

CEDAR

MIEA TEAM

wings

The In-flight Magazine of Middle East Airlines - Air Liban

Frank Gehry's
spectacular structures

PAUL GUIRAGOSSIAN
peintre de la condition humaine

Tanzania
An African Dream
Adventure

art

Contributors

WRITERS, PHOTOGRAPHERS, EXPERTS and TRAVELERS

Every issue meet our extended family of contributors who help us create Cedar Wings.

Ziad Farah is an AUB graduate with a BA in architecture. He currently works in contracting in Miami. Ziad has always been fascinated by the diversity of architecture, landscapes, cultures and cuisines in the world. Thanks to social media, he is always exposed to new destinations and hidden gems that fuel his passion for travel. He takes pride in his detailed research and itinerary planning in order to make the most of each journey and create a beautiful and memorable experience. In addition to travel, he is a passionate foodie, an amateur photographer and a movie awards addict!



@ziadsf

Growing up in a region known for upheaval, **MarieJoe Raidy** advocates for doing business in a way that is environmentally responsible.

As creative partner with Raidy Group and director with international firms specialized in new technologies such as Supergarant, Creative Lounges and Globivest, she spearheads an effort to adopt innovative and eco-friendly techniques. She helped create the Better Business Group with the American Lebanese Chamber of Commerce, which encourages corporations to adhere to a code of business ethics, and is a founding member of the Lebanese Policy Advocates Program. In recognition of her trailblazing ways, she was recently asked to serve as General Secretary for Child of Lebanon.



@mariejoeraidy



@bouchraconsultancy

BOUCHRA BOUSTANY IS THE FOUNDER OF BOUCHRA CONSULTANCY, LAUNCHED IN 2012 AND SPECIALIZING IN COMMUNICATION AND EVENT PLANNING FOR LUXURY BRANDS. BOUCHRA CONSULTANCY'S CLIENT ROSTER INCLUDES DIFFERENT TYPES OF BUSINESSES, BOTH LOCAL AND INTERNATIONAL, ALL INVOLVED IN THE LUXURY FIELD. THE COMPANY SPECIALIZES IN BRAND AWARENESS, PRODUCT LAUNCHES, TALENT MANAGEMENT, MARKETING STRATEGY AND BRANDING, AS WELL AS CATERED EVENTS, WHILE PROVIDING STRATEGIC COUNSEL, CREATIVE SOLUTIONS AND TIMELY, RESPONSIVE SERVICES.



@kharratnour_healthcoach

NOUR KHARRAT IS A HEALTH COACH WHO GRADUATED FROM THE INSTITUTE OF INTEGRATED NUTRITION (IIN). AFTER A 10-YEAR CAREER IN MARKETING, SHE DECIDED TO CHANGE COURSE TO FOLLOW HER PASSION AND HELP PEOPLE HAVE A HEALTHIER AND HAPPIER LIFE. SHE HELD A VARIETY OF WORKSHOPS AT VARIOUS SCHOOLS TO EDUCATE KIDS ON THE SIDE EFFECTS OF SUGAR ON THEIR HEALTH. SHE IS A STRONG BELIEVER THAT THROUGH EDUCATION KIDS AND ADULTS CAN MAKE LONG-LASTING CHANGES TO THEIR LIFESTYLES.

*After a Master's in business and professional experience at FMOG, **Michelle Gebaily** came up with the idea of opening Kitchenlab, a cooking school, with Youmna Ziade Karam, who has a law and political science background. In Lebanese culture, food is a focal point, but learning from scratch or improving cooking techniques wasn't always a priority, so Michelle came up with the idea of creating a cooking atelier in 2013. Kitchenlab is equipped with workstations adapted for hands-on lessons. Classes have been devised to suit every person, with menus adapted to all levels and to different types of events, from public to private, corporate and team building.*



@kitchenlab.lb

Chris Nader has been trotting around the globe for 10 years. Last year alone, he spent 153 nights in hotels in 27 cities across 22 countries. His work sometimes takes him to hotels where no other sane person would dare sleep. But hey, he likes adventure and luckily most hotels he checks into are top luxury properties. He loves free-standing bathtubs. He hates being asked "how was your flight sir?" He is uncompromising when it comes to service. And if you want to win his heart, make sure you have Eggs Benedict on the breakfast menu.



