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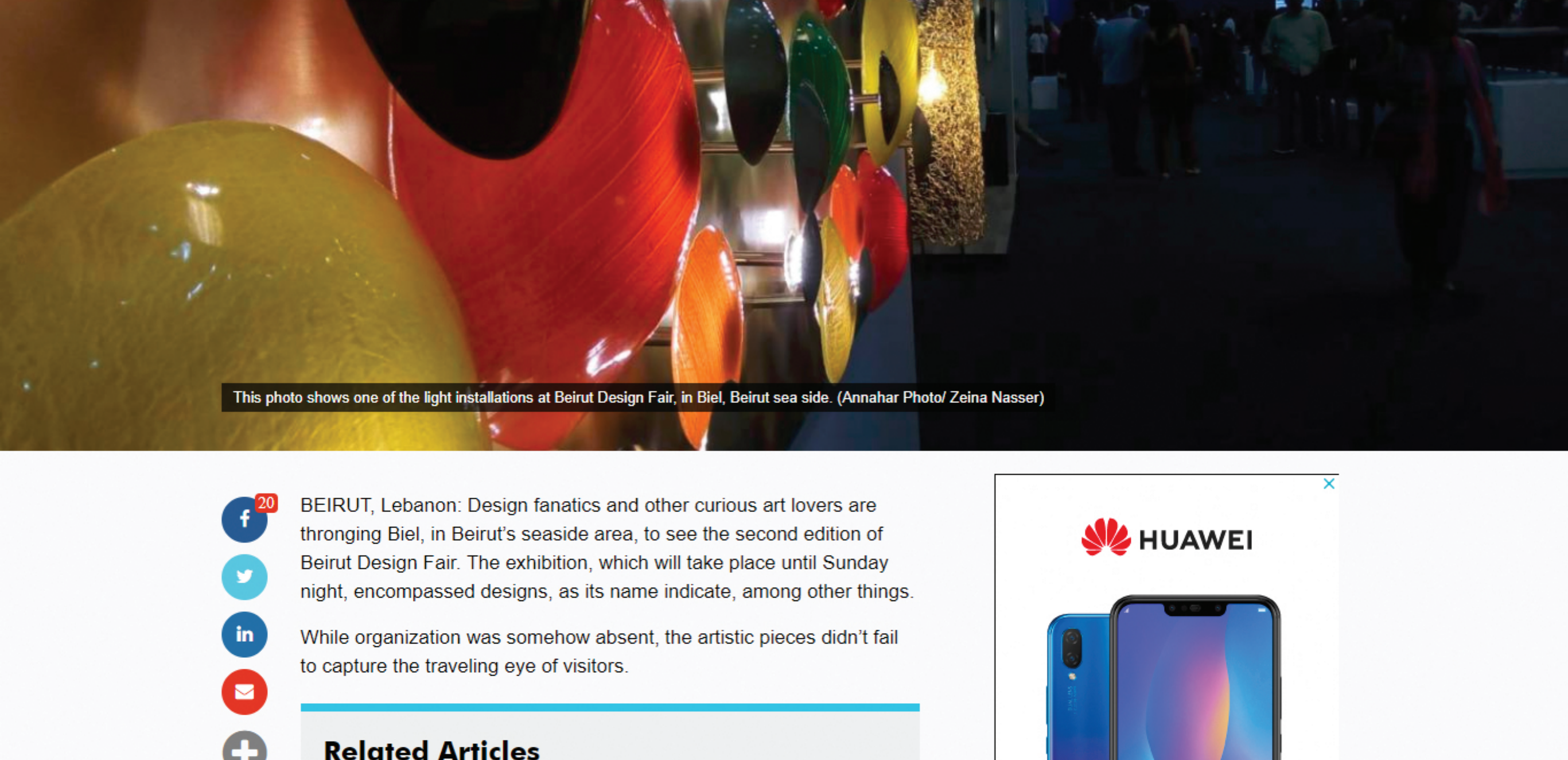
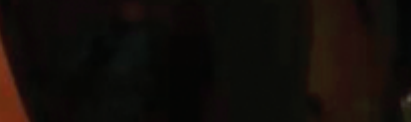
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# Beirut Design Fair: Where art stands tall amid the chaos

