

LEBANON

LAND OF CREATIVITY

First Edition of Beirut Design Fair

Beirut Design Fair has blown the regional design calendar wide open, creating a contemporary space for local designers to showcase their works, gain experience and perhaps take the first steps beyond our borders. Packed full of creative pieces, the Fair was undeniably Lebanese, full of creativity and bursting with raw talent. Here, Splendida speaks to Hala Moubarak, one of the event's creators.

Tell us about Beirut Design Fair.

The goal of the Beirut Design Fair is to be a challenging and high-level platform upon which to demonstrate the legitimacy of Lebanon's place at the heart of the international design scene.

One of the principal objectives of the fair is to bring together a creative community by providing space and time for dialogue, exchange, interaction and cooperation. In this way, the Fair attempts to define and affirm the identity of Lebanese design in all its richness and detail.

Beirut Design Fair endeavors to reveal – on both a national and international scale – the effervescence that characterizes a creative scene which is at once global and rooted in tradition, one which today constitutes an important meeting point for local and international energies.

Beirut Design Fair also strives to actively participate in the convergence of regional creative threads, mixing an international dynamic, innovative design and a rich culture of workshops operated by artisans who excel in their expertise and craftsmanship.

Can you tell us about Guillaume Taslé d'Héliand and yourself?

Guillaume Taslé d'Héliand is the Founder and Director of Beirut Design Fair. Guillaume worked for over 10 years as a journalist for the largest newspapers in France, then for several years in the Reed Elsevier Group, the world's leading trade show organizer, before developing his own press group. Over the years he became interested in the field of design and used his experience and create the first Design Fair in Lebanon. I am the co-Founder and Head of Exhibitors Relations. After several years working as an interior architect



in the GCC, I returned to Lebanon to resume my career and also joined USEK as lecturer in art and design. I contributed to Deco Magazine, a leading Lebanese publication. My passion for design and creation led me to meet Guillaume and set up the first Design Fair in Lebanon.

What inspired you both to start this initiative? How have your backgrounds come together for this project?

The last 5 years have been crucial for design in Lebanon. Events such as inaugurations and conferences on design were held every 15 days. The project of Beirut Design Fair began following discussions with local designers who stated their desire to have a high-level platform to present their work. Lebanon is distinct from other Arab countries thanks to the Mediterranean, to its blend of cultures, and to the urban character of Beirut. We have a history and a collective memory, a spirited nature, and the freedom to create without limits and in complete independence. Beirut Design Fair takes as its starting point Beirut, to progress towards the world. Thanks to a selection committee, we were able for this first edition to choose the best designers. Now, Lebanese design exists. It has become a fact, at home and abroad. It is distinguished by its wealth of design, its aesthetic and functional research. So creating Beirut Design Fair together was obvious!

How would you rate local talents in Lebanon?

We have a unique design community, combined with skilled makers! It is distinguished by its youth, dynamism, mobility, openness and mainly freedom. The Lebanese design community is the most important and vibrant of the whole region. The work of Lebanese designers is the fruit of innovative, moving, and elegant ideas: sometimes, research and the desire to preserve ancestral craftsmanship lead to an invaluable creative inspiration.

How does the fair help expose talent to the world?

Beirut Design Fair does its best to attract collectors, sponsors, investors, publishers, manufacturers, amateurs, and lovers of design and beauty from all around the world. In short, one of Beirut Design Fair's goals is to establish a network for people to connect, as in any fair that does its



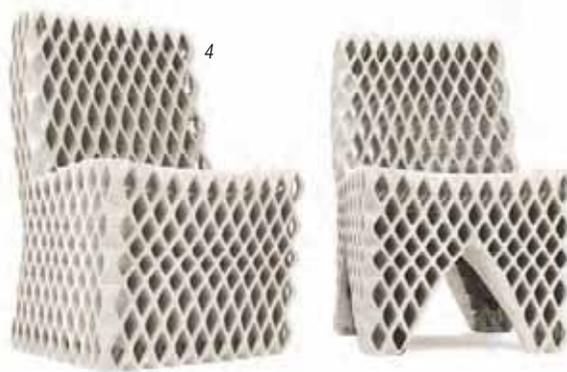
job. We are in contact with nearly 200 product designers, and 700 architects many of whom love to create products. To help promote these talents, Beirut Design Fair will place Lebanese designers on the international scene and in foreign fairs. We are also organizing a design award to give visibility to young designers, as well as non-profit exhibitions in the country and abroad. Beirut Design Fair will also bring design to schools and will assist universities in open platforms of dialogue with renowned foreign academies. What makes Beirut unique is certainly our drive to make it a better place for the future generations! We are free to create, make, and we certainly have a voice to go forward and defend our belief in a country that makes all the impossible possible.

Of course there's the second edition, what should we expect to see?

This edition was 100% local. We are hoping to attract foreign designers and galleries for next years' edition!

Tell us, which was your favorite item on display and why?

One favorite item on display? We were surrounded by so much wealth. So choosing one item is almost impossible. The talent, innovation and ambition demonstrated by the fair were highlighted in Beirut Design Fair's awards: The Talent Award, given to the most promising young designer, was awarded to Anastasia Nysten for her armchair Troll. In its spaciousness, its comfort and its formal touch, Troll incarnates a genuinely oriental – and not at all orientaling – spirit. The Object Award, created to spotlight a singular, innovative creation, was awarded to Stouff, a contemporary interpretation of the traditional Lebanese stove, centerpiece of the foyer and symbol of a "gourmet" lifestyle both friendly and warm. Finally, the Initiative Award, which honors an entrepreneurial approach representative of the creative spirit of Beirut and the surrounding region, was given to Render Design Residency, a joint creation of Amar A. Zahr and gallery owner Joy Mardini. This year, Render Design Residency invited international designers Francesco Pace and Anne-Claire Hostequin to work in Lebanon and to create works inspired by traditional Lebanese craftsmanship.



1- 392 Rmeil 393
Art Space
2 - Loulou Hoda
Collection, David/Nicholas,
Joy Mardini Design Gallery
3- Chair, Anastasia Nysten
4- 3D Chair, Bits of Atoms
5- General, Beirut
Design Fair
6-Hala Moubarak &
Guillaume Tasle d'Heliland





EAST MEETS WEST

Studio A

Studio A by Ahmad Bazazo introduces made-to-measure objects that bring light and focus into any space it sits. This bar, like all items from the studio, focuses on the creation of unique spaces and pieces, highly influenced by the specificity of its locale, at the crossroads where east meet west. It challenges the notions of traditional design by pushing the boundaries of material experimentation and precision in order to create objects of the highest possible quality. By having a complete understanding of the past, while applying modern materials and techniques of fabrication, new pieces are conceived with a sense of timelessness that surpasses that of fast-paced design and current trends.

