



# BEIRUT DESIGN FAIR

20>24 SEPT  
2017

**PRESS KIT**  
July 2017

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# BEIRUT DESIGN FAIR

The first edition of Beirut Design Fair seeks to gather the best galleries and established designers alongside the emerging creators who represent a rising, yet still relatively unknown generation. The fair is an embodiment of Lebanon itself : filled with surprises, beauty and interesting exchanges, and permeated by an inspiring and dynamic energy.

Originally conceived by Guillaume Taslé d'Héliand and Hala Moubarak, the initial project has since been enriched by the work of some one hundred Lebanese designers and the international expertise of Special Advisor Bénédicte Colpin. Together, the fair's creators offer a fresh perspective on design in Lebanon and participate in establishing and defining its specificities.

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.

In its endeavors and objectives Beirut Design Fair attempts to meet the expectations of design lovers, collectors and professionals alike through the search for new creations, fresh ideas, and unique and inspiring innovation in the realm of design.

In keeping with this goal, the first edition of the fair will unite some of the best and most notable names in Lebanese design – brands, designers, galleries, distributors, and exceptional artisans – and will open a correspondence with sponsors and investors in this prolific and productive city, forever developing and burgeoning with ground-breaking and innovative projects, from hotels and restaurants to high-end residences and offices.

Beirut Design Fair will not only be a vast exhibition space ; it will also be a forum for participation and exchange, offering four days of stimulating events, conferences and design opportunities.

At the heart of the fair, *The Banquet* will provide a dedicated space in which participants and visitors will be encouraged to exchange ideas, perspectives and discoveries. In the Land of the Cedar, home to one of the world's oldest cultures, *The Banquet* will be situated on a large dining table sculpted from 50,000-year-old wood, around which participants will be invited to gather and taste some of Lebanon's greatest delicacies, provided by renowned chef Maroun Chedid.

Beirut Design Fair will be held at BIEL (the Beirut International Exhibition & Leisure Center) from September 20-24, 2017. The fair will be both simultaneous with and adjacent to Beirut Art Fair, the contemporary art fair which since 2010 has promoted the artistic and cultural vibrancy of Beirut, of Lebanon and of the ME.NA countries (Middle East - North Africa). During these four days, the contemporary art and design fairs will provide space and opportunities for the creative energies of Beirut to flourish and thrive.

***« Our objective is to promote recognition of Lebanon's proper place: at the forefront of creativity in the region. We have here assembled evidence confirming that Beirut has both the legitimacy and the means to become a capital of design. »***

Guillaume Taslé d'Héliand, Founder-Director, BDF.

***« 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. »***

Hala Moubarak, Co-founder & Head of Exhibitor Relations, BDF.

***« Beirut Design Fair's goal is to assemble creative energies in one place, to give space, over several days, to the richness of the regional and international creative scene tied to Beirut and to allow aspiring designers, from this country and others, to exhibit exceptional works that testify to the quality of contemporary design. »***

Bénédicte Colpin, Special Advisor.

# BEIRUT AND DESIGN

Over the past five years, Beirut and Lebanon have been the site of remarkable evolution in the realm of design. The city and the country have attracted an important community which today possesses an undeniable presence and craftsmanship.

A new generation of students, many of whom have studied in Europe and in the United States, has introduced new ideas and perspectives. Recent years have also been marked by innovation and change in the art market. Today, thanks to galleries, editors, collectors and a group of sponsors, the market has matured, as numerous designers successfully meet the challenges of producing in Lebanon.

In just a few years, Lebanese design has exploded in popularity, both domestically and internationally. It is distinguished by its richness of conception, its simultaneously aesthetic and functional design, its sensibility, and its openness to the world.

## ROOTED AND RENEWED

Beirut has always occupied a special place, thanks to its geographical position, its history, and its way of interacting with the rest of the world. These factors make it a truly exceptional spot, both in reality and in the collective imagination.

For decades, Beirut and Lebanon have offered a unique network of craftsmanship. Many designers have come to the country to produce objects and projects. Unlike other countries in the Middle East, Beirut has very active artisans in the fields of metalworking, ceramics, glass, wood, etc. The presence of these artisans and craftsmen stems directly from the demand for their skills. The Lebanese value quality, buyers are present, and the city is in perpetual construction and reconstruction: all of these factors keep this culture of craftsmanship alive.

Artisans in Lebanon work in the same way as creators. They excel in their art and gather other skills from neighboring countries to complement their expertise. This attitude of openness, flexibility and community is one of the city's strong points, and the close dialogue that exists between artisans and designers enhances the quality of the local scene.

## A GLOBAL AND CONNECTED CREATION

Most creators in Beirut have studied abroad or in highly regarded local design schools (ALBA, USEK or LAU), and while they are focused on Lebanon, they radiate internationally. As a cosmopolitan city, Beirut offers a well-connected and cultivated design scene, proud of its freedom of expression and unique in the region.