Art, in all cases, should be accessible to everyone, for it opens horizons which are much needed especially in times like those witnessed in Lebanon now.

by Zeina Nasser | Zeina\_w\_Nasser | Source: Annahar | Date added: 23 September 2018 | Last update: 23 September 2018 | 19:05

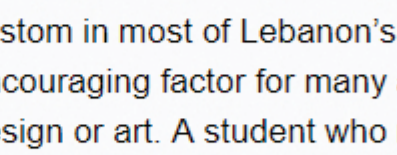


This photo shows one of the light installations at Beirut Design Fair, in Biel, Beirut sea side. (Annahar Photo/ Zeina Nasser)

BEIRUT, Lebanon: Design fanatics and other curious art lovers are thronging Biel, in Beirut's seaside area, to see the second edition of Beirut Design Fair. The exhibition, which will take place until Sunday night, encompassed designs, as its name indicate, among other things.

While organization was somehow absent, the artistic pieces didn't fail to capture the traveling eye of visitors.

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To start with the negative, car parking was a major issue, as valet personnel advised people to park far away, falsely claiming that there's no available space in the nearby parking.

Also, a parking charge of 5,000 LBP, which seems to have become a custom in most of Lebanon's artistic and cultural events, is not an encouraging factor for many art lovers, and mainly, students majoring in design or art. A student who might like to visit the exhibition for more than one day will end up paying a lot just to park his/her car in what was public property before turning into a private parking.

Art, in all cases, should be accessible to everyone, for it opens horizons which are much needed especially in times like those witnessed in Lebanon now.

Crises will not be solved through art, but people sensing art might perceive them (crises) differently while pondering over a painting, wandering along with a sculpture, or effortless piece of furniture and unique design.

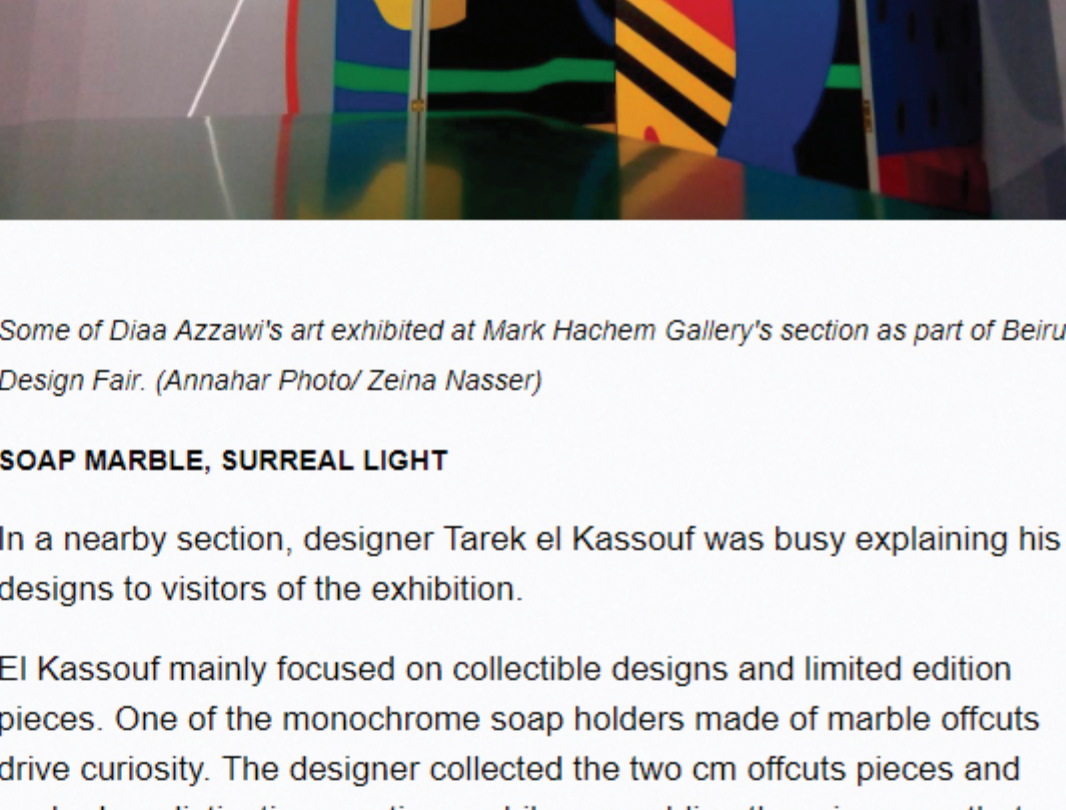
Despite the chaos, however, art still prevailed.

