sorts of professions you will instinctively excel in.”

“This event was extremely valuable because it gave students a rare opportunity to gain an inside look from the employer’s perspective,” said Charbel Aoun, instructor at LAU’s School of Business and part of the organizing committee headed by Dr. Sylva Karkourian, chairperson of the Department of Management Studies.

On a positive note, the panel concurred that LAU graduates have a reputation for making an impact wherever they decide to pursue their careers.

Indeed, says third-year Political Science student Maya Sawwan, “It’s nice to know that a degree from LAU will take me far, but this event motivated me to make sure I have the right work ethic that employers are seeking.”

The Race for Space

LAU's capital projects are full steam ahead

LAU's capital projects are in full swing. The university's rapid growth has created a need to expand and upgrade to meet the requirements of faculty, students and staff, and to foster the strength of our academic programs while providing a conducive and comfortable work environment. As part of the \$240 million capital projects budget, a total of 20 renovation and deferred maintenance projects with an aggregate budget exceeding \$2.5 million are under way. The Facilities Management Department is relentlessly working towards meeting the growing space demand and at the same time increasing operations and maintenance capacities.

CHAGOURY HEALTH SCIENCES CENTER

The Chagoury Health Sciences Center in Byblos is nearing completion. The spectacular six-floor, 15,500 square meter modern complex was specifically designed to motivate students, promote learning and meet the needs of the health sciences academic programs and schools.

The building boasts technological solutions such as video-conferencing, digitized collections of microscope slides and a state-of-the-art simulation center. It will host the Gilbert and Rose-Marie Chagoury School of Medicine, the School of Pharmacy and the Alice Ramez Chagoury School of Nursing, providing a unique opportunity for students of these disciplines to interact, share expertise and develop into well-rounded professionals.



BYBLOS CAMPUS



BYBLOS INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECT

A project to upgrade the infrastructure of the Byblos campus is well underway. New facilities will provide the Byblos campus with nine megawatts of backup power, a central chilled water air conditioning plant, a central boiler plant for heating, a wastewater treatment plant, a water pumping plant, a main central water storage reservoir and a power substation. Infrastructure upgrades are expected to be completed in 2015.



UNDERGROUND PARKING GARAGE

With the goal of greening the Byblos campus, both internally and externally, as well as the need to accommodate more parking spaces, LAU has decided to build a new five-story underground parking garage, leaving more space for grass and landscaping. In a creative use of space, the garage's rooftops will have green terraces that can be used for social gatherings and events. Phase I of the 625-car garage, which will include a bomb shelter on its lowest level, has been completed, while the works for Phase II related to finishing the Underground Parking facility were recently awarded. This state-of-the-art facility will be operated through a modern parking management system, and is expected to be ready in 2014.

GIBRAN LIBRARY

Award-winning architecture firm Atelier Pagnamenta Torriani has finalized the conceptual design for the new Gibran Library on the Byblos Campus. Drawing on the resources and expertise of the staff at the Riad Nasser Library, the new facility will feature two adjacent buildings with a stunning canyon-like space between them. With a growing student body, it is designed to accommodate over 500 students at one time. A LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) consultant has been engaged to seek LEED-Gold Accreditation for the building, which will open its doors in fall 2015.



SCHOOL OF ENGINEERING WORKSHOP AND LABS

Excavation for the construction of the new School of Engineering's labs and workshops building has begun in Byblos, with an anticipated date of completion to coincide with the unveiling of the new library. The labs will offer a space for students and faculty to conduct research in a cooperative environment, using the latest technology for industrial, mechanical, computer, civil, and chemical engineering.



FREM CIVIC CENTER

The Byblos campus is reaping the benefits of the Frem Civic Center, which was inaugurated in 2011. The center was conceived as a vehicle to foster collaboration and cross-disciplinary dialogue among various departments. With its multi-purpose hall, meeting rooms, seminar rooms and complete energy efficiency, it provides a place for planned or impromptu gatherings, and for intellectual debate. Workshops, seminars and lectures on transparency, and ethical and sound governance practices, are being held in Frem. It houses offices for the School of Business, the University Enterprise Office and Outreach and Civic Engagement Unit, in addition to other LAU centers and institutes. It is also currently home to a temporary Clinical Simulation Center, a cutting edge lab used by all health education majors.



SPORTS CENTER

With a university-wide focus on health and the cultivation of the whole person, a new sports center is planned for the Byblos campus. The facility will include a track and swimming pool, a gymnasium, a health spa as well as a multitude of indoor and outdoor courts. The project is planned for completion in 2016-2017.



BEIRUT CAMPUS

GEZAIRI BUILDING

The university has recently acquired the former headquarters of leading shipping company Gezairi Transport. Located one block from Beirut campus on Sadat Street, it comprises a main building with a three-floor penthouse, a large theater and offices. The property also includes a school, which Gezairi Transport donated after relocating to Downtown Beirut. Eleven classrooms have been renovated and used during this academic year.

Upon completion, the premises will house all School of Architecture and Design programs and functions, including the new Fashion Design program.

"Because space in Lebanon is scarce and precious, we are working to optimize the use of our land. To that end, we are also renovating ageing buildings, equipping them with advanced, modern, intelligent and energy efficient building systems."

—Georges Hamouche, assistant vice president for Facilities Management



LEARNING RESOURCE CENTER

The LRC building is undergoing major renovations to provide a state-of-the-art student center that will include student lounges, lecture halls, conference rooms, Red Cross and nurses offices, a choir room, music practice rooms, office space for student clubs and organizations, career counseling offices and a fitness center, among other key learning and civic life entities. The new student center was driven by a desire to integrate academics and social life as LAU continues to cultivate a holistic approach to education.

Completion is expected in July 2013.



ARTS AND SCIENCES BUILDING

The School of Arts and Sciences in Beirut is getting a new building; a \$50-million, 18,000 square-meter facility which will house classrooms, studios, labs and offices, with a projected completion date in 2016-17. The complex will provide additional academic space and replaces some functions currently housed in Nicol Hall, Orme-Gray, Sage Hall, and Shannon Hall.



INFRASTRUCTURE AND DATA CENTER

Part I: Power plant – (8 MW) of power, a medium voltage loop running across the Beirut campus to feed the existing buildings, new transformers' and electrical rooms, upgrading of the buildings' main distribution panels, low voltage systems, earthing and lightning protection.

Part II: Data Center – The Project entails upgrading the main Beirut campus data center. The design was completed, tendered and awarded in 2013 Execution will start in May 2013 and the project is expected to be completed in phases through summer 2014.



CAFETERIA AND CYBER CAFE

The doors to the 250-seat renovated cafeteria will reopen to the LAU community this summer. Improvements include an extension of the main dining area and the creation of a cyberspace where students can connect while munching on snacks and coffee. Other renovations entail a new kitchen with state of the art equipment, as well as a spacious dining area with a lively ambience.

FM INITIATIVES

In an effort to better organize, enhance, modernize and upgrade the service level at the university, the Facilities Management Department has embarked on a series of new enterprises. Special committees consisting of engineers and administrators from the two Physical Plant divisions are working together, under the leadership of the Assistant Vice President for Facilities Management and the respective Physical Plant Directors, to prepare for the implementation of the following important initiatives:

- Safety Audit and Safety enhancement Initiative
- Energy Management and Sustainability initiative
- University Design Guidelines
- Buildings and Grounds Condition Assessment
- CMMS (Computer Maintenance Management System)
- Sustainability Campaign



Beirut team



Byblos team



FACILITIES MANAGEMENT STAFF

The Facilities Management department is composed of four units: Project Management & Contract Administration, Planning & Renovations, Physical Plant - Beirut and Physical Plant - Byblos. These four units plan, construct, renovate, operate and maintain LAU's physical assets. Facilities Management strives to a set of core values: quality, professionalism, teamwork, commitment to timely support service, environmental awareness, responsibility and safety.

Through the Looking Balustrades

Architect and lecturer Mazen Haidar explores the relationship between Beirut and its balustrades

By Muriel Kahwagi

Furn El Hayek



Hamra

"This project is not an invitation to actualize this patrimony, but to respect it."

—Mazen Haidar, architect and lecturer at the Department of Architecture

Hamra

If you grew up in Beirut in the 1970s, one of the earliest dealings you had with the city — the very first contact you ever established with it, perhaps — was through the wrought-iron handrails of your house's balconies.