@hotel_trotter

Founded by **Cherine Magrabi Tayeb**, House of Today is a nonprofit organization that identifies, nurtures, mentors, curates, showcases and connects Lebanese product designers to create a relationship with design experts, regionally and globally. It is a platform that inspires, creates, and influences through biennale exhibitions as well as an annual scholarship program. Since its inception in 2012, Cherine has overseen the development of HoT's program and the curation of its design exhibitions. She has played a pivotal role in putting Lebanon on the international design map, leading House of Today to become recognized internationally as a reference for design in Lebanon and the Middle East.



@houseoftoday

CHRISTIAN GHAMMACHI IS A NATIONAL OF LEBANON AND FRANCE, AND HIS CAREER AS A PHOTOGRAPHER AND FILMMAKER SPANS MORE THAN TWO DECADES. HE HAS CREATED CONTENT IN OVER 65 COUNTRIES AND HAS PUBLISHED AWARD-WINNING BOOKS SUCH AS "19 YEARS LATER" AND "RISE ABOVE LEBANON." HE HAS ALSO PRODUCED MANY TRAVEL AND ADVENTURE SHORT FILMS, MANY OF WHICH HAVE KNOWN VIRAL SUCCESS, INCLUDING "RISE ABOVE LEBANON" AND "RETURN TO KENYA." CHRISTIAN IS REPRESENTED BY GALLERIES IN LONDON AND THE UAE.



@riseabovelebanon



@larakoussaife

LARA KOUSSAIFE HAS EXTENSIVE EXPERIENCE IN LOCAL DEVELOPMENT, SUSTAINABLE TOURISM AND MARKETING CONSULTANCY. BESIDES BEING AN AUTHOR AND EDITOR COVERING TOPICS ON LEBANESE HERITAGE, LARA IS A PROJECT MANAGER, COACH AND TRAINER DESIGNING AND IMPLEMENTING ENTREPRENEURS' EMPOWERMENT PROGRAMS IN RURAL AREAS. ALONG WITH HER ENGAGEMENT IN CIVIC SOCIETY, SHE IS AN ACTIVE PARTICIPANT IN SOCIAL, CULTURAL AND TOURISM CLUSTERS, WORKING CLOSELY WITH MULTIPLE LOCAL AND INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATIONS.



@kaph.books

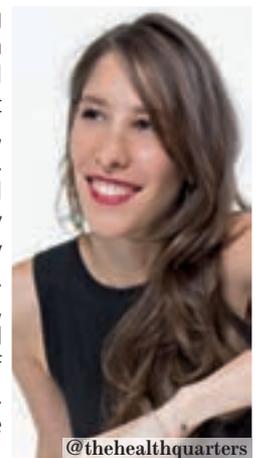
Born in Beirut, **Nour Salamé** started her career as a management consultant in Paris, before moving back to Lebanon and working in the fields of marketing and management until 2016, when she started Kaph Books, a publishing house specialized in art books for artists from the Middle East. Passionate about art, she believes books are a means to archive and promote artistic practices. During her free time, she enjoys traveling and visiting peculiar museums throughout the world.

From the moment **Omar Frangieh** stood behind the lens, he knew he had a passion for it. There is something about looking at the world through your very own eyes and sharing that perspective with the world in the form of pictures. It's showing others a bit of your own vision and that pushes him to expand his boundaries and experiment with the surroundings to astound those who appreciate good photography. This passion has entwined itself with Omar's work as regional head of TV production. He incorporates his expertise in catching the moment before it ends. That's the beauty of photography, "the preservation of fleeting moments, captured at the right moment."



@omarfrangieh

Mira Tueny is a dietitian and a smoking cessation practitioner. She provides a balanced lifestyle nutrition and physical activity plan to keep people fit and at reduced risk for cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, cancer and other diseases. She holds a Master's degree from Imperial College London in preventive cardiology and is recognized as a specialist in obesity by the World Obesity Federation. Mira is the founder of The HealthQuarters, a holistic, multidisciplinary polyclinic and Snack In The Box, a monthly box of expertly selected healthy snacks. She works as a consultant for gyms, juice bars and food brands.



@thehealthquarters



Spotted on the Red Carpet

Lebanese fashion houses made quite a splash at the Cannes Film Festival this year. At the premiere of Chinese film “Ash Is The Purest White,” British singer Cheryl Cole wore a diaphanous, sheer white gown by Lebanese designer Zuhair Murad, while Bollywood actress Deepika Padukone and British-Thai actress Araya Hargate both had on gowns by Lebanon-based Ashi Studio. Hargate was uniquely stunning in a white feathered jumpsuit, and Padukone exuded over-the-top glamour in a hot pink origami gown with an ultra-short skirt and long, flowing, ruffled trail in back. The night before, Padukone also favored Lebanese designers by wearing a sheer, off-white Zuhair Murad gown that emphasized her devastating figure. Models Sara Sampaio, Heidi Klum, Alessandra Ambrosio and Izabel Goulart chose Zuhair Murad as well. And for the “Girls of the Sun” premiere, Oscar-winning actress Helen Mirren donned a magnificent royal blue gown, complete with Medieval influences, by Lebanese designer Elie Saab. Many other stars and celebrities also wore Lebanese designs.

