

Lebanon in spotlight at Singapore Art Fair

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BEIRUT: Two months after the fifth edition of the Beirut Art Fair graced BIEL with its selection of art from the Middle East, North Africa and South Asia co-founders Laure d’Hauteville and Pascale Odile are gearing up for an overseas adventure.

The first edition of the Singapore Art Fair will run at the Suntec Singapore Convention and Exhibition Center from Nov. 27 to 30. Centered, like its Beirut sister fair, around art from the MENASA region, it is set to feature a lineup of 59 galleries and solo booths. The majority of the participating galleries are from South Asia, with almost two-dozen based in Singapore itself. Among these is British-Lebanese entrepreneur Assaad Razzouk’s Sana Gallery, which specializes in art from the Middle East.

Booths hailing from the Middle East consist of Marrakesh-based Galerie Noir Sur Blanc; Gallery Ward, Salsali Private Museum and XVA Gallery from Dubai; Damascus’ Samer Kozah Gallery and Tajalliyat Art Gallery; and Beirut-based Les Plumes Galerie Elsie Braidi, Galerie Janine Rubeiz and Emmagoss, the name under which modernist artist Paul Guiragossian’s family collectively exhibits its work.

Lebanese photographer Roger Moukarzel will be showing his work of video art “So Far, So

Close” for the first time. The piece consists of a collection of 50,000 photographs collected during his travels around the world, through which he hopes to convey his vision of the MENASA region and its multiplicity of cultures.

A Lebanese Pavilion, curated by collector and founder of NGO Liban Art



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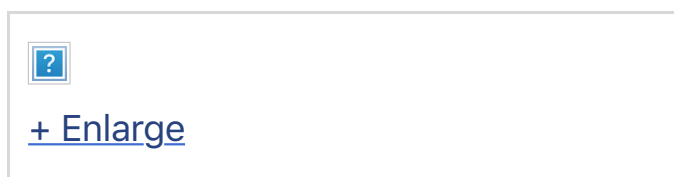
Janine Maamari, will showcase work by 12 young Lebanese artists, under the theme “Contemporary Lebanon: Art Beyond Violence.”

“I wanted young people and I wanted contemporary artists,” Maamari told The Daily Star. “I decided to bring more than one artist because I wanted to show the variety [of the Lebanese art scene]. The theme came out of what I saw in different studios.”

Several of the artists Maamari chose to include are under 30 and only two are aged over 40, she said, explaining that she wanted to capitalize on Lebanon’s youthful, growing art scene while giving a boost to up-and-coming artists whose work is not yet well-known overseas.

Her selection includes painters Said Baalbaki, Tagreed Darghouth and Omar Fakhoury, all represented locally by Agial Art Gallery, along with Bassam Geitani and Christine Kettaneh, whose work was recently showcased in a group exhibition at Galerie Janine Rubeiz.

The self-contained pavilion will also include work by Dima Hajjar and Hiba Kalache, Senegal-born Nadia Safieddine, Marwan Sahmarani, Alfred Tarazi and designer Najla El Zein. Young Lebanese artist Laudi Abilama, who recently completed a residency in Singapore, is exhibiting a portrait of politician and first Prime Minister of Singapore Lee Kuan Yew.



Art historian, curator and deputy director of the National Museum of Modern Art at Paris’ Pompidou

Center Catherine David is curating a second pavilion, focused on art from the Middle East and North Africa. The pavilion is set to feature work by Morocco’s Hicham Benohoud, Egypt-based Anna Boghiguan (whose work is currently on show at Beirut’s Sfeir-Semler Gallery), Lebanon’s Ali Cherri, Simohammad Fettaka from Morocco, Tunisian artist Atef Maatallah, Saudi Arabian star Ahmed Mater and Algeria’s Massinissa Selmani.

A series of talks and round tables has been programmed to take place over the course of the four-day fair, tackling topics from understanding art from the MENA region and collecting, to Singapore's art history and its impact on art from the MENASA region.

Lebanese street artist Yazen Halwani will also team up with Southeast Asian street artists Antz and Darbotz for two days of live graffiti. – The Daily Star

The Singapore Art Fair takes place at the Suntec Singapore Convention and Exhibition Center from Nov. 27 to 30. For more information, please visit www.singapore-art-fair.com

21/11/2014