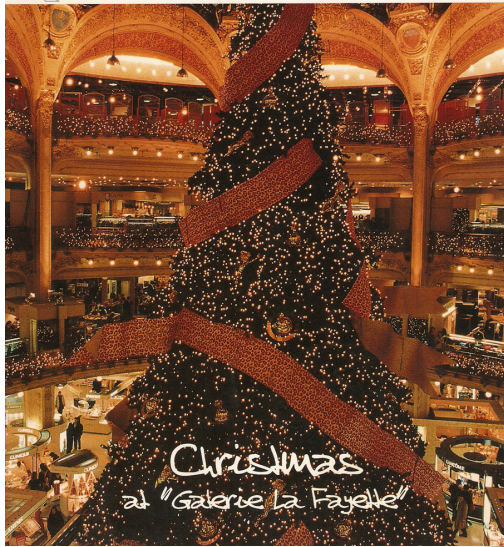


CEDAR WINGS

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LEBANON

SUNSOCK MUSEUM

Giving Lebanese Art a Home

By Hania Jundi

*In a number of halls
in an 86-year-old
stately two-floor building
live five pure forms of
life. They converse
and frolic and grow
with each other—
through each other.
No blood relation
binds them together,
only a creative bond
and a common free
spirit. They don't even
look alike. In fact,
they couldn't have
been more different.
Yet by celebrating
their difference, they
form a cohesive co-
llective society. During
the day, they serve
their guests. At night,
they sleep in peace
because a certain gen-
erous individual has
given them his home.*



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That generous individual was Nicolas Ibrahim Sunsock. In 1952, Sunsock decreed in his will that his palace-like halls, built in 1912 in Achrafieh, become the Nicolas Ibrahim Sunsock Museum for exhibiting ancient and modern national and international art. He designated the President of the Beirut Municipality as museum supervisor (intendant), who in turn assigns a fourteen-member committee to form the administrative council.

History and Structure: Between 1953 and 1957 and by presidential decree, the Sunsock Museum served as a Hospitality Palace for royalty and dignitaries on their official visits to Lebanon. In 1961, the museum launched its cultural activities with its first Salon d'Automne aimed at promoting plastic arts in Lebanon. This fall exhibition was held annually ever since.

While the second floor comprises the museum's largest exhibition hall, the first floor comprises a large Arab Salon accessed through a grand entrance of arches supported by colonnades and finished with settees and with engraved oriental wood. Also in the first floor are exhibition halls, a function room, administrative offices, and a constantly expanding library open to researchers and housing art and monography magazines. The Lebanese Painters' and Sculptors' archives are located on the ground floor. These archives can be consulted by researchers and students and offer biographic and bibliographic information on artists as well as transparencies that trace the stages of their careers.



Anwar Hashim

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