## VIVID SECTION

Diaa Azzawi's colorful and geometric furniture and wood sculptures capture passersby with their vivid colors and fine cuts. A palette of cold colors dominates this section of the solo exhibition, featured by Mark Hachem gallery.

Mark Hachem gallery mentions that Azzawi, one of "Iraq's most influential artists," as CNN describes him, combines traditional pieces of furniture and freely formed abstract shapes that rely on color to create a body of work that is closer to object art than furniture.

Opening one of the delicately designed cupboards, one would really feel that he/she is opening an artwork, facing a small sculpture that looks the same in color and fine lines, but not size.



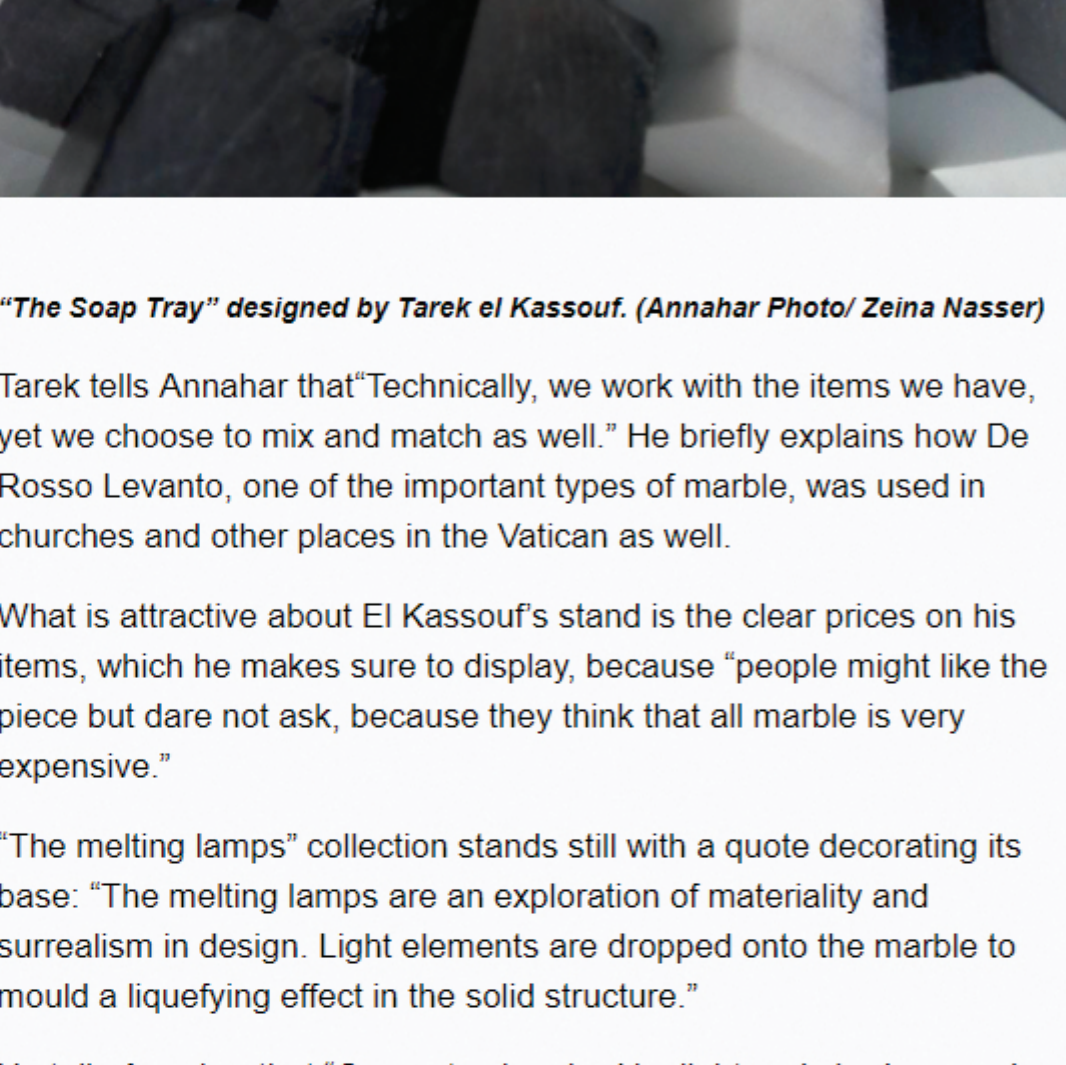
Some of Diaa Azzawi's art exhibited at Mark Hachem Gallery's section as part of Beirut Design Fair. (Annahar Photo/ Zeina Nasser)