"Whatever intimacy you develop with the city starts, more often than not, with the balustrades," says Mazen Haidar, architect, conservationist and lecturer at LAU's Department of Architecture. "It's through these handrails that you first explore the city as a child, that you establish a certain rapport with it."

Entitled "The Balustrades of Beirut," Haidar's exhibition, presented at the Art Factum Gallery earlier this year, is a discovery of Beirut's artistic wrought-ironwork, which bears testimony to the rich variety of the city's ever disappearing architectural heritage.

Having been *le dernier cri* during the 19th century under the French mandate, many of Beirut's ornamental balustrades — which range from the symmetrical and geometrical to the intricately ornate and florally patterned — were meticulous replicas of handrails from Paris and *le Midi*.

But while French architecture's drawn-out love affair with wrought-ironwork came to an end at the height of modernity in the 1930s, ultimately making way for plainer and more simplified handrails, Lebanese architects and artisans cleaved ever closer to this craftsmanship, bringing forth a peculiar *mélange* of modern constructions with old-style balustrades.

"It's a tradition we held on to even as we transitioned into modernity," explains Haidar. "And the further you move from central Beirut, the less elaborate these balustrades are. The balustrades in Hamra, Zokak el-Blat and Batrakiyyeh, for instance, are much more ornamental than the ones you would find in Furn el-Chebbak."

Far from being a mere prettying adornment, Haidar believes the balustrades "provide you with a tool to discover the city through this superficially naïf element." More than that, they are an emblem of the perpetually jeopardized centrality of the balcony.

The balcony acts as a buffer zone, Haidar explains, an impartial mediator between the privacy of one's own home and the common space of the city. But as more and more households opt for enclosing their

balconies, the once spatially neutral porches of Beirut are turning into secluded entities, thus compromising the relationship between the inside and the outside in the city.

Likewise, conservationist and architect Mona Hallak believes that paying homage to Beirut's balustrades transcends the sheer physicality of the balustrades themselves; it helps to preserve both the city and the people's collective memory.

"Balconies are becoming near-extinct entities today. We don't use them or interact with them the way we used to," she says. "This is why the balustrades of Beirut [in the 1930s–1960s] are important. They are a mnemonic tool that reminds us of the central role balconies played — and should continue to play — in our households."

"This project is not an invitation to actualize this patrimony, but to respect it," stresses Haidar. "If we were to recreate these balustrades today, they would lose all their value, all their authenticity. The current architectural trend is inclined to glorify nostalgic historicism, but this will at best produce a weak replica of true heritage. Architecture should always stay true to its own period."





LAU
School of Arts and Sciences

Mulberry Swing

Student film engages southern village of Kfarrommane

By Linda Dahdah

"The story of Mulberry Swing is of exceptional teamwork."

—Dr. Mona Knio, chairperson of the Communication Arts Department

"The aim was not to get a good mark but rather to take a unique opportunity to work together, to learn from each other, to improve."

—Hassan Salameh, communication arts student

Almost every Lebanese has a story of a relative, a community member or a whole village that courageously stood up to the Turks at some point during their 400-year reign over the country. While some have been raised to the rank of national hero, like northerner Youssef Bey Karam, who is said to have taken on the Ottoman army several times with only a coterie of men, the stories of more modest battles have also been passed down from generation to generation.

Hassan Salameh, a communication arts student at LAU, grew up listening to these tales. About a year ago his 90-year-old grandmother Mira Milla told him about a man from the southern village of Kfarrommane who was forced into the Ottoman army in *Mulberry Swing* as the empire engaged in World War I. Salameh listened intently to his grandmother as she described a young farmer's daring escape from the army — only to discover that the man in the story was her grandfather, his own great grandfather.

This is how the historical drama *Mulberry Swing* was born.

"It was a nice and simple story with a ready-made structure of a short-film; it became obvious that this was going to be the topic of my end-of-year project," Salameh said.

Several months after being captured by the Ottomans, protagonist Saleh decides to return to his family. *Mulberry Swing* takes place in the seven days during which, while hiding from soldiers, he tries to make his way home.

"It took my aunt three days to take the thorns out of his feet," Milla told her grandson.

After conducting thorough research on early 1900s traditional clothing and language, and finalizing the script accordingly, Salameh put his scheme into action, and within less than three months, the shooting started.

"We had exactly 120 people involved in the making of this film. Forty LAU students and graduates took part at different levels, from assisting in script writing and costume design to make-up and photography," says the young director.

"At first, no available position satisfied me," says Nur Fakhoury, assistant production designer. "Then I realized I wanted to work on the film even if it meant I would be sweeping the floor."

Kfarrommane villagers played a central role in facilitating the production. Some helped by opening their doors to students, and others discovered the pleasure of acting.

"*Mulberry Swing* is the story of exceptional teamwork," says Dr. Mona Knio, chairperson of the Communication Arts Department, proudly. "The organization, the focus of each and every person involved, revealed how dedicated they were," she adds.

"Watching more than 100 people working together in total peace, with such a high level of professionalism, was out of this world," says LAU Theater Coordinator Hala Masri.

This is precisely the achievement Salameh was looking for. "As the shooting started I discovered that I had already succeeded, in the sense that the aim was not to get a good mark, but rather to take a unique opportunity to work together, to learn from each other, to improve."



GULF Gala dinners

Dubai & North Emirates Chapter



From Left to right: Saad El Zein, President of Dubai and Northern Emirates Chapter. Riyad Salameh, Lebanon's Central Bank Governor. Adalat Audi Naccash, Honorary President of Dubai & Northern Emirates Chapter. Dr. Joseph G. Jabbra, LAU President

Abu Dhabi Chapter



The crowd with the Lebanese Pop star Rami Ayach



Oman Chapter



From Left to right: Carla Khalil, President of Oman Chapter. Mireille Aoun Kamar, Vice President of Oman Chapter. Maya Jabr, Spouse of the Consul of Lebanon in Muscat, Oman



From Left to right: Mr. Michel Najjar, Director of Admissions in Byblos Campus. Mr. Christian Oussi, Executive Director of Public and Media Relations. Mr. Naim Stephan, President of Abu Dhabi Alumni Chapter. Mr. Youssef Jabre, Consul of Lebanon in Oman and his spouse Maya. Mr. Abdallah Al Khal, Executive Director of Alumni Relations. Ms. Nada Hajj, Director of Admissions in Beirut. Mrs. Carla Khalil, President of Oman Chapter and her husband Ali El-Zein

LAU's Global Reach

Visiting professors add unique international perspective and flavor to the School of Architecture and Design

By LAU Staff

The School of Architecture and Design is proud to host a number of visiting professors from around the world throughout the academic year. These individuals enrich the intellectual milieu of the university by adding a unique international perspective and flavor. "Visiting professors give our students immense exposure," says Dr. Maroun El-Daccache, chair of the Department of Architecture and Interior Design. "They come from Europe, the U.S. and other places, adding vigor to our curriculum with their fresh ideas, and encouraging students to expand their knowledge by studying abroad."



Nicola Santini (Italy)

As a designer for the French-Lebanese interior design company Kann Design, Santini is committed to exploring how different concepts of art and life play out in livable space. He studied architecture in Florence and obtained his Ph.D. in Urban Planning and Architectural Design. Santini and his partner, Pier Paolo Taddei of Avatar Architettura, create designs that carefully consider environmental implications and ecological alternatives, and their products are made of recycled materials that were produced in Lebanon.



Erhad Schutz (Germany)

Schutz's work as an architect and urban designer earned him the Pyramid Award for Excellency in Residential Design. In 2010, he was part of the team that constructed the First Net Zero House in Ras al-Khaimah, UAE, sponsored by the Blue Building Foundation. The concept proved to be in step with the client's desire to pursue a comprehensive system of recycling and energy saving. His current project is an innovative design of a temporary artists residence, called "Art Lab XXS." Due to the residence's location in a secluded, verdant area of Hanover, Germany, respect for the environment is being integrated into the design. Visible collection and distribution of energy, water and organic waste is the focal point of the project.



Gerasimos Vamvakidis (Greece)

Vamvakidis' work on the design of a public-space project in the Faliron district of Athens has earned him global recognition. In Faliron, a new national library and opera are currently under construction, incorporating a unique landscape design whereby the complex will be almost hidden under a large green park with small hills and valleys that will extend across the coast. Architects from around the world were invited to design a landmark for the complex that will rest at the end of a pier running 150 meters along the sea. Inspired by the idea of "hiding" under landscape, Vamvakidis designed a "hill," where visitors can walk, sit or lie down on areas with various inclines. He drew on elements of the surrounding man-made and natural landscape.