Around the World

what's ON, what's HOT

Lebanon Wins at **CANNES**

NADINE LABAKI'S FILM "CAPHARNAÛM" WON THE PRESTIGIOUS PRIX DU JURY AT THE 71ST CANNES FILM FESTIVAL THIS YEAR. THE 44-YEAR-OLD LEBANESE ACTRESS AND DIRECTOR IS NO STRANGER TO THE FESTIVAL: IN 2007, HER FIRST FEATURE FILM "CAMEL" PREMIERED AT CANNES, AND HER SECOND FEATURE, 2011'S "WHERE DO WE GO NOW?" WAS RELEASED AS PART OF THE FESTIVAL'S UN CERTAIN REGARD SECTION. HER THIRD FILM, IN WHICH SHE ALSO STARS, TELLS THE STORY OF A CHILD WHO REBELS AGAINST HIS LIFE AND BRINGS A LAWSUIT AGAINST HIS PARENTS. SONY PICTURES CLASSIC ACQUIRED THE NORTH AMERICAN AND LATIN AMERICAN RIGHTS TO "CAPHARNAÛM" AND PLANS TO RELEASE THE MOVIE IN DECEMBER THIS YEAR.



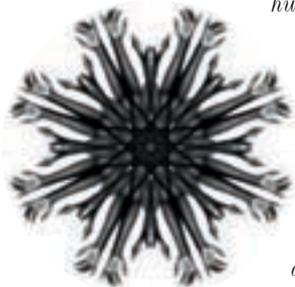
ABD EL WAHAB *lands in* LONDON

In a milestone opening last March, popular Lebanese restaurant Abd El Wahab launched a new outpost in London – the company's first outside of the Arab region. The 120-seat restaurant, located on Pont Street in Belgravia, serves traditional Lebanese cuisine as well as a selection of Lebanese wines. Ghia Holding, the parent company of the Abd el Wahab restaurant group, which now holds 45 dining venues within its portfolio, chose London as its first international location due to the city's position as a hub for commerce, culture and international cuisine. The restaurant is set over two floors and also boasts an outside terrace suitable for drinks, informal dining or simply to enjoy Arabic coffee with a Lebanese dessert.

Kaleidoscope OF THE HUMAN NUDE

Argentinean artist Fede Bianchi has taken the human nude into new artistic territory. Long fascinated by patterns, repetition and calculations, he started shooting nude photographs and then mixed them with mathematics to create human mandalas. His singular artworks – female nudes

replicated in perfect shapes on twirling patterns – are both striking and therapeutic. In his own words: “Our vulnerable human condition is so fragmented and ridden with anxiety that often we need to reform and return to our center with energetic and purified balance. In order to heal myself of this anxiety I create contemplative pieces evoking unity and the infinite. I use the matrix of the female body as a brush. The feminine form stands for creation, transformation, beauty and harmony. I call my work ‘body mandalas.’”



The Only Travel Jacket YOU’LL EVER NEED

Yoganshi and Hiral tied the knot in 2013, but before their first anniversary Hiral left San Francisco for Chicago to pursue his MBA. This started a series of frequent flights between the two cities, to help with their long-distance relationship. Every time he traveled, Hiral would carry a bulky neck pillow so he could sleep during the flight. If he forgot his pillow, he’d have to buy a new pillow at the airport. That’s when he came upon the idea of creating a single jacket that would solve all travel-related problems. Through a successful 2015 Kickstarter campaign Yoganshi and Hiral raised US\$9 million and in 2016 launched BauBax, the world’s most sophisticated travel jacket. The success of the initial jacket encouraged the duo to work on an improved second version, scheduled for release in August 2018. Boasting 25 different features, BauBax 2.0 comes with a neck pillow, eye mask, gloves, footrest, blanket, travel bottle, earplugs, apple pencil pocket, AirPods pocket, AirPods straps, power bank pocket, sunglass pocket, microfiber cloth, passport pocket, tablet pocket, retractable keychain, bottle opener and whistle, drink pocket, phone pocket, wired earphone holder, zipper for your pen, hand-warming pockets and, of course, a top secret pocket. The new jacket is available in four different styles: vest, windbreaker, sweatshirt and bomber.



