

AGENDA

LEBANON

PHOTOGRAPHY

**‘La Mer Patrie’**  
*Dar El-Nimer, Clemenceau*  
Until Sept. 27, 11 a.m. to 7 p.m.  
Fouad Elkoury and Jeremy Peacock’s joint show comprises photos that illustrate a part of the lives of Palestinians in Beirut in the early 1980s, the departure of the Palestine Liberation Organization from Beirut to Tunis and arrival in Palestine as part of the Gaza-Jericho Agreement.

MUSIC

**‘Ensemble Dashrum’**  
*Dawar al-SHAMS, Tayyouneh*  
July 9, 7 p.m.  
05-922-846  
The Korean Women’s Chamber Music Ensemble will perform a traditional drumming and music concert.

FILM

**‘Upon the Shadow’**  
*Institut Francais, Mathaf*  
June 27, 7 p.m.  
The Cinema al-Fouad film festival continues with Nada Mezni Hafaiedh’s film, which follows the life of former Femen member Amina Sboui and the community of LGBTQ friends she houses in her Tunisian home.

PERFORMANCE

**‘Cirque du Soleil – Bazzar’**  
*The Parks, Furn al-Shubbak*  
Until June 30  
antoineticketing.com  
“Bazzar” sees the colorful Cirque du Soleil troupe bringing to life vibrant scenes in an artistic and acrobatic spectacle that combines order and chaos.

ART

**‘Towards the Sublime’**  
*Galerie Tanit, Mar Mikhael*  
Until Aug. 9, 11 a.m. to 7 p.m.  
This group show displays the works of 17 artists, including Gilbert Hage, Ayman Baalbaki and Lamia Joreige.

**‘Watercolors’**  
*Agial Art Gallery, Hamra*  
Until July 20, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.  
Oussama Baalbaki presents a recent series of watercolors, looking at the transformation of Lebanon’s urban and rural landscapes.

**‘Baalbek, Archives of an Eternity’**  
*Sursock Museum, Ashrafieh*  
Opening June 27, 6 p.m.  
Curated by Vali Mahlouji, the project brings together archaeological, ethnographic, anthropological and artistic perspectives to unpack the history of Baalbek.

**‘The Mother of David and Goliath’**  
*Sfeir-Semler Gallery, Karantina*  
Through Aug. 10  
01-566-550  
The work in Mounira Al Solh’s third Beirut solo concentrates on women’s rights, stories and their position in history in the Arab region.

**‘Theater of Operations’**  
*Sursock Museum, Ashrafieh*  
Until July 7, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.  
Baris Dogrusoz’s work looks at the archaeological site of Europos Dura in Syria and the acts of creation toward two potentially resistive architectural typologies.

JUST A THOUGHT

It’s not fair to compare one artist to another because they all come with their own sort of elements to the picnic, you know.

*Amie Lennox (1954-)*  
Singer-songwriter, political activist, philanthropist

PREVIEW

Beirut Art Fair celebrates 10 years

Parallel events to BAF include talks, book signings and special tour

By Maghie Ghali  
The Daily Star

BEIRUT: Beirut Art Fair will celebrate its 10th anniversary this September, with a focus on emerging artists from around the world. Running Sept. 18-22 at the Seaside Pavillion, the fair will assemble some 50 galleries from 18 countries, 30 of them newcomers. “In parallel with the gallery booths, we plan a diversity of artistic experiences,” BAF founder Laure d’Hauteville said in an interview with art historian Marie Tomb. “This 2019 edition aims to draw stronger-than-ever bridges between countries and continents ... We plan to broaden our horizons and present an even wider panel of renowned and promising artists to an ever-growing international public.”

Joanna Abou Sleiman-Chevalier, BAF’s new artistic director, said she hopes to take visitors on a unique experience unlike other international art fairs.

“I was traveling from fair to fair in order to pick up new interesting artists and galleries,” she said at a news conference. “We’re trying to show artists that are not necessarily seen in every big fair. Galleries like Kamel Mennour, who are very well known and do all the fairs ... will bring emerging artists [to BAF].

“It’s not only about [numbers] but about quality,” she added, “all these artists who are very interesting but don’t get the chance to show their work.”