Christopher Burns (USA)

Burns worked on an empty site located on the pre-World War II foundations of the Reichsbank in Berlin's historic baroque center, which was designated by the municipality to be developed for residential and commercial use. The intention of the project was to introduce a type of housing unusual for Berlin – the urban townhouse – which offers individual, small-scale investor-owners the chance to build in, and identify with, the city. The townhouse is designed as two distinct living units that can be connected or separated from each other as requirements change: children move out, for instance, or a mother-in-law moves in. The house can metaphorically shrink or expand, and offers an independent rental unit if so desired. The core of the house is a two-story apartment with its own street access, the façade of which is composed of a series of horizontal and vertical concrete planes that form the frame for a composition of glass windows and sliding surfaces.

Frederico De Matteis (Italy)

Federico De Matteis is a researcher at the Faculty of Architecture at Sapienza University of Rome. In recent years, he has worked extensively on various aspects of housing design, including the development of "smart" guidelines for individual buildings and the larger city. He also develops strategies for the refurbishment and transformation of Italy's extensive 20th-century public housing developments. These projects have given life to manuals for use by local authorities, designers and teachers to provide future architects with set rules while simultaneously preserving creative freedom. De Matteis believes educators should nurture intercultural exchanges, thereby preparing students to work in a complex, globalized world.



Paying Tribute

IWSAW celebrates International Women's Day in style

By Muriel Kahwagi



"What we lack is a personal status law that can be applied to all Lebanese regardless of their religious affiliation."

—Dr. Ogarit Younan, co-founder and president of the Academic University for Non-Violence and Human Rights in the Arab World

Civil marriage — which is which is nothing short of the norm in the West — is a space oddity in the Middle East. Though the Lebanese state recognizes civil marriages certified abroad, the Lebanese law prohibits those who wish to get a civil marriage union from doing so in the country.

Until now, the authority to marry in Lebanon is granted exclusively to religious courts, which do not allow interfaith marriages. Supporters of civil marriage in Lebanon have been attempting to introduce secular marriages into the legal system since the late 1950s, but their invigorating efforts have redoubled in recent months since the brave Khoulood Sukkarieh and Nidal Darwish became the first couple to remove their respective sects from their national identity cards, thus acquiring what they and their supporters say is the right to have a civil marriage.

Pointedly, LAU's Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World (IWSAW) celebrated International Women's Day by organizing a panel discussion entitled "Civil Marriage and the Confessional System: Challenges and Consequences" on March 12 on the Beirut campus.

The forum addressed the various civil marriage draft laws that were previously proposed in Lebanon; civil society activism; and how civil marriages can be contracted in light of the Lebanese confessional system.

"Love is the most powerful and honorable force that could ever exist," said panelist Dr. Ogarit Younan, co-founder and president of the Academic University for Non-Violence and Human Rights in the Arab World. "Marriage is and should be a celebration of love. And love cannot burgeon — or indeed subsist — without justice. The law cannot and should not deprive us of our most basic right: our right to love."

Arguably, the Lebanese law does include a provision for civil marriage. Decree

Number 60 from a law passed in 1936, during the French mandate, states that people with no religious affiliation can be granted civil rights.

"Every religious group has its own laws in Lebanon — but what we lack is a personal status law that can be applied to all Lebanese regardless of their religious affiliation," said Younan.

Indeed, Joseph Bechara, the notary who signed the civil marriage contract of Sukkarieh and Darwish, stressed the importance of eradicating sectarianism from "legal documents and souls" alike.

"Lebanese citizens have the right to be affiliated with the state without having to refer to their religious affiliation first," said Bechara. "Everyone has the option of removing their religious identity from their civil records, and doing so does not mean they are tampering with their own faith and beliefs."

Echoing Bechara, Sukkarieh and Darwish, who removed their religious affiliation from their civil records in 2011 and 2009, respectively, emphasized the foremost importance of expressing "our Lebanese citizenship regardless of our religion."

"Lebanese society today is split into two: people who are fighting for women's rights, and people who are fighting those who fight for women's rights," said Sukkarieh. "Women's rights are human rights, and both men and women ought to lobby for them."

Dr. Dima Dabbous, assistant professor of communication and director of IWSAW, wholeheartedly agrees. "Marriage is a contract that women are at the heart of," she said. "But it is regrettably a contract, which, according to various sects, discriminates against women. We need to discuss alternatives that do women justice — hence the importance of bringing civil marriage to the light."

To Their Credit

CLH honors women journalists

By Muriel Kahwagi

In prefatory celebration of International Women's Day, the Center for Lebanese Heritage (CLH) at LAU held a lecture on Arab women's contributions to journalism at the turn of the century. The event took place on March 4 on the Beirut campus and hosted Lebanese writer Dr. Elham Kallab Bsar.

"Talking about the history of women in journalism is like trying to empty the whole ocean in a seashell," said Bsar at the onset of the forum. "There will always be so much more to talk about, and I can never do these great women justice — but I'm going to try my best," she told an eager audience.

In the late 1800s, the Arab world's polygonal identity was disbanded. With various countries in the region still under the mercy of the Ottoman Empire, a mass of Lebanese yearning for freedom — women in particular — immigrated to Egypt. Lebanese women at the time were not legally allowed to write or publish articles in print media in their homeland. Eluding oppression and seeking latitude, they settled in various cities — including Cairo and Alexandria — and started to contribute to the local journalism scene bit by bit.

"This heartfelt struggle is what engendered the subsequent literary resurgence," noted Bsar. "A lot of Lebanese people may never have contributed to journalism if they weren't subject to so much oppression. Men wanted to escape political uncertainty; women wanted to escape illiteracy and ignorance."

Al-Hilal, *Al-Ahram*, and *Al-Manar* were some of the newspapers that were established in Egypt in the early 1900s, but over 35 equally compelling publications were in print as well, said Bsar, with satirical newspapers being a crowd favorite at the time.

Though most of these publications were androcentric, 1908 marked a timid albeit critical turning point in that respect,

as the law that prohibited women from contributing to journalism was amended and women were at last delivered from literary suppression.

Lebanese journalist Hind Nawfal was the first to publish a monthly journal for women; she called her scholarly offspring *Al-Fatat*, Arabic for "The Girl." Other Lebanese writers such as May Ziade and Salma Sayegh also wrote and published extensively, the former hosting *Salon al-Thulathaa'* (Arabic for "The Tuesday Salon"), the most famous literary salon of the Arab world during the 1920s in Cairo.

Arab women's path toward emancipation did not stop there. In 1926, women were finally granted the right to pursue careers in medicine, and the American University of Beirut's graduating class of 1927 was the first in the university's history to graduate female students.

Though most of these publications were androcentric, 1908 marked a timid albeit critical turning point in that respect, as the law that prohibited women from contributing to journalism was amended and women were at last delivered from literary suppression.



"We must never forget or underestimate women's invaluable contribution not just to journalism, but to humankind," said CLH Director and poet Henri Zogheib. "We wouldn't be where we are today if it weren't for their exemplary achievements."



Top of the Class



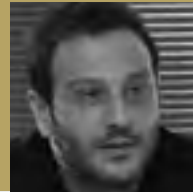
MAHER ABDEL RAHIM
B.A. Architecture '05

Rahim is an associate at Bousfields, Inc., a highly regarded planning and urban design firm in Toronto. Having worked for prominent firms Dar Al-Handasah and Khatib & Alami his experience includes a range of projects varying in type and scale, one of which won third prize in a United Nations-organized competition.

Currently, he's a senior urban designer on a mega-project for Toronto's entertainment district, which will integrate legendary architect Frank Gehry's designs. Though he is glad for the opportunity, his own architectural dreams are in Lebanon. He would like to design a villa overlooking the Mediterranean, a technical school in the city of el-Mina, and "combine historic preservation, sound urban design and necessary initiatives to renew old mid-rise buildings and integrate them within new high-rise buildings" in Beirut, thus contributing to its future while respecting its past. Rahim credits LAU with helping him build the fundamentals of his architectural skills. "In order to propose something new, you have to absorb what already exists and then use that knowledge, along with contemporary thinking, to design something innovative," he says.