AUCTION *of the Century*

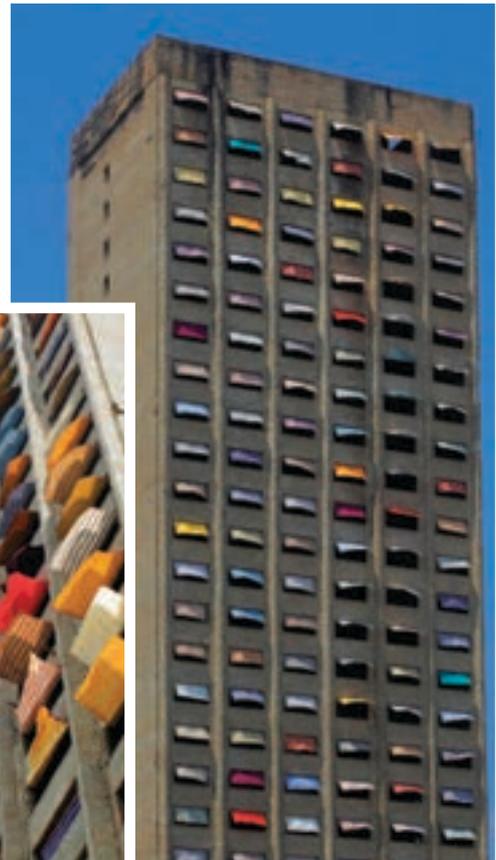
THE PEGGY AND DAVID ROCKEFELLER PRIVATE COLLECTION NETTED A STAGGERING US\$832 MILLION AND SET 22 WORLD RECORDS WHEN IT WAS AUCTIONED OFF BY CHRISTIE’S IN NEW YORK IN MAY. CHRISTIE’S SOLD OVER 1,500 PIECES FROM THE COLLECTION, INCLUDING ARTWORKS BY THE LIKES OF PICASSO, MONET AND MATISSE, AS WELL AS COVETED TREASURES LIKE A 256-PIECE SÈVRES DESSERT SERVICE ORIGINALLY ORDERED BY NAPOLEON BONAPARTE. A PAINTING BY LATE LEBANESE ARTIST SALIBA DOUAIHY, WHO WAS BORN IN THE NORTHERN LEBANESE MOUNTAIN TOWN OF EHDEN AND LATER MOVED TO NEW YORK, SOLD FOR A RECORD US\$336,500. DOUAIHY WAS THE ONLY LEBANESE ARTIST REPRESENTED IN THE ROCKEFELLERS’ PRIVATE COLLECTION.



Saliba Douaihy (1912-1994)
Untitled, oil on canvas, 1963. 66.3 x 106.9cm
Estimate: US\$25,000-US\$35,000
Price realized: US\$336,500

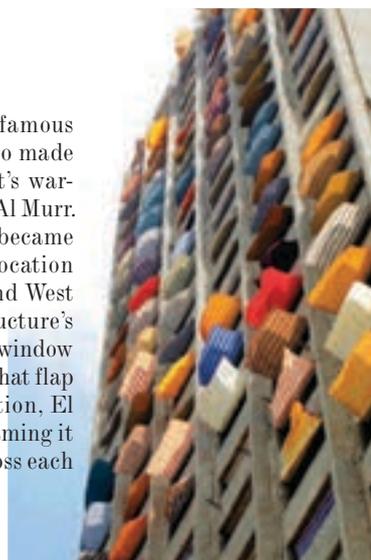
Lebanon Snapshots

Jad Ghorayeb is passionate about Lebanese heritage and culture. For many years now, the architect has been photographing Lebanon in an attempt to capture the contrast between current architectural tendencies and disappearing architectural traditions. Through his photos, he hopes to raise global awareness of Lebanon's unique heritage, while contributing to its preservation. His Instagram account @jadgghorayeb has been garnering international attention and praise, with his work being reposted and featured in major publications, including DesignBoom, Limit Art, Design Dautore, Axema, Asia Photo Magazine, Street Art Globe and many more.



Window to the Future

Jad El Khoury has reinvented one of Beirut's most infamous landmarks. The Lebanese artist and interior architect, who made a name for himself by adding colorful murals to Beirut's war-damaged buildings, this time turned his attention to Burj Al Murr. Built in 1974, the Murr tower was never completed, and it became a favored sniper's nest during the war years due to its location smack along the Green Line that once divided East and West Beirut. In an attempt to move beyond the abandoned structure's checkered past, El Khoury installed colored shades in each window of the 40-story tower, adding brilliant bursts of happiness that flap in the Mediterranean breeze. With his artistic intervention, El Khoury infused joy, life and creativity into the tower, renaming it Burj Al Hawa in a nod to the wind that dances its way across each colorful shade.