## SOAP MARBLE, SURREAL LIGHT

In a nearby section, designer Tarek el Kassouf was busy explaining his designs to visitors of the exhibition.

El Kassouf mainly focused on collectible designs and limited edition pieces. One of the monochrome soap holders made of marble offcuts drive curiosity. The designer collected the two cm offcuts pieces and worked on distinctive creations, while assembling them in a way that makes the cubes stand on their points, hence counterbalancing each other.

A similar set of designs lies behind "The Soap Tray" (75\$). The Nothing Tray is very similar in colors, but its sizes look larger, perhaps to be used for nothing or anything to hold.



"The Soap Tray" designed by Tarek el Kassouf. (Annahar Photo/ Zeina Nasser)

Tarek tells Annahar that "Technically, we work with the items we have, yet we choose to mix and match as well." He briefly explains how De Rosso Levanto, one of the important types of marble, was used in churches and other places in the Vatican as well.

What is attractive about El Kassouf's stand is the clear prices on his items, which he makes sure to display, because "people might like the piece but dare not ask, because they think that all marble is very expensive."

"The melting lamps" collection stands still with a quote decorating its base: "The melting lamps are an exploration of materiality and surrealism in design. Light elements are dropped onto the marble to mould a liquefying effect in the solid structure."

He tells Annahar that "One gets absorbed by light and shadows and what marble has to offer, so there's a story behind this melting light, triggering a daydream."

All products used by the designer are made in Lebanon, and he has a design studio in Sydney and an atelier in Beirut.

The designer majored in architecture at USEK and graduated 10 years ago. In 2014, he shifted to designing furniture and products.