MAHER ABDEL RAHIM



ELIE ABS
B.A. Architecture '97

During his time at LAU, Abs gained a first-rate "theoretical, conceptual and technical base" in architecture, which served him well as he went on to obtain his master's in Architecture and Urbanism from the Architectural Association in London. He subsequently worked for the renowned firm Kohn Pedersen Fox, one of the largest architecture firms in the world. He currently puts his degree to use as co-founder and principal architect at Accent Design Group, a highly successful firm that provides design consultancy services in the Arab region. The firm recently won a wide-reaching competition to build a residential building in Beirut's Gemmayze district, which Abs says is an effort to "translate the typological richness of Gemmayze into a playful volumetric composition."

His willingness to experiment is another trait that stems from his experience at LAU, where he says his ideas were allowed free range, "which is extremely important in developing an architectural personality." Abs considers this freedom essential and hopes to see it imparted to all future generations of architects.



ELIE ABS



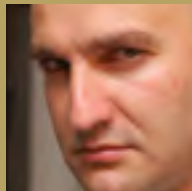


VANESSA DAMMOUS
B.A. Architecture '01

Dammous has studied in far-flung locales such as Lyon and Milan, attending the prestigious Ecole de Beaux Arts and Domus Academy, where she obtained an M.A. in product design. However, it is at her first alma mater that her talents have found their best expression. Her studies at LAU and abroad led her to realize that she “wanted to remain within the academic realm, researching and investigating new discourses around architecture and design.” Since 2008, she has been in pursuit of this ambitious goal at LAU, where she teaches Design Studios in the School of Architecture and Design, imparting her experience to future generations of architects. She continues to hone her own philosophy of design, which is, in her words, “a receptive, as well as a critical one.” To her students, whose accomplishments she takes great pride in, she advises being “fully curious, passionate and critical, and think that when it comes to design, there’s no limit.”



VANESSA DAMMOUS

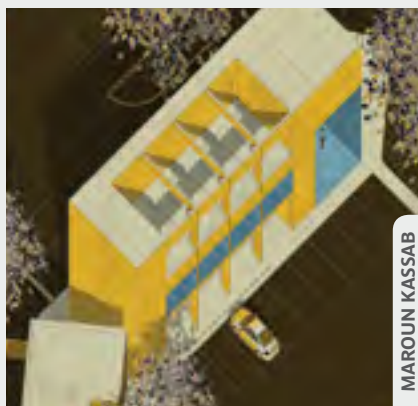


MAROUN KASSAB
B.A. Architecture '99

Maroun Kassab obtained a Master’s degree in Architecture from the University of Cincinnati and is currently pursuing his Ph.D. at the University of Sydney, focusing on the modernist period in Lebanon. Kassab pursues a trans-Atlantic path, working on diverse projects in both Lebanon and the United States. He has his own firm in Lebanon that designs structures with spatial and aesthetic characteristics in mind, while at the same time taking into consideration cost, convenience and sustainability. He credits LAU with providing him the tools to “engage the architectural field both critically and professionally.”

His path to success took him at first into the field of construction, which gave him the knowledge of materials and technique he needed to excel. Today, Kassab is working on a project in his home village of Ain el-Delb, designing a municipal building, a public library, an open theater and a public garden.

Public buildings are what draw him the most, although he says, “Any project, no matter how small, has to be looked at from the perspective of establishing a new beginning.”



MAROUN KASSAB

New Neighbors

Gentrification in Beirut an inevitable part of a city's changing face

By Paige Kollock



In 1988, New York City residents staged a series of protests in the East Village's Tompkins Square Park over the gentrification of their neighborhood. Courtesy of New York City Parks Photo Archive.



Levon Momdgian is a 28-year-old resident of Badawi, a working class neighborhood adjacent to Mar Mikahel and Geitawi that runs along the Beirut River. Its streets are lined with auto-parts dealers, mechanics and a few “antique” shops that peddle everything from old clocks to cracked mirrors.

“This is my grandmother’s house,” Momdgian says, pointing to his building, “and my uncle lives next to her. My mother’s aunt and uncle all live here, my parents lived here since they were kids, and my brother rented a house next to ours. All of my family lives here. We’ve always lived like this.”

Family proximity has certainly been a hallmark of life in Lebanon, where many houses are constructed in such a way that an extra floor can be added when the next generation arrives. But it’s a way of life that’s increasingly disappearing in Beirut, as living spaces become smaller due to real-estate trends, and families become dispersed.

The minimum rent in Badawi is around \$500 a month for a small apartment of about 60 meters, says Momdgian, who lives next to a newly built house with a high security wall, automatic gate and private parking space. >



Example of an unfinished house



Karm el Zeitoun, now a working class neighborhood in Achrafieh, may soon become gentrified. Photo courtesy of Laura J Padgett.

"There are new buildings in our neighborhood, but they're unaffordable and that bothers me," he says, noting that the area started changing about 20 years ago. "They built a bridge behind us that takes you from Dekwaneh to Achrafieh. Now there's no more parking... You spend about 30 minutes looking for a space."

Residents of Badawi say new shops where there were once car parts and mechanics stores are opening up at a rapid clip. Last year, a trendy pub called Dictateur arrived on the scene, bringing customers from all over Beirut to the small, quiet neighborhood.

Developers believe Badawi could succumb to the gentrification that has been rapidly transforming Mar Mikhael since 2009.

"While nightlife from Gemmayze spilled over, Mar Mikhael became a hub for venues related to creative industries, such as designer shops, art galleries and so on," says Marieke Krijnen, a Ph.D. student at Ghent University in Belgium who did a case study on the neighborhood while obtaining her master's degree at AUB.

"This increased the attractiveness of the area for higher classes, and real estate developers smartly responded by buying land that was at the time relatively cheap and planning some luxury residential projects."

British sociologist Ruth Glass coined the term "gentrification" in 1964 to describe the influx of middle-class people displacing working-class residents in neighborhoods in her hometown of London.

Years later, author and geographer Neil Smith viewed the gentrification of cities as an economic process propelled by urban land prices and speculation. In his book *The New Urban Frontier*:

Gentrification and the Revanchist City, he describes the riots in Tompkins Square Park in New York City's Lower East Side that began in 1998, when a group of anti-gentrification protesters, housing activists, park residents and others were attacked by riot police as they attempted to evict them from the park.

"Gentrification occurs in urban areas where prior disinvestment in the urban infrastructure creates neighborhoods that can be profitably redeveloped," he wrote.

Today, gentrification is a phenomenon as inevitable as wrinkles and gray hair. It has affected almost every major metropolis, from New York City's East Village and Boston's South End to Paris' Marais district and Moscow's Ostozhenka, the main street of which was ranked in 2011 as one of the most expensive and desirable streets in the world.

To understand the gentrification process in Beirut, says Dr. Rachid Chamoun, director of LAU's Urban Planning Institute, we must first examine the gentrification of Beirut Central District (BCD).

After the civil war, the historic center, then in shambles, was subject to complete — and controversial — renovation by development company Solidere, which served to make downtown a pleasant and clean economic driver for the city. But as Dr. Elie Haddad, dean of LAU's School of Architecture and Design, argues in his paper "Contemporary Architecture and Urbanism in Beirut," it also wiped out characteristic zones such as Wadi Abu Jamil, the bustling Old Souqs and Martyr's Square, transforming those areas from livable spaces into privatized ones.

Dr. Chamoun believes gentrification of neighborhoods in Beirut has evolved from that of the BCD, fanning out east to Gemmayze, west to Ras Beirut, and south to Basta and Bashoura.

He puts gentrification in the city into several categories. First is real-estate gentrification, whereby developers buy up houses in lower-income areas, renovate them and increase the rent, or when builders erect new high-rises, such as in Mar Mikhael and, previously, Achrafieh. The second is commercial gentrification, largely seen in the Hamra neighborhood, whereby independent, family-owned shops are replaced by chains like Starbucks and Costa Cafe.

"Hamra was always attractive to many different sects, religions and politics, and people felt very comfortable, even during conflict time, to be there and discuss their political views," says Chamoun. Political groups even selected certain establishments as their headquarters. Starting in 2000, that all began to change with the influx of chain stores.

A third category is infrastructure gentrification. This occurs when a highway is built through a neighborhood, causing real estate below the highway to suddenly drop, at which point investors swoop in and redevelop the area.