VIEW BCHAMOUN

Not to be Compared

Situated in Bchamoun, View Bchamoun's prime location offers unrivaled views of both Lebanon's picturesque mountain scenery and dazzling sea views, in the heart of an alluring town.

View Bchamoun, a state of the art residential and commercial compound, embraces every aspect of exceptional living by offering unparalleled facilities and features on lush garden grounds. The nine individual modern buildings and 144 immaculate apartments available with stunning mountain and sea view are complimented by the numerous walkways and bikeways encircling the grounds.

Countless facilities such as basketball, football and tennis courts, outdoor and indoor swimming pools and Jacuzzi, high-tech Gym, children's playground and nursery, as well as an inclusive shopping complex and 24h supermarket, make for a fulfilled and distinct living experience.

- ✓ 144 APARTMENTS
- ✓ 9 BUILDINGS
- ✓ COMMERCIAL AREA
- ✓ LUSH GARDENS
- ✓ AMPLE PARKING SPACE
- ✓ ON SITE SHOPPING COMPLEX
- ✓ HIGH TECH GYM (24 HOURS ACCESS)
- ✓ INDOOR AND OUTDOOR SWIMMING POOLS
- ✓ TWO FOOTBALL FIELDS
- ✓ ONE BASKETBALL COURT
- ✓ ONE TENNIS COURT
- ✓ CHILDREN'S PLAYGROUND
- ✓ BBQ AREA
- ✓ 24 HOUR SECURITY

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EYES ON LEBANON

with Darine Hamze

Lebanese ACTRESS Darine Hamze is enjoying her moment in the sun. One of the most ACCLAIMED actresses of her generation, she's taken on diverse, daring and COMPLEX ROLES in different languages and in VARIOUS COUNTRIES, allowing her to achieve fame across the Arab World and beyond. Darine studied acting in LONDON, and she's been working in film, TV and theater since 2007, in both Europe and the MIDDLE EAST. She won the BEST ACTRESS AWARD at the Oran International Film Festival 2017 for her role in the movie "Nuts." Darine speaks Arabic, French, English and Farsi. She sat down for an intimate CHAT with Cedar Wings.



Your favorite spot in Lebanon

Well it depends on the season, the weather and my mood, but I guess since Lebanon is so diverse and has amazing seasons, my favorite spot in summer is the mountains because I love the cool breeze and the pine trees. And in winter I love Faraya and ironically the seaside. Otherwise I tend to hang around my home area, which is Ashrafieh with its cozy cafés and narrow streets.

Your best-loved village

I love Souk el Gharb since I was brought up there, and my grandparents' home is there. It has beautiful nature, and it is where I first rode a bike and first scratched my knees. My earliest childhood memories are all there, before I moved to the UK.

Your favorite restaurant

My favorite restaurant has to be Sushi Bar. I am a seafood lover, so I spend a lot of time looking for the best sushi and seafood restaurants. Sushi Bar and I have been together for years!

Your preferred Lebanese dish

It's shish barak. I love pastries and I love yogurt, so the combination when done correctly is simply delicious. I don't eat it a lot, but it's a delight when served right out of the oven.

Places to shop in Lebanon

I usually head either to Downtown Beirut or ABC Ashrafieh. It's practical for me since it's near my home, and most of the shops that I need are there.

Best Lebanese tourism destination

I recently had an American producer friend visiting, and she really wanted to visit the Temple of Jupiter in Baalbeck. My friends and I were trying to convince her to go to Byblos instead, but she insisted, saying it is a very important sight. To make the story short, it was an amazing trip, and the Roman architecture was truly majestic. We got amazing pictures and felt huge pride in our heritage and history. I would say Baalbeck is the best we have in stature and size.

Most breathtaking view in Lebanon

The sunset anywhere and anytime, but I would suggest near Raouche since it's an open view. The view from Harissa is also breathtaking and should always be visited.

Your favorite Lebanese wine

I am not an expert, and I rarely have the odd red wine glass, but I enjoy a simple glass of Ixsir's Grande Réserve.

Your favorite Lebanese artist

Ziad Rahbany. He's a friend of mine, and I see him as an iconic figure. To me he represents the real meaning of Lebanese theater, and he's at the forefront of a movement of social self-criticism that no other artist could grasp. He's a real talent.