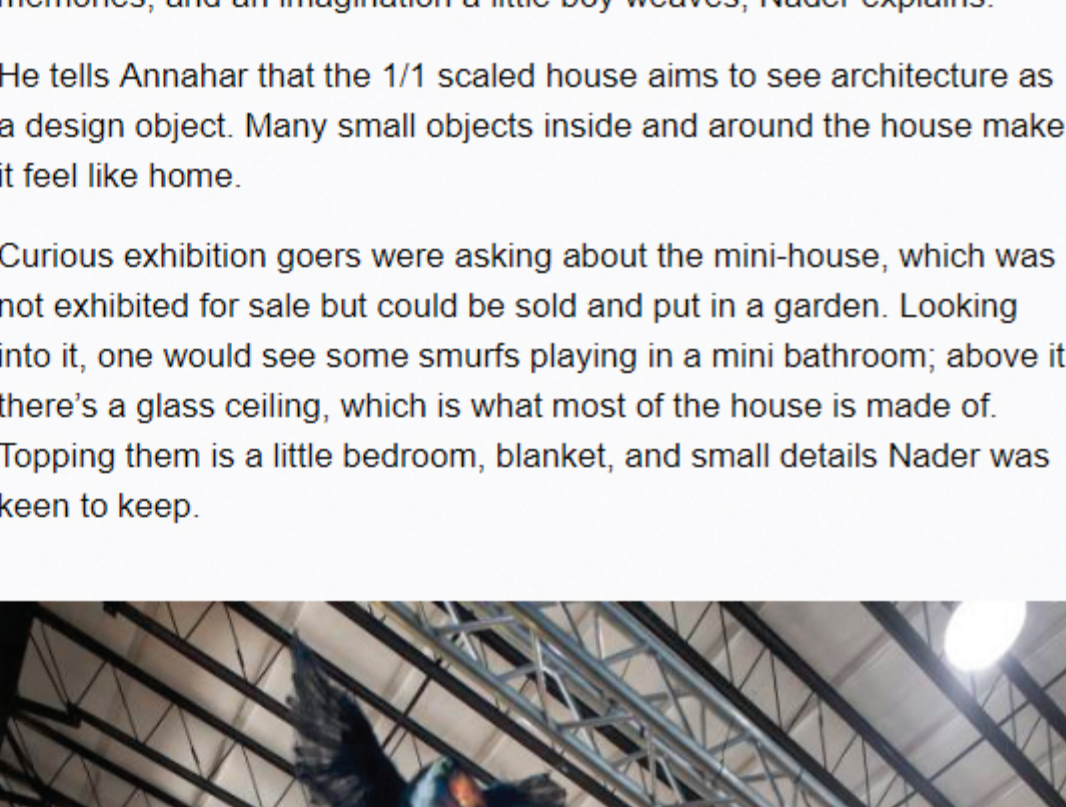
## WHAT A REAL "FAKE COLLECTION"

Iwan Maktabi, one of the well-known carpet stores in Lebanon, featured some of CC Tapis' collections. CC-Tapis, based in Milano and produced by artisans in Nepal, was created in 2011 by the traditional Persian house Maison Chamszadeh, founded in 1943 and known for the handcrafted rugs.

Slinkie, one of the collections by the Spanish designer Patricia Urquiola, is all about color and organic shapes. CC-Tapis' Magazine #6 mentions that her designs are "a visual exercise aimed to transform the intangible idea of shade and hue into a finely produced and sophisticated product."

Bethan Laura Wood, designer of "Super Fake" collection gives what it real for the naked eye. It's like looking into a newly designed landscape or Earth. Layers roll along her rugs, revealing various manufacturing techniques among Tibetan craftsmen.

Then there's the After Party collection, designed by Garth Roberts, which reveals, just as its name, a glittery joyful party, with random lines and free edges, left to dance, without any corners being too sharp. After Party was the winner of the German Design Award 2018.