Haddad and Chamoun both contend that gentrification carries with it the negative factor of marginalization.

"It reduces demographic variety and the ability of the lower classes to mix with people from other classes and to feel that they can get there someday with a little bit of effort," says Haddad.

It also brings about what he calls "interiorization," which is "a withdrawal from the life of the street toward the life of the apartment."

"You have people who can have big parties in their apartments, but may never walk on the street around the home in which they live, and never interact. When gentrification is complete, what



A new house in Badawi with high security walls, a motorized gate and private parking, indicates an influx of money to the area. Photo courtesy of Laura J Padgett.

comes with it is an erosion of street life, so the baker goes, the butcher, the shoemaker, the tailor, they all flee." This phenomenon is best exemplified in the waterfront area of Beirut, where looming towers and their adjacent sidewalks are warded off by security guards, with nary a view of the people who reside in them, creating the feeling of a model neighborhood rather than a livable one.

On Rue Gouraud in Gemmayze, a lone tailor's shop punctuates a street lined with eating and drinking establishments.

"I've owned this shop for 31 years," says Claudette. "Seven or eight years ago the neighborhood really started to change, when all the pubs and restaurants started opening. Many more people come here now — including tourists and foreigners — and it's been great for business. Many investors have offered to buy this shop, but I always say no. I simply don't want to sell it."

In Hamra, another tailor may not be so lucky. Local seamstress Nouhad is facing eviction from both her home and her shop. Her story has inspired an outpouring of support on social media from those wishing to preserve the last vestiges of independently owned businesses.

Jane Jacobs, an American author and journalist, noticed the dangers of vanishing street life in the 1950s. In her book, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, she describes how large residential towers in New York City's projects led to crime because the street was no longer lived on on a 24-hour basis.

"The ubiquitous principle is the need of cities for a most intricate and close-grained diversity of uses that give each other constant mutual support, both economically and socially," wrote Jacobs. "Unsuccessful city areas are areas which lack this kind of intricate mutual support."

A glance through the real estate pages of Lebanon Opportunities magazine reveals what the market is offering: small apartments in large, multi-story buildings with facilities and 24-hour security, the

opposite living environment of what Jacobs championed.

But not all agree with that view. "There is this leftist thinking in academia that always goes against gentrification as linked to a lack of public policy, and to talk against Solidere as a corporate entity that raised the price of the surrounding real estate. I do not follow this logic," says Dr. Robert Saliba, associate professor in the Department of Architecture and Design at AUB.

"Gentrification is irreversible because there is a lack of space within cities now, so the only way to live in Beirut is to go smaller. If you're a middle-class couple, you're no longer able to afford Beirut, so you live on the periphery, and that's fine, that's how it works," he says.

Saliba says the negative connotation of gentrification is linked to what's called "invasion and succession."

"In Manhattan, it happened in the industrial 'meat packing' district in the late 1990s. This is what's happening in Beirut too, especially in Mar Mikhael on the other side of the highway, near the port."

A stroll through that area, near the headquarters of waste management company Sukleen, reveals telltale signs that the process has already begun, with newly opened cafes and art galleries. Planners believe other targets could be Zokak el-Blat, all of the real estate along the Beirut River, and some pockets of Achrafieh such as Karm el-Zeitoun, which is still a working-class neighborhood.

Krijnen believes both Momdgian's neighborhood of Badawi and nearby Bourj Hammoud could be potential targets for developers. "We have to keep in mind that Bourj Hammoud is a separate municipality and that zoning is different there, but anything is possible," she says. "I can already imagine the brochures marketing projects there: 'Real Armenian Charm,' 'Experience a Different Culture in Diverse Lebanon,' 'Sujuk and Souqs.'"

Campusnotes

Edited by Linda Dahdah

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



Expertise beyond the classroom

In line with its commitment to advancing education beyond the campus walls, LAU signed a one-year agreement with executive education training company Universal Training on January 28. Under the agreement, faculty from LAU's School of Business will offer tailored programs to middle and upper management professionals across the region, particularly in North Africa.

The training programs will be based on Universal Training's client needs and will first be given to Libyan companies, universities and government bodies.

A cultural amalgam

The Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World (IWSAW), in partnership with the European Project for Interreligious Learning, held a conference entitled "Reconciliation: Committed to Staying Together, One People, Multiple Confessions" at LAU Beirut on February 4 and 5.

Forty women from Switzerland, Austria, the Netherlands, Lebanon, Germany, and Bosnia and Herzegovina took part in the two-day seminar which addressed religious plurality in the Arab world, post-colonialism in the Middle East and the challenges of constructing a civil society.



Researching Arab research

On January 25, LAU formally joined hands with the Lebanese Association for Educational Studies and the Arab Educational Information Network to host a conference on Arab graduate programs.

The conference will take place in November 2013 and will bring together researchers and academics to address quality-related issues in regional master's and doctoral programs. The event will be open to researchers, faculty members, and education graduate and postgraduate students from across the Arab world.

Economic statecraft

On February 20, U.S. Ambassador to Lebanon Maura Connelly was welcomed at LAU Beirut to discuss Lebanon's economic future. Connelly gave a thorough diagnosis of the current economic challenges facing the country to a room filled with prominent guests, faculty and students. "A strong, sovereign, stable, independent Lebanon is what the U.S. wants to help foster," explained Connelly. According to the ambassador, one of the most important ways to accomplish this goal is to increase trade and safeguard the economy.





Therapeutic communication

The School of Pharmacy (SOP), in collaboration with the Outreach and Civic Engagement unit, orchestrated a two-day workshop on effective team building on February 5 and 6 at LAU Byblos. The workshop aimed at fostering leadership, interpersonal communication and problem-solving skills among SOP's faculty and staff, thus cultivating a spirit of teamwork between the participants. The event was the first in a series of trainings the school is organizing as part of its continuing education and capacity-building initiative.

Fighting for their rights

On February 27 and 28, the Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World, Konrad Adenauer Stiftung Amman and the Women Empowerment Organization hosted a joint regional roundtable on the challenges facing Iraqi women who seek legal rights. The discussion centered on Iraqi law and examined how it is affecting women's lives. Judges, lawyers and activists in the region examined key laws that govern elections, non-governmental organizations, citizenship, as well as personal status and family laws.



Leadership academy

The Outreach and Civic Engagement unit, in partnership with the Hariri Foundation for Sustainable Human Development, is organizing a series of leadership workshops for students from various educational institutions. The workshops will be held in the framework of the newly formed Leadership and Constitutional Education Academy and will aim to train 600 grade 8, 10 and 11 students on both the practical and legal fundamentals of leadership. A total of seven weekly training sessions will be delivered by more than 20 LAU students.

Future diplomats

In the presence of former Interior Minister Ziad Baroud, 450 students gathered at the Third Annual Middle School Conference Model UN of GC LAU MUN on March 2 and 3. Hosted by LAU, the conference brought together students who represented as their assigned countries in 10 UN committees. On the first day, sessions and cultural celebrations were held in Byblos, while Sunday's sessions, crowned by an official closing ceremony, took place at the Beirut campus.



Lifelong learning

Members of the LAU community, along with more than 100 faculty and staff members from educational institutions throughout Lebanon, attended a two-day workshop on continuing professional development (CPD) on March 1 and 2. The event was hosted by the Department of Education in collaboration with Levant Distributors. It tackled the importance of CPD, classroom management, the teaching of social studies and the use of technology in schools.



Sense and responsibility

Student and professional journalists gathered on March 3 at LAU Beirut to attend a conference on conflict reporting and social media. The event was hosted by the School of Arts and Sciences in collaboration with the university's Advancement Communication Manager Nada Torbey. The conference was the first in a series funded by an EU media-training program that covers 17 countries in MENA and Eastern Europe. The trainings are conducted by a consortium led by BBC Media Action.

Back to the roots

Just two years after LAU started a beginner's course in Latin as an elective, seven students earned a diploma from the Department of Classics at Cambridge University. Dean of the School of Arts and Sciences Dr. Philippe Frossard personally congratulated the students on April 10. Given the success of the initiative — the students took the Cambridge test at their own request — a proposal has been put forth to use Cambridge examinations for all students who complete the Latin course.