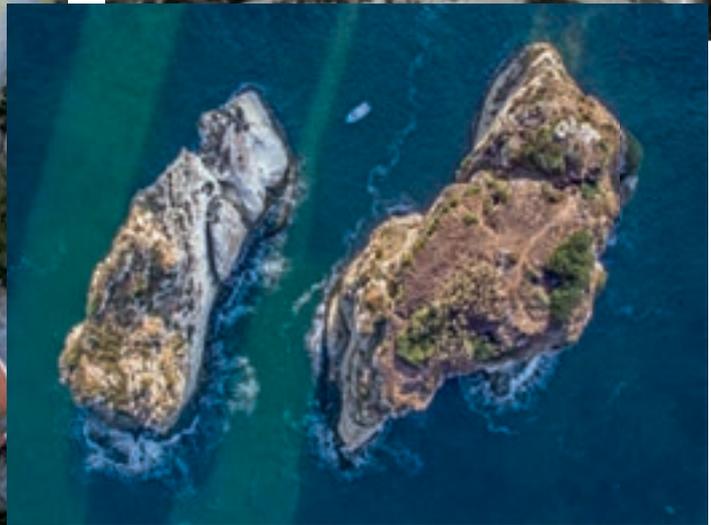
The best book you ever read

I have read many books over the years, and I like so many of them that it's hard to choose just one. But one of the best books has to be "The Dice Man" by Luke Rhinehart. I was at university when I read it, and my thought process really took a shift after that book. It made me see the world differently and made me more mature. Another one was "The Prince" by Niccolò Machiavelli.

Three things you always take with you when traveling

Well I always have to take my purse, my home keys and my phone everywhere I go. But my special three things would be lip balm, a book and dark chocolate: I enjoy having those with me when I travel.

“I would say Baalbeck is the best we have in stature and size.”



The best travel destination

I recently went to Japan, and it was amazing for inner peace and calm. For shopping and the theater I go mostly to London, and for fun and adventure I go to New York and LA.

Your activities during the weekend

My activities during the weekend usually include a Saturday brunch, a nice outdoor stroll, a small road trip outside of Beirut and a nature hike on a sunny Sunday followed by the movies at night.

Photos ©Rise above Lebanon

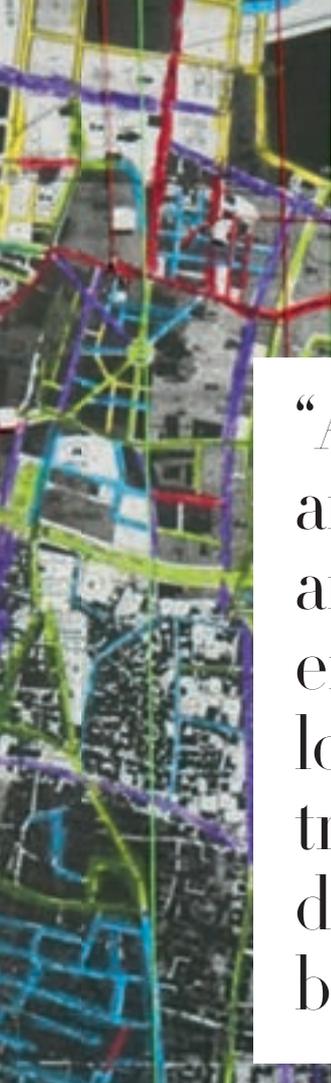
A BATTLE FOR PEACE

Alfred TARAZI

by Mariejoe J. Raidy

Alfred Tarazi is leading an initiative to **CREATE** a **MEMORIAL** to honor the **LEBANESE** Civil War's victims. A Beirut native with a BA in **GRAPHIC DESIGN** from the American University of Beirut, the 36-year-old has collaborated on several **URBAN ART** projects, and he's constantly looking for alternative ways to map, represent and remember the violence that threatens **HUMAN LIFE** all over the world and specifically in the Middle East. Tarazi believes that art, as opposed to politics and **MEDIA**, can offer an **ALTERNATIVE WINDOW** to perceive a world that is often far more complex than the reductive narratives offered.





“Where The Streets Have No Names,” 360 x 240cm. Mixed media on wood. 2017

“Art and design are about social and political engagement, as long as that is true there is no drastic difference between them.”

CEDAR WINGS MET WITH THE YOUNG ARTIST AT HIS IMPRESSIVE 600-METER STUDIO, SET WITHIN A FORGOTTEN BUILDING IN BEIRUT’S BOUCHRIEH NEIGHBORHOOD.