As part of this focus, the new Project space will offer selected galleries a platform to spotlight promising young artists, all endorsed by the fair’s selection committee.

The 2019 edition will center on three exhibitions, produced in partnership with BAF.

“A Tribute to Lebanon” explores Western pieces inspired by Lebanon, from the 18th century to



Nestled within Beirut Art Week (Sept. 17-24), Beirut Art Fair will run Sept 18-22 at the Seaside Pavillion.

today, through artworks and historical objects from the collection of art patron Philippe Jabre.

Curated by collector Gaby Daher and designed by architect Jean-Louis Mainguy, the show promises more than 100 rare and exceptional objects linked by the theme of travel – including dolls, postcards, photo and watercolor albums.

Artworks include Orientalist paintings of Lebanon’s mountains, Beirut and Tripoli, as well as rare works by 20th-century artists. Many of these works are being exhibited for the first time, including pieces by Andy Warhol, David Hockney, the Civil War-era paintings by A.R. Penck and photos by Don McCullin.

“I discovered through the pieces that I had to write on that the look the Orientalist artist had on Lebanon helped a lot in the independence of the country,” said Fifi

Abou Dib, who is compiling a catalogue for “A Tribute to Lebanon.” “Whether they were sailors, writers, diplomats, scientists, there was always love in every piece they delivered in Lebanon.”

Curated by Abed Al Kadiri, BAF’s second expo “Lebanon Modern: Unexpected Trove – The Unseen Works of Hussein Madi,” will debut a series of the Lebanese artist’s landscape paintings.

Produced between 1965 and 1970 during his early years in Rome, these 47 canvases, now part of the Mazen and Loulia Soueid collection, recently resurfaced after spending 50 years in the hands of an Italian collector.

“It was pure coincidence that I discovered 47 paintings,” Mazen Souaid said. “Madi, when he first showed up in Rome in 1964, was a struggling art student who couldn’t

even afford his own paints.

“I think it’s important that this show is happening at the same time as we’re seeing how foreigners saw Lebanon,” Soueid said. “This is the inverse, how a Lebanese artist saw foreign lands and it should be a complementary show with great cultural exchange.”

The video art program “The Sensitive Sea” presents a visual dialogue of the Lebanese and Western scenes around a common theme, the sea, as a bridge linking two cultures across the Mediterranean.

Curated by Madeleine Filippi and Sophie Lanoe, the show is comprised by work by six artists, all reflecting the sea’s political, economic and cultural facets.

To celebrate BAF’s first decade SGBL’s Revealing, will show works by 10 artists from the MENA region, selected following an open call

answered by over 400 applicants.

“There is no unifying theme to the platform,” Revealing curator Rachel Dedman said in her statement. “However each artist’s work reflects – and in many case addresses – the range of personal, political and socio-economic conditions in which we live today across the MENA region.

“In this sense, Revealing by SGBL bears witness to some of the urgencies and issues governing society, and the interests shaping artistic practice.”

Parallel events to BAF include talks, book signings, special tours and the fair’s precursor event, Beirut Art Week, taking place Sept. 17-24 in downtown Beirut, will be displaying a number of artworks in public spaces.

For more information visit [beirut-art-fair.com](http://beirut-art-fair.com)

Qatar megalibrary woos younger readers



Architect Koolhaas has previously said he wanted readers to be able to “see all the books in a panorama.”

By Gregory Walton  
Agence France Presse

DOHA: The Gulf’s largest book collection, Qatar’s National Library, has enhanced ties with libraries outside the region and wooed younger readers in its first year, as an anti-Doha boycott drags on.

Scores of children weave in and out of the banked rows of shelves or sit on beanbags clutching books at the foot of the vast columns that support architect Rem Koolhaas’ 45,000-square-meter megastructure.

Every single book in the children’s library was borrowed in the first six months as the QNL has sought to avoid the stuffiness of some world-class libraries and attract young readers. It has marketed itself as a “noisy” library and features a 120-seat auditorium and a special events area at the heart of the naturally lit space that is reminiscent of an airport.

“All of the books you see in this place can be borrowed by the users,” the library’s Deputy Executive Director Stuart James Hamilton says.