Science for society's sake

The Lebanese Association for the Advancement of Science (LAAS), in collaboration with LAU and the National Council for Scientific Research (CNRS), held the 19th LAAS International Science Conference on the Beirut campus on April 5 and 6. The two-day symposium provided a platform for pioneering researchers and practitioners to present and discuss recent advances in the various fields of science and science education, including but not limited to biological and medical sciences, food security, environment, engineering, mathematics and behavioral sciences.

Cultural competence

On April 15, Dr. Sylvia Nassar-McMillan, professor and program coordinator of counselor education at North Carolina State University in Raleigh, North Carolina, addressed psychology majors, alumni, faculty and school counselors on the subject of global and domestic diversity in counseling. She said diversity must be accounted for when treating a patient and presented the audience with several factors that should be considered to provide effective counseling services, namely a patient's socio-political situation, their immigration history, ethnicity, religion, gender, age, health status and those of their kin and community.



Offshore energy

On April 17, Malek Takieddine, a lawyer specialized in energy issues, visited LAU Beirut to give a lecture to a group of international affairs students about the thorny politics of oil and gas off the shores of Lebanon. He spoke about the potential gains that could come from the resources, the disputed maritime boundary between Lebanon and Israel, as well as the licensing and bidding process.



The Ground Beneath Your Feet

LAU professor studies Lebanon's fault lines

By Nisreen Kaj and Dalila Mahdawi

"I was having lunch with family when it hit," says Dr. Grace Abou-Jaoude Estephan, recalling a 5.3-magnitude earthquake that rattled Lebanon in 1997. Although the trembling quickly subsided, the experience left her acutely aware of how vulnerable human beings are to the whims of Mother Nature.

Lebanon's political landscape is so often a source of disquiet, but Abou-Jaoude Estephan, an assistant professor in the department of Civil Engineering, says it is the country's tectonic fault lines that should be a cause for concern. An even more immediate threat is the landslides caused by such seismic activity. "Our lack of knowledge about Lebanon's susceptibility to earthquake-induced landslides is troubling," she says. "A major earthquake causes sudden land movements, which can result in significant damage and possibly death."

"Earthquake-induced landslides are a potentially devastating threat in Lebanon."

—Dr. Grace Abou-Jaoude Estephan,
assistant professor, Department of Civil Engineering

With Lebanon's urban areas experiencing rapid annual growth, construction and infrastructure projects are often undertaken without appropriate urban planning, particularly in mountainous or sloped areas, she says. Moreover, despite the fact that developers are required by the Order of Engineers and Architects (OEA) to submit a seismic study to obtain construction permits, no mechanisms exist to ensure those studies are implemented. "There is usually no follow-up after initial approval is obtained, no guarantee structures will resist seismic loading."

The fact that Lebanon lacks a proper natural disaster mitigation system would significantly exacerbate economic, environmental and human losses in the event of a major tremor. "Earthquakes



with a local magnitude of more than 4.0 [on the Richter scale, where 10 signifies a cataclysmic tremor that could potentially be felt across the world] can cause mass movements to happen," says Abou-Jaoude Estephan. That means many of Lebanon's cities or urbanized areas are potentially fairly vulnerable. "Most structures have not been built to withstand seismic events or subsequent mass movement of rock or soil." Landslides would also likely block roads to affected areas, preventing rescue teams from entering, contributing to additional loss of life.

In 2012, Abou-Jaoude Estephan was awarded \$100,000 by the Partnerships for Enhanced Engagement in Research Program, developed by USAID and the National Science Foundation, to identify areas in Lebanon that are susceptible to earthquake-induced landslides. LAU provided an additional \$3,500 to cover the remaining costs of the two-year project, which is being conducted in collaboration with Associate Professor Joseph Wartman of the University of Washington, Seattle.

Lebanon sits on a number of major fault lines, with the country experiencing hundreds of earthquakes – mostly

harmless – every year. Nevertheless, historical records point to a number of catastrophic earthquakes in excess of 7.0 that caused extensive destruction to coastal cities like Beirut and Byblos. History books also detail a number of land movements induced by earthquakes. According to the World Health Organization, several areas in Lebanon are at "high risk" of landslides.

Abou-Jaoude Estephan's research involves mapping landslide-prone zones in the Geographic Information Systems framework, conducting modeling and analysis using high-end software, and assessing high-risk zones through detailed fieldwork.

Her research is part of a growing national awareness of the importance of hazard mapping and mitigation. "It should help us better understand earthquake-induced landslides, plan urban growth and save lives," she says. Her research results, which will be published in mid-2014, will then be disseminated to national institutions working on environmental issues and hazard mitigation, such as the OEA, the National Council for Scientific Research and the Disaster Risk Management Unit.



Looking Back

Alumna Rima Nasir Tarazi (A.A. '49) remembers her university days



"Vivid memories of my university days weigh heavy on my memory — musical hours in the lounge, the delightful picnics and field trips, our foray in the arts: giggles during Glee Club and the drama of theatre performances."



As a recently minted octogenarian, I look back on my life and all sorts of emotions are conjured up — thrill, sadness, devastation, elation. Much of my life has been defined by the fact that I am an Arab and a Palestinian and therefore carry the burdens of centuries of oppression, though I have inherited a great culture illuminated by dignity, resilience and tolerance, as well as an unending quest for freedom and justice.

As I was sitting at the piano, bidding farewell to 2012, my mind wandered to so many of you. Faces and voices of such dear friends, many of whom I completely lost touch with, kept creeping into my consciousness making me realize that I will probably never see those dear ones again, and that those beautiful moments be relived.

Vivid memories of my university days weigh heavy on my memory — musical hours in the lounge, the delightful picnics and field trips, our foray in the arts: giggles during Glee Club and the drama of theatre performances. I remember my old teacher Miss Sabri who introduced us to two yet unknown musicians, the Rahbani brothers, who taught us a song and dance about rainfall, which we did not take seriously. Little did we know that those two young men would soon be making music history in Lebanon!

After my graduation I went to France to pursue music studies and then returned to Birzeit, Palestine to help my family, then continued my education at the American

University of Beirut, graduating in 1954. I went on to work at Birzeit University, got married in 1956 to Antoine Tarazi, and accompanied him to Montreal where he was doing his neurosurgical training.

With the future of our land, country and people at stake, it became inevitable for me to get involved in public affairs, despite the fact that I had a very busy husband and four little boys.

Besides serving on the Board of Trustees of Birzeit University, which was founded by my family, I served on the board of the Society of Inash El Usra, and presided over the Ramallah and National YWCA and the General Union of Palestinian Women.

In 1993, I was cofounder of the National Conservatory of Music of Birzeit University, which we renamed the "Edward Said National Conservatory of Music" as a tribute to a great Palestinian thinker and passionate musician. Currently, I am chairperson of its Supervisory Board.

I have been composing songs ever since I was young. They express the tribulations and dreams of my people. Some of them are written to the words of renowned Arab and Palestinian poets.

I still live in Ramallah, which is slowly becoming a cultural hub and very lively city. Of course one misses the tranquility and beauty of an erstwhile green and cozy summer resort. Yet, at our age, one has to come to terms with change! After all, I have four sons and six grandchildren. The seventh is on the way.

Alumni Events



February

Alumni organize desert camping trip

The Bahrain Alumni Chapter organized a camping trip in the Sakhir Desert, south of the capital Manama, on February 22. Close to 120 people attended the event, which featured live musical performances and entertainment.



March

Transportation engineering and beyond

The School of Engineering Alumni Chapter in collaboration with the School of Engineering and the Alumni Relations Office organized a lecture entitled: "An Overview of Transportation Engineering: Case Studies in Lebanon" on March 1 on the Beirut Campus. The lecture was presented by Dr. John El Khoury and was attended by more than 150 alumni and friends.



Ameen Rihani meets the Big Apple

On March 2, the San Francisco Alumni Chapter hosted a lecture on Lebanese-American author Ameen Rihani's critically acclaimed novel "The Book of Khalid" at the San Francisco Towers. The director of "Project Khalid," Dr. Todd Fine, discussed Rihani's upbringing in Manhattan's Little Syria, relating the author's literary works to his struggles and political activism in the Big Apple. The lecture drew over 50 alumni, and was followed by a reception and book signing.



Not just another Gala dinner

The Toronto Alumni Chapter held its annual Gala Dinner at the Phoenicia Restaurant and Lounge in Toronto on March 2. The event brought together alumni, family and friends, and featured various song and dance performances. The LAU New York Headquarters and Academic Center's Federal Financial Aid Coordinator Linda Nicholas and Assistant Vice President for Enrollment Management Abdo Ghie were also in attendance.