You studied graphic design. Why did you leave everything to pursue art? What is your artistic mission?
There was a time before the advent of the digital revolution when the boundaries between design and art were totally blurred. A lot of great artists were also designers and great designers were often using the same methodologies and tools as artists. This also reflected a true political and social awareness that manifested itself in the cultural production of artists and designers. Over time the separation of both disciplines made artists and designers much more vulnerable to the commodification of these disciplines. Art and design are about social and political engagement, as long as that is true there is no drastic difference between them.

Which gallery currently represents you? And tell us a bit about the gallery.

I am represented by Galerie Krinzinger in Vienna, a 40-year-old institution that has represented and still represents some of the best artists worldwide. The gallery is most famous to have promoted from its inception an important art movement known as the Viennese Actionists. That movement had worldwide repercussions and has inspired a lot of key artists that have since then also been represented by the gallery. Galerie Krinzinger also has a vested interest in artists from the non-Western world. Arab art for instance has often been marginalized. It is to the credit of Dr. Ursula Krinzinger to have created an opening in Vienna for artists from around the world to share their work.

Where did you exhibit internationally?

I have been exhibiting internationally since 2007. The most important show, however, for me has been held in Beirut at the disaffected City Center, aka The Egg, in Downtown Beirut. In this building I did a large installation with a group of people aiming to propose that ruin as a site to serve as a memorial for the victims of the Civil War. Our temporary installation was presented on April 13, 2010 marking the 35th anniversary of the beginning of the Civil War. That show embodied what I believe art can do: to operate on the margins of politics and history in order to propose alternative ways for people to reconcile what often appear as the irreconcilable forces that lead to violence and war.



“Forgotten Men,” 200 x 200cm
Mixed media on canvas. 2015

“Living through the war as a child and through the reconstruction as a teenager has made me strongly aware of the precariousness and beauty of life.”

When are your upcoming exhibitions?

I have a show scheduled for the beginning of 2019 with Galerie Krinzinger in Vienna, followed by another one in Beirut.

Tell us about your latest project, “The Lovers.”

“The Lovers” is a project I have been developing for the past two years. It is a history of the region and particularly of Lebanon and Palestine, seen through the angle of one of the Lebanese Civil War’s most unlikely couples.

Tell us about the art book on which you’re working. Why a book? When will it be released?

In 2017 I presented a large installation in Beirut titled “Dear Madness.” It attempted to reconfigure the years 2005 and 2006 in Lebanon through a narrative I developed, emphasizing the relationship between history, love and madness. Those two years were quite traumatic, and I wanted to explore how the Lebanese had lived through them and apparently overcome that violence. “Dear Madness” then turned into large sculptures and a lot of text,

both being cumbersome forms in the fast-paced world of contemporary art. To transform these into a publication that could set its own pace was a natural outcome. For the time being we will have a single artist book that will be presented during Art Basel.

What inspires you when you create art?

I strongly believe that I’ve lived most of my inspirational moments at a very early stage of my life. Living through the war as a child and through the reconstruction as a teenager has made me strongly aware of the precariousness and beauty of life. Ever since, it has been a constant challenge to nurture these inspirations for them to become fully formed thoughts and ideas. Some of those have manifested themselves in artworks over the past 10 years. I would like to also explore other forms such as books and films. I am very much interested in cultural productions that bridge various creative disciplines.

What are your dreams and goals? The finale to which you look forward?

My ultimate artistic dream remains the creation of a memorial for the victims of the Lebanese Civil War. It is a multifaceted work and endeavor that ultimately leads to writing the history of that war through the individual stories of its victims. Its scope goes way beyond art, but it invariably needs art in order to articulate and share that vision with others.



“Empty Plot of Land,” 200 x 200cm. Mixed media on canvas. 2015

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A FRENCH FABLE

Experience utmost luxury
at *Hôtel de Crillon*
in Paris

by Mariejoe J. Raidy



When it reopened in July 2017, after a three-and-a-half year and multimillion-dollar renovation, Paris' Hôtel de Crillon was reborn more luxurious than ever. Housed in a landmark structure originally built in 1758 and located at the foot of the Champs-Élysées, the hotel was once the residence of the Duke d'Aumont, who sold it to the Count de Crillon in 1788. The former hotel particulier was transformed into a luxury hotel in 1909 and has been graciously welcoming visitors ever since.