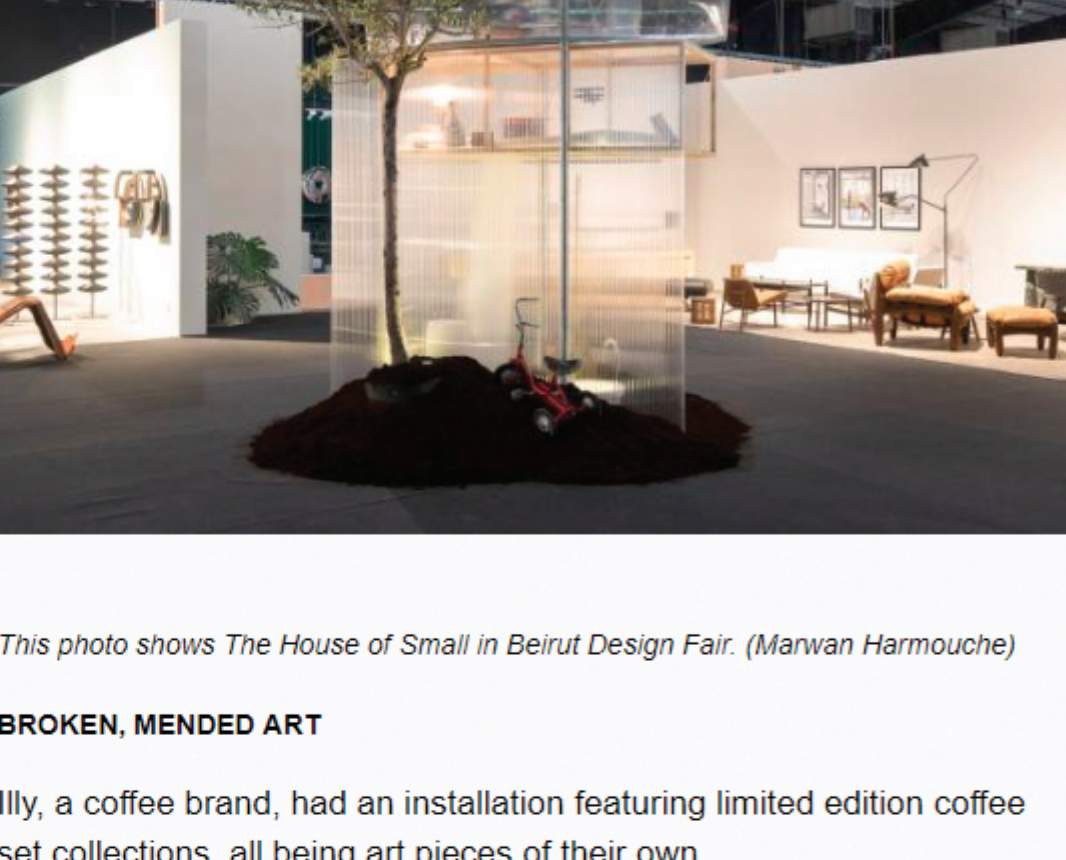
A visitor to Beirut Design Fair feels the texture of one of the carpet in Slinkie Collection, designed by Patricia Urquiola. (Annahar Photo/ Zeina Nasser)

## HOUSE OF SMALL

House of Small, designed by architect Karim Nader and his team, is a dream home featuring an olive tree, too many dreams, childhood memories, and an imagination a little boy weaves, Nader explains.

He tells Annahar that the 1/1 scaled house aims to see architecture as a design object. Many small objects inside and around the house make it feel like home.

Curious exhibition goers were asking about the mini-house, which was not exhibited for sale but could be sold and put in a garden. Looking into it, one would see some smurfs playing in a mini bathroom; above it, there's a glass ceiling, which is what most of the house is made of. Topping them is a little bedroom, blanket, and small details Nader was keen to keep.



This photo shows The House of Small in Beirut Design Fair. (Marwan Harmouche)

## BROKEN, MENDED ART

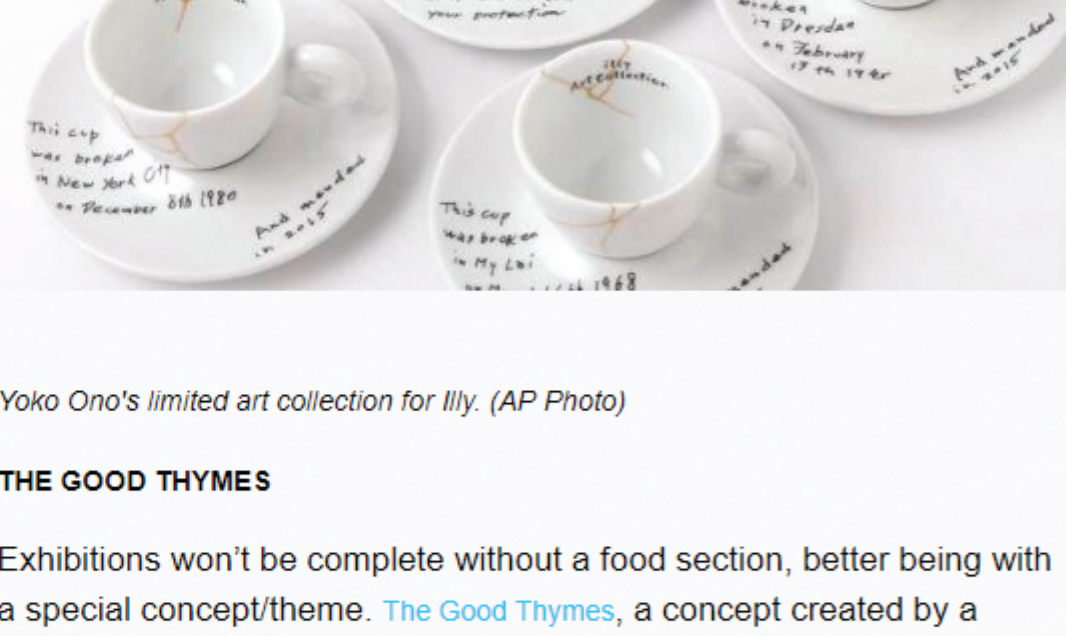
Iilly, a coffee brand, had an installation featuring limited edition coffee set collections, all being art pieces of their own.