A West Coast rendezvous

On March 3, more than 30 members of the Seattle Alumni Chapter along with their families and friends had brunch at the Hilton Bellevue Hotel in Washington.



Kuwaiti desert witnesses LAU fever

The Kuwait Alumni Chapter organized its annual Desert Open Day event on March 8. More than 400 alumni, families and friends enjoyed a variety of activities and amusements.



Alumni gather for Committee Planning Meeting

On March 14, the Washington D.C. Alumni Chapter congregated at the home of Chapter Vice President Suzanne Nader Soubra for a Chapter Committee Planning Meeting.



Another step toward continuous learning

As part of its "Keep Learning" alumni lecture series, the Alumni Relations Office organized its fourth address for this year under the title "I Like You and I Am Not Like You" on March 15 at LAU Beirut. More than 180 alumni and friends attended the event, which was followed by a reception.

Alumni News

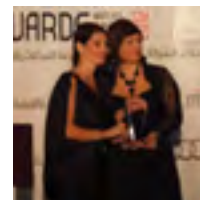
Hulemenaye Getahun (B.A. '71) worked with Ethiopian Airlines for nine years, and now owns her own import-export company that ships oil seeds and fresh sheep meat to the Middle East. She has two sons working in the United States and one daughter working in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia



Dr. Ghada Hijjawi-Qaddumi (B.A. '76) went on to get her Ph.D. in Islamic Art at Harvard University. She has had a very prominent and successful career working as a curator in Islamic art museums in the Gulf. In 2012 she was elected the president of the World Crafts Council/Asia-Pacific region for 2013 to 2016.



Nada Ghazal (A.A.S. '92) is the designer and owner of Nada G™ Fine Jewelry, which has celebrated an amazing year of awards. In June 2012, Jewelers Circular Keystone, one of the most respected voices in the industry, chose Ghazal to be featured as a Rising Star at the 2012 Las Vegas Jewelry Show, the biggest and best jewelry convention in the world.



Nada Al Khatib Salem (B.A. '96) lives in Ohio, U.S. She is married with three kids, the youngest of whom is almost five years old.



Anthony Hoglind (A.A.S. '97) has worked in international publishing in Denmark since graduating. He received an M.Sc. in International Business from Copenhagen Business School and has for the past three years worked as an area sales manager in Copenhagen and Stockholm for the world's

leading office services provider, Regus. In March of this year he was promoted to general manager at the Business Centre at One Fullerton in Singapore. An avid traveller, he has backpacked across Burma, Cambodia, Vietnam, Thailand, Kenya, South Africa, Brazil, Peru, Chile, Bolivia and Argentina.



Ginane Makki Bacho (B.A. '82) is a successful artist who has a solo exhibition showing at Ayyam's Gallery in April entitled "Afterimage," which presents a highly personal series of paintings Bacho refers to as "memoirs" about life during the civil war. She is also known for her artist books such as "Face to Face, the Artist as Woman and Mother" (1985), "Ginane, Diary of a Woman" (1986), "Extraordinary People" (1998), and "Dichotomie en Blanc et Noir" (2009).

Nader Sobh (B.S. '83) went on to obtain an M.S. from AUB in math and then got his Ph.D. in the United States. He has four children, all of whom have or are studying engineering.



Ibrahim Dani (B.S. '83) began his first full-time job shortly after graduation in Saudi Arabia, where he got married. In 1992 he moved to Australia and obtained a Masters in Information and Communication Technology and also studied Financial Services. Additionally, he obtained his M.B.A. from the University of Strathclyde (UK). In

2001 he joined Abu Dhabi Investment Authority, where he has been working since. In Abu Dhabi, he and his wife welcomed their daughter, Layal. His latest endeavour has been blogging on his website ibrahimdani.com.

Zaven Kouyoumjian (B.A. '92) host and producer at Future TV, has released a much-anticipated book entitled "Shahed ala Moujtaama".



Samah Wehbi Kalakesh (A.A.S. '98, EX '00, M.B.A. '01) joined Deloitte & Touche Consulting after graduating. After seven years at Deloitte she reached a managerial position specializing in feasibility studies in real estate and hospitality for the Middle East branch. She married Dr. Mohammad

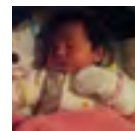
Kalakesh, cardiologist, in 2008 and left Deloitte with the arrival first baby Celine in October 2009. She welcomed her second baby Ali in August 2011 and returned to work as a freelancer with a local consulting firm. She also conducts training workshops for executives at AUB Exterior Affairs.

Abdel Aziz Hajjar (B.S. '99) and his wife welcomed a baby boy named Rafic on January 15, 2013.



Wissam Tabbara (B.S. '99) is the director of quality and operations at Symform, a startup that developed the world's first and largest peer-to-peer cloud storage network. Prior to that, he was the lead senior software engineer and helped build key components in the network. He married Ivy Arai Tabbara and they have two children together: toddler Zane and infant Yara. He has been living in Seattle with his family since 1999.

Raef Hachache (A.A.S. '01) and his wife **Nadine Marashli (B.A. '04)** recently welcomed a beautiful baby girl, Sima.



Nina Rahal Lott (B. Arch. '01) went in 2003 to the UK, where she was granted a scholarship from the Glasgow School of Arts to pursue an M.Phil. degree in Architecture. She is currently living in Valenciennes, France with her husband Philippe Lott, a researcher in aeronautical engineering, and her twin girls Mayssa and Talia, who were born in August 2012.



Shadi Braish (M.B.A. '03) has been working in Dubai for over eight years at UM MENA and was promoted to the position of media director. He got married on July 1, 2013 to his better half Hala.



Susan Hamade (A.A.S. '03, B.A. '05, M.A. '07) has been working as an academic coordinator in the English Department at the Australian College of Kuwait for the past five years. In June 2012, she got promoted to deputy head of curriculum and testing. She got married to a wonderful man named Hendrik van der Merwe on April 18, 2013 in

New York. She met her husband in Kuwait and they are planning to globetrot for their wedding celebrations in the U.S., Kuwait, Lebanon and South Africa.

Ahmad Alliek (B.S. '03) is currently the assistant to the secretary general at Fransabank SAL. Previously he worked at Centuria Capital in Saudi Arabia as director of consultancy services, and prior to that was at The First Investor in Qatar as senior associate of Investment Banking Services. Alliek is engaged to Doha Khanafer and is in the process of launching a private solar energy business in Congo-Brazzaville.



Hanan Halabi Dimiskieh (B.S. '04) has been working in the Islamic banking sector since graduation and now works at Al Baraka Bank as a credit officer. She married fellow LAU alum **Mohamad Dimiskieh (B.S. '07)** in 2011, with whom she welcomed a baby girl named Thalia this year. She is graduating from the LAU Emba Program this summer.

Mona Karam Sawaya (B.S. '04) is happily married and has a two-and-a-half-year-old boy. She is living in Dubai and working at Pearson.

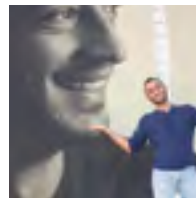


Bilal Haidar (B.E. '04) recently passed the Project Management Professional Exam and is now PMP certified.

Maen Abilmona (B.S. '05, M.B.A. '10) recently assumed the position of sales manager at DMG Events in Dubai.



Amani EL Hage El Shahall (B.A. '05) is married to Fouad El Shahall, lives in Oman and works at Muscat Hills Golf & Country Club. She and her husband welcomed the arrival of twins Adam and Boushra.



Zaid Abu Hamdan (B.A. '05) has been an actor since the age of five and holds an M.F.A. from the New York Film Academy in Hollywood. Hamdan worked as an assistant director, writer and producer for well-established TV shows, such as the 2013 E! Golden Globes coverage and Sesame

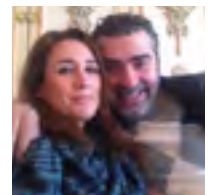
Street. In addition, he worked as a TV reporter for MBC group in Hollywood. In 2009, Hamdan established his company Zaha Productions, producing five award-winning short films to date and creating strong work relationships with prestigious production houses in Los Angeles and the Gulf.

Carl J. Nacouzi (B.S. '05) has spent 10 years in the banking industry and launched a department in a company that has been in the industry for more than a decade, with plans to become a partner in the near future. He recently assumed the role of assistant general manager at Unilux Cards.