Part of the Rosewood family, the re-imagined Hôtel de Crillon houses 124 guestrooms and suites, three restaurants, a bar, a newly created swimming pool, a hair salon by David Lucas, a barber by La Barbière de Paris and much more. Architect Richard Martinet led the restoration project, including the landmark façade and grand reception salons on the second floor, while the hotel's interiors were created under the artistic direction of Aline Asmar d'Amman by four interior designers: Tristan Auer, Chahan Minassian, Cyril Vergniol and Culture in Architecture. Karl Lagerfeld designed the Grands Appartements, two exceptional suites facing Place de la Concorde, and a suite called Chouquette (named after his cat). There are also three historic salons for meetings and events, Salon Marie-Antoinette, Salon des Batailles and Salon des Aigles, which witnessed the signing of the first French-American treaty to recognize the Declaration of Independence, with Benjamin Franklin in attendance. "It is important to embrace the legacy and the history of the hotel in every aspect," says Roula Noujeim, the hotel's communications director.

“Karl Lagerfeld designed the Grands Appartements.”

I had heard many stories about Hôtel de Crillon, and I wanted to experience the place for myself, so I booked a room and spent 24 hours at the hotel. As I arrived at the property, I felt I was entering a private mansion, where a duke was about to welcome me like royalty. My own private butler Laura greeted me and walked me to my room. She told me she would be at my service throughout my stay, and that I could call her at all times from my room by pressing the butler button, for a tour of the hotel, room service, bookings or any other request. Once in the room, I was pleasantly surprised by

a welcome letter and sweet treats. Hôtel de Crillon had even gone to the trouble of stitching my initials in gold on the side on the pillows adorning the bed. "We really work on the small little details that make a big difference," Laura told me. "We have a lot of love to give to our clients, and we do it with all our heart, it is not an effort, it is our pleasure."

Hôtel de Crillon offers four distinct dining options, the most upscale of which is L'Ecrin helmed by Michelin-starred chef Christopher Hache, who traveled the world to come up with his inventive recipes. Every night, Hache offers guests new dishes to keep them amused and enthralled. The

hotel is also home to the Brasserie d'Aumont, named after Hôtel de Crillon's first resident. The restaurant serves French cuisine prepared by chef Justin Schmitt and also houses a crudo bar. For afternoon treats, you can head to the splendidly designed Jardin d'Hiver, where a space decked in hues of purple, silver, gold and mauve sets the scene for high tea and decadent desserts.

A must-try, and your fourth dining choice at the hotel, is the famed Les Ambassadeurs bar and lounge, where once upon a time many official state documents were drafted and signed. As part of the renovations, the bar was relocated and is now at the main entrance of the hotel.



This move was designed to make Les Ambassadeurs easily accessible from the street, thereby encouraging both locals and visitors to once again patronize the place. You can go in for tea, lunch, a light dinner, dessert or a cocktail created by star Paris mixologist Christophe Davoine. Les Ambassadeurs offers live entertainment every evening, while a DJ spins his tunes on weekends. "We wanted Parisians to come back to the hotel, for our guests to better live the real Parisian experience," says Noujeim. I personally fell in love with the hotel's magnificent lobby. Although Hôtel de Crillon is one of the biggest hotels in Paris, its lobby area is designed in a way that gives the place a sense of intimacy: every nook and cranny feels like a luxurious living room in a private home. The space is both personalized and cozy, like a perfect love affair. When you're in the lobby, it's absolute silence, yet you're in the very center of Paris, at busy Place de la Concorde, steps from Rue du Faubourg Saint-Honoré.



“Part of the
Rosewood family,
the re-imagined
Hôtel de Crillon
houses 124
guestrooms and
suites, three
restaurants, a bar
and a newly
created
swimming pool.”

“Hôtel de Crillon is one of the biggest hotels in Paris.”



What elevates Hôtel de Crillon above its peers is that every guest is treated with respect and with true French hospitality. This is certainly why stars and celebrities often choose to stay at the hotel and always come back for return visits. Over the course of its history, Hôtel de Crillon has hosted the likes of Isadora Duncan, Sergei Diaghilev, Peggy Guggenheim, Charlie Chaplin, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, Andy Warhol, Leonard Bernstein, Madonna and Mario Testino, among many others.

If I were to sum up my 24 hours at Hôtel de Crillon in one sentence, I would say that the hotel is a maestro, and the staff is the orchestra. Every note was harmoniously executed to move seamlessly with the next, and the musical fluidity left me dazzled and fulfilled.

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Photos: Hôtel de Crillon, A Rosewood Hotel and Marriage J. Raidey.

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