One of the unique limited edition collections is designed by Yoko Ono, wife of former Beatle John Lennon. On each coffee cup plate, Yoko mentioned an incident, making it seem like the "visibly broken coffee cup" was broken on that date.

From the Hiroshima incident to John Lennon's death, the collection, and artworks were mended again, on the same date.

Ono, a performer, and artist known for having quite a different path in art, used a warm light brown, for breaking and mending an artwork.

"This cup will never be broken as it will be under your protection," reads one of Ono's espresso cups.



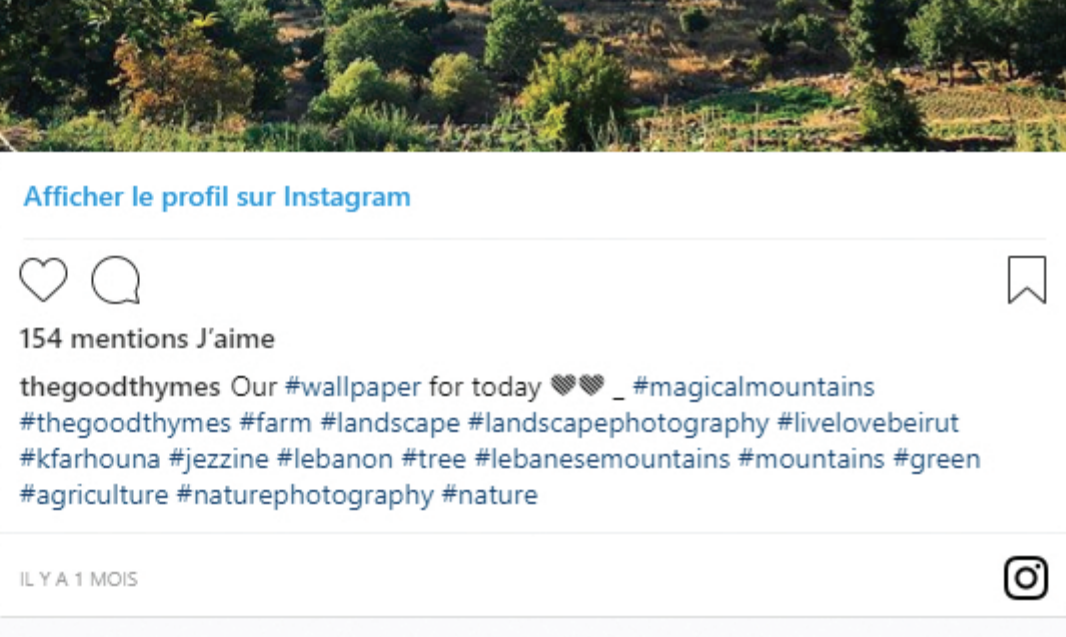
Yoko Ono's limited art collection for Iilly. (AP Photo)

## THE GOOD THYMES

Exhibitions won't be complete without a food section, better being with a special concept/theme. The Good Thymes, a concept created by a designer, his wife, and her sister, who wanted to do something with the piece of land they had in their village, Jezzine, South Lebanon.

"We thought that we will grow thymes for our children. It was their favorite food," The Good Thymes team tells Annahar.

Currently, The Good Thymes are making really good herbs out of their passion, that turned into a business, featuring a variety of thymes mixed with herbs, or made to be a topping for a salad. The prices are really appropriate and could be bought by anyone who loves thyme.



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