Sara Saadeddine Daouk Shatila (B.A. '06, M.B.A. '12) married Hisham Shatila on August 3, 2006 and has two lovely sons, five-year-old Mohamad and 18-month-old Yehya. She has taught different subjects — including math, science, social studies, physics and chemistry — for different levels up to grade 8 in several private schools.

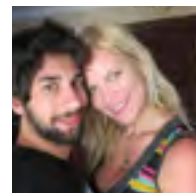


Ghenwa Shaar Shalak (A.A.S. '06) is a working mother who launched her own business of handmade decorative items after a 13-year career in advertising and sales. She is happily married to famed Lebanese actor Ammar Shalak.



Sarah Firikh (B.S. '06, M.B.A. '08) gave birth to a wonderful baby boy, Adam, on August 31, 2012. She is a freelance corporate trainer in Abu Dhabi.

Ibrahim Salame (M.B.C. '06) currently works for Gen Re, a Berkshire Hathaway company, as business development director for the MENA and Cyprus.

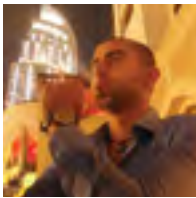


Muhieddine Taha (B.S. '06), known better as Mido Taha, graduated from LAU with a B.S. in Graphic Design in 2006. After undertaking internships at Saatchi & Saatchi-Beirut and Pinc Design House, he worked in Lebanon for one year with a local publishing house before. He moved to Saudi Arabia in 2008 with MAC-M&C Saatchi, now known as MMG KSA, where he recently was promoted to Art Director. He met his wife Anne, who is from Finland, in Riyadh. He has trained to become a mountain guide and river rafting guide in Nepal and is planning to climb the Seven Summits. Additionally, he moonlights as a DJ.



Bayat Al-Bayat (B.S. '07) works with Rotana Holding Group. Last December, he relocated to Bahrain, where he was promoted to group treasury analyst. In December, he and his wife Hadeel welcomed daughter Jenine to their family, which also includes a Pomeranian named Simba.

Justine Atallah (B.S. '07) has been working at Nostalgie and NRJ radio stations in Beirut as sales commercial and media coordinator for the past five years.



Mohamed Abboud (B.S. '07) has been with IBM for five years, achieving the Global Procurement Excellence Award, the highest IBM award in procurement, in 2012. Currently he is a business development manager for IBM across the UAE.

Bechir Hasbani (B.E. '08) is a new employee at Apave Liban SARL, where he works as a technical electromechanical engineer for project inspection, project site visits and commissioning.



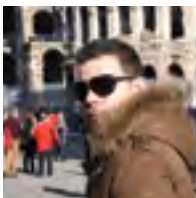
Abbas Sibai (B.S. '08) is currently responsible for program management and communication for the National Tobacco Control Program at the Lebanese Ministry of Public Health. Additionally, he founded a new green initiative called E4Waste, which acts as a network between waste management

stakeholders to manage waste from collection to disposal while recovering valuable resources. Abbas also launched Live Love Beirut, which is a crowd-sourced love campaign for Lebanon.

Mohamed Soussan (M.B.A. '08) is currently based in Al-Ain, UAE, where he has been working as a group general manager for Ayla Hotels & Resorts Management Company, LLC. Previously he worked as executive assistant manager at Khalidiya Palace Rayhaan by Rotana Hotels in Abu Dhabi.



Pascale Harb (B.S. '10) began working after graduation as a project coordinator at an NGO called the Lebanese Welfare Association for the Handicapped. Since January 2012, she has been working at a company called 961 Media, which is the exclusive agent of the NBN television station and offers value-added services in telecom.



Fady Assaad (B.S. '11) took several months off after graduating to travel around the world to gain inspiration. In August 2012, he began working for startup graphic design company called Beirut In Graphics. He is a Senior Graphic Designer and was also recently promoted to Media Executive.

Ghazi Haidar (M.B.A. '11) currently holds the position of administration manager at Dar Al Handasah (Shair & Partners) in Egypt.



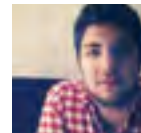
Raed N. Al-Ghoussainy (B.S. '11) moved to Kuwait upon graduation to work as a customer relationship manager at Winners International Trading Co. In January he shifted gears and began work at a new company called International Trading Center Company, where he serves as key account manager.

Dina El Rawas (B.S. '12) obtained a position as an associate auditor at the international auditing firm PricewaterhouseCoopers, where she has been working for the past four months.



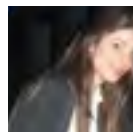
Yousef Shebab (B.S. '12) launched his own private business specialized in CCTV and security.

Karim Farhat (B.S. '12) began working at Aramex International just before graduating.



Nelly W. Awad (B.A. '12) recently participated in the fifth United Nations Alliance of Civilizations Global Forum, the theme of which was responsible leadership and effective dialogue in diversity.

Carol Saad (B.S. '13) obtained a job with Middle East Airlines as an airline nutritionist and food quality inspector. In October 2012, Saad went to Paris to undergo a training program at Charles De Gaulle airport. In November 2012 she travelled to Abu Dhabi to attend the International Travel Catering Association conference, where she learned about numerous aspects of the worlds of airlines and food, met key people in the field, and established valuable contacts.



Lara EL-Yafi (B.A. '13) has been chosen by BBC Arabic and UNESCO to produce a short documentary that will be airing in the near future. She is now working as an assistant producer with the company In Media Plus for The X Factor Arabia.

Rayya Morcos (B.S. '13) graduated from LAU as an interior designer and enrolled in ESMOD to pursue a career in fashion design. After five years as senior designer at Maison Rabih Kayrouz she launched her own brand of ready-to-wear garments and accessories for women, and that's how Bird on a Wire was born a year ago.



WHY I GIVE BACK

Robert Shafie and Varsenig Yapoudjian



What years did you attend Beirut University College/Beirut College for Women, what years did you graduate, and what degrees did you receive?

I graduated from BUC in 1984 with an M.B.A. My wife Varsenig Yapoudjian graduated from BCW in 1974 with a B.S. in Computer Science/Mathematics.

Where do you live now?

We have been living in Boston, Massachusetts for the last 25 years, where we raised our two daughters, Natalie and Nancy.

What have you been doing since graduation?

My wife and I operate a family clothing business. I have also been pursuing a Ph.D. in Psychology at Grand Canyon University. I expect to graduate in March 2014.

Why do you give back to LAU?

We have all benefited from the generosity of former students. The happiest people are those who give without expecting anything in return.

What is your fondest memory of BUC/BWC?

My fondest memories are of the early 1970s, when I met Varsenig and life seemed simpler. We both carry beautiful memories of the library, the pink lounge and the benches under the trees. We still remember every single tree and branch, warm winters, the spring breeze and the May Queen festivals that brought us into the heat of the summer. I particularly recall the special relationship that existed among students, faculty and administration. I will never forget former President Dr. Riyad Nassar, who so admirably protected LAU during the war years.

What message would you like to convey to fellow alumni and current LAU students?

I strongly encourage all LAU graduates to remain loyal and active members in the development of this family-oriented institution. Since connecting with LAU's Alumni Office, I have rediscovered my role in my home country of Lebanon.

How do you feel your education at LAU contributed to your professional and personal development?

Even after a 25-year absence from Lebanon, my first visit to LAU left me so encouraged that I felt compelled to continue my education by pursuing a Ph.D. As a young man I entrusted LAU with providing me with education, guidance and confidence, and I have never been disappointed in its dedication to ensuring the similar success of future generations.





Fulfilling the Promise

LAU Campaign for Academic Excellence



ADNAN KASSAR IS FULFILLING THE PROMISE.

Adnan Kassar is renowned for his diligence, vision and leadership, and understands the importance of inspiring such values in Lebanon's future leaders.

Kassar, who received an honorary doctorate from LAU in 2008, is currently the chairman of and major shareholder in Fransabank SAL, and is the chairman of Fransa Holding SAL. He is also the founder and co-owner of A.A. Kassar SAL, a leading trading company headquartered in Beirut.

Dedicated to ensuring equal opportunity in education, Fransabank recently established the LAU Adnan Kassar Annual Scholarship Grant. With this generous gift, Fransabank will support 10 needy and deserving students at the LAU School of Business.



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