

CURATED BY HALA MOUBARAK *Made in Lebanon*

Hala Moubarak
Photography by
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Beirut is a mysterious city. You can roam the streets and find architectural jewels, abandoned houses with secrets to tell about war, peace, tolerance and love. Beirut is steeped in stories, things you see on every street corner, while drinking a cup of coffee or meeting a complete stranger. From the moment we place the human being at the centre of our activities, all of our perceptions change. And we can make, create, produce, give artisans work and open up opportunities to a city that needs it. I am the co-founder of Beirut Design Fair. An interior architect, designer and lecturer, I am 100% made in Lebanon and take my country, its craftsmanship and designers wherever I go. Beirut Design Fair is a project that started from the heart. Guillaume Taslé d'Héliand and I wish to offer this city its rightful place on the map of the design world and become the hub of the Mediterranean.

Traditional coffee
raqwa



Traditional coffee raqwa

Very often, we hear Fairuz's voice in a cup of coffee. Serving Arabic coffee is an important aspect of our hospitality and is considered a ceremonial act of generosity. The coffee (kahwa) is poured out in front of guests from a long-handled coffee pot (rakweh) and served in proper cups (chaffeh). The raqwa is traditionally made of brass or copper, occasionally silver or gold. In more recent times the raqwa is made from stainless steel, aluminium or ceramic. And who knows? You may meet a coffee reader who will tell your fortune by looking at the shades of what is left in your cup.

Take a seat

I have a love affair with chair number 14 by Austrian-German furniture maker Michael Thonet, the design process behind it and its aesthetic. As far as I can remember, the khayzaran chair was always part of every Lebanese home, all big family lunches, reunions and gatherings. Local designer Samer Al Ameen offers a reinvention of the classic chair, which was first designed in 1900 by Thonet. Al Ameen loves to play with materials and dares to disrupt the past. One of his latest creations is a stainless steel, modernized khayzaran chair, without the wicker. The traditional Oriental feature flirts with contemporary design.



Samer Alameen,
Khayzaran Chair, new
collection



Scents from the East

Soap making is a tradition that has survived in Lebanon for over 600 years. With all-natural ingredients and handcrafted allure, the artisanal soaps are making a comeback as people turn away from chemicals in favour of more organic products. Senteurs d'Orient is a collaboration between a mother and daughter who share a passion for bathing rituals and social causes. They are proudly committed to employ women in every role, and proceeds from the sales of their products support women's education. The soaps are crafted fusing traditional methods – including air-drying – along with modern manufacturing techniques, allowing them to create the finest soap base. Senteurs d'Orient is beautiful, authentic and natural.

Revisiting blown glass

The Green Glass Recycling Initiative – Lebanon (GGRIL) is an organization that deserves our support. During the 2006 war, the only green glass manufacturing plant in Lebanon was completely destroyed and to date not rebuilt. Today, GGRIL supports the last six glassblowers of Lebanon. The redesigning of the traditional Lebanese jug (ibrik) takes us back to memories of our grandparents' houses and is a call for action. You can find mesmerizing shades of blues, Oriental amber and cedar green. All proceeds from the sales of these glass items go back into the stream to provide more work for the glassblowing artisans.

GGRIL Green Glass
Recycling Initiative -
Lebanon



Droop light

Designers Stephanie Sayar and Charbel Garibeh have been working together since they met at the Lebanese University in Beirut. She is wild and talkative, he is creative and loves experimenting. Under the Sayar & Garibeh label, they've created the sculptural and poetic Droop table lamp. A hand-blown glass bulb with a brass base was merged and blended with a geometrical marble block to create one object. Display it on an old refurbished trunk and watch it shine like a star.



Charbel Garibeh & Stephanie Sayar,
Droop lamp, Brushed brass, Hand
blown glass, Marble block, 230mm
x 120mm x 100mm. Photo by Mike
Malajalian

Carla's colours

The last design show that enthralled me was Carla Baz at Joy Mardini Design Gallery. I was following Carla's experimentation with watercolours on her social media channel, and I was sure that this super girl was up to something. Her first solo show is definitely a must-see. Like she does in her watercolours, she is showing us the fragility of marble, playing with the landscapes of the veins and combining colours you would never expect to see together. It's definitely an open invitation to see marble slates in a different way.



Carla Baz, Monarch lamp in Giallo Siena marble and semi-precious stone with frosted glass globe



Dar Onboz

My story with Dar Onboz

Dar Onboz is an award-winning, multidisciplinary creative platform producing Arab publications, films, songs, performances, educational tools, games, objects and exhibitions for people of all ages. They believe in sowing curiosity to spark learning, in weaving tales to create magic, in learning from ancestral heritage to build know-how. They intertwine art with science, architecture, archaeology, history, nature, stories and more, to produce memorable experiences. They implement their philosophy through trainings, workshops, multimedia kits and decentralised activities within schools, universities, NGOs, public libraries, municipalities and ministries. Recently Dar Onboz expanded into Madar Onboz (multidisciplinary actions for developing Arabic resources), partnering with Beirut Design Fair to create Beirut Designs, an education and outreach program targeting Lebanese youth and educators.



Oh Maurice!

If you try searching for the Chaise Maurice on Google, you'll barely find any information on its history and dynamics. But this is a vintage chair found in many Lebanese homes, and specifically in country houses. The amazing thing about the chair is its mechanics. The back can adapt to three different seating positions, allowing the human body to achieve complete ergonomic comfort. If you visit the antique stores in Beirut's Basta neighbourhood, you can still find an old Chaise Maurice that just needs a paint job and velvet fabric to recapture all the charms of yesteryear.

Stouff, MAD Studio,
32cm, Length 60cm,
Depth 45cm, 78.2 kg



Stay warm

When you look at this design, you think that the minimalistic lines come from a different country. But the truth is that Marie-Lyne and Anthony Daher have stayed close to their roots and have not forgotten cold winter nights. Stouff is a new take on the traditional Lebanese stove (sobia), which is still used in country houses because of its ability to warm a room up very quickly. The modern design offers an energy-efficient performance, as it is engineered to maximize heating power output while minimizing wood consumption. Stouff is a perfect example of combining tradition and modernity.



Boisseliers du Rif,
A craftsman hand
assembling a limited
edition cigar humidor
representing the
colours of the
Lebanese flag

It's all about craftsmanship

Established in 1913, Boisseliers du Rif is one of the most important Lebanese woodcraft enterprises. Each year, over 50 architects and designers come together to share ideas and collaborate to see their products come to life. They work together as a team, with designers and craftsmen teaming up to elevate design details to another level. The world is definitely going toward collaborative design, and Boisseliers du Rif is one of the most important vectors in Beirut promoting values, commitment and tradition.