“Unlike many of the national libraries, we have a public library function that goes alongside the national and research library functions,” he adds.

With over 1 million books and 500,000 digital editions, the library, located in Doha’s Education City, is the largest in the Middle East. The UAE is shooting to outdo Qatar with its Dubai-based Mohammed bin Rashid Library, hoping to house 1.5 million volumes when it opens.

Tensions between the United Arab Emirates and Qatar erupted in June 2017 when the Emirates joined a Saudi-led alliance that imposed an economic and diplomatic boycott on Doha, accusing it of supporting Iran and Islamist movements, charges Qatar denies.

“We’re in an intriguing situation here politically,” Hamilton says.

“But from the library’s perspective it just makes us more keen to make sure that our profile is raised and connections are made with other countries.”

The library has also brought forward plans to collaborate and reach out to libraries outside the region in

response to the embargo, he adds.

Since opening, the institution has also staged more than 1,000 public events, many featuring authors and scholars from Europe and North America – a symbolic milestone in the face of the regional boycott.

Opened on April 16, 2018, the library is part of gas-rich Qatar’s drive to reduce dependence on hydrocarbons and pivot to a knowledge-based economy.

The building is designed to look like folded sheets of paper and employs more than 39 nationalities, has 144,000 members and has loaned more than 1 million items. Experts estimate the combined public, university and national library to have cost around \$300 million.

Inside, rows of pristine white shelves rise up a gently banked incline. Architect Koolhaas has previously said he wanted readers to be able to “see all the books in a panorama.” An open-topped subterranean reading room clad in marble holds heritage materials and artifacts related to Qatari and regional history.

Qatar has faced increased scrutiny over freedom of speech since its

winning bid to host football’s 2022 World Cup, and questions have previously been raised about the freedom of libraries in the conservative Gulf region.

Hamilton says that while there is no censorship of material in the library, books have to comply with a set of standards.

“The collection we have started has to be there for its users – we’re not holding anything back,” he says, adding that all new additions must meet collection development guidelines and cannot promote “hate speech.”

“The ones we don’t have in the collection are the ones that don’t meet the standard,” he says. “We don’t buy everything.”

Volumes on LGBT health are freely available, though homosexuality is illegal in Qatar, as are critical works on the country’s recent political past.

“Any library like the Qatar National Library,” he adds, for example, “the New York Public Library, needs to reflect the needs and interests of its users and its population so our collection develops in response to what our users want.”

The Mueller report is now inspiring art

By Hillel Italie  
Associated Press

NEW YORK: Multimedia artist Liz Zito is so immersed in the Mueller Report that she wrote fan fiction to fill in the parts redacted by the Justice Department.

When she worried that other Americans didn’t know about special counsel Robert Mueller’s findings, she gave it a “performative reading” in Manhattan.

“When you deliver a comedic performance, you want people to laugh at all the jokes,” Zito says of her June 13 show at 601 Artspace, “but a lot of positive feedback from that night came from people learning what was in the report and how manipulated we all were/are as world citizens.”

Made public in April, the Mueller report detailing the results of the two-year investigation into whether the Trump campaign colluded with Russia has become a work of theater, among other art forms.

Over the past month, there have been readings in New York, Washington and elsewhere. Monday night, an all-star reading featured John Lithgow, Annette Bening and others. Law Works, which identifies itself as a bipartisan organization that advocates for the rule of law, livestreamed the event. “If Americans aren’t going to read the report,” says Law Works executive director David Wade, “we wanted to help them watch it.”

From the start, the report has been treated like a work of interpretative art. As Mueller’s team were reviewing documents and interviewing Trump’s associates, Trump and his supporters repeatedly called it a “WITCH HUNT.” One of the first Mueller readings happened early this month, the 24-hour “Filibustered and Unfiltered: America Reads the Mueller Report,” at New York City’s The Arc.

Soon after the report came out, said director Jackson Gay, she jokingly posted on Facebook that maybe she should stage a reading. The response was so enthusiastic that she found it “impossible not to go ahead.”

“We encourage the performers to read the report as straightforwardly as possible,” she says. “If somebody gets up there and comments on it than they’re really no better than the talking heads on TV.”