In addition to the undeniable influence of the local scene, the city also benefits from a diaspora spread throughout the world: people who are at once integrated into their adopted cultures while remaining attached, in one way or another, to their country of origin. Whether these creators are based in Lebanon or elsewhere, Beirut remains the anchor. And this is true for the leading Lebanese designers, be it Chahan Minassian, Aline d'Amman Asmar, Karim Habib, Karen Chekerdjian, david/nicholas, Nada Debs, Marc Baroud, Charles Kalpakian, Bernard Khoury or Rabih Kayrouz - to mention only the best-known. What unites these creators is their permanent search for authenticity, freedom, quality and singularity. From Paris to New York, from London to São Paulo, the great designers, interior architects, and architects distill this unique culture and lifestyle, one that is powerfully marked by the light and colors of the Mediterranean.

## SELECTION COMMITTEE

The selection committee for Beirut Design Fair reflects the event's position as a platform for fostering encounters and showcasing talent : one where rigor meets generosity, where diversity is celebrated in a cosmopolitan atmosphere, and where the promotion of creativity is rooted in an economic and cultural context.

For its first edition, Beirut Design Fair has assembled an exceptional selection committee whose members are attached to Beirut and Lebanon either by origin or by affinity. The confluence of these recognized professionals from the worlds of design, interior design, architecture, luxury, museums and education offers multicultural expertise on a variety of topics centered around the pursuit of beauty, meaning and relevance.

**Aline Asmar d'Amman** (architect, interior designer and artistic director), **India Mahdavi** (architect, designer and interior designer), **Marc Baroud** (designer, director of the design department of the Lebanese Academy of Fine Arts), **Marianne Brabant** (from Modern and Contemporary Department of the Musée des Arts Décoratifs de Paris), and **Mathias Orhel** (founder of m-0 creative recruitment consultancy) will bring their expertise to the selection of exhibitors at Beirut Design Fair, and will also participate in the attribution of the Beirut Design Award for creativity and innovation during the salon that runs from 20-24 September 2017.





## ALINE ASMAR D'AMMAN

### **Architect, Culture in Architecture**

Architect, interior designer and artistic director Aline Asmar D'Amman has long been committed to fostering links between culture and architecture.

Born in Lebanon and based in Paris, she works between the Middle East, Europe and the United States.

Among her current projects are the artistic direction of the renovation of the Hôtel de Crillon, including the decoration of its historic salons and suites; a collaboration with Karl Lagerfeld on the 'Grands Appartements' that he is decorating; the transformation of an office building into a lifestyle hotel in London; the design of the arrival terminal at Bahrain airport; and private residences in Riyadh, Beirut, Lausanne and Paris.



## INDIA MAHDAVI

### **Architecture and Design**

Architect, designer and interior designer India Mahdavi is an essential name in contemporary international creation. From the Parisian studio that she established in 2000, Mahdavi conceives and designs private residences in places such as Paris, London, New York, and Siwa in Egypt, alongside her hotel, restaurant and boutique projects. Mahdavi's design objects, starting with the Bishop, have become icons of contemporary decorative art. Her rich, cosmopolitan, polychrome, and solar universe has been shaped by cinema, art, and design. Abstract prints and figurative motifs with pop accents celebrate nomadic culture rooted in the places of the Mediterranean, with a particular attachment to cities like Beirut, where light, land and sea exchange secrets.



## MARC BAROUD

### **Designer and Director of the department of design at the Lebanese Academy of Fine Arts (ALBA)**

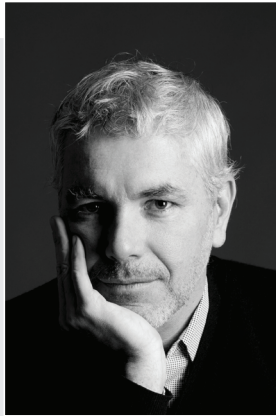
Operating between Beirut and Paris, Marc Baroud's creative activities stretch from experimental design to galleries, from architecture to teaching. His sole concern is to engage in collaborations and creative processes where empathy and intuition foster new ways of seeing, living, and thinking about space. For Baroud, it's always just one step from conceptual to contextual!



## MARIANNE BRABANT

**Modern and Contemporary  
Department, Musée des Arts  
Décoratifs de Paris**

A university-trained art historian and a graduate in museology at the École du Louvre, Marianne Brabant has worked for twelve years at the Musée des Arts Décoratifs, a Parisian institution dedicated to design and the decorative arts. Part of the museum's Modern and Contemporary Department, Brabant is currently participating in an exhibition project dedicated to the design and creative scenes in Lebanon.



## MATHIAS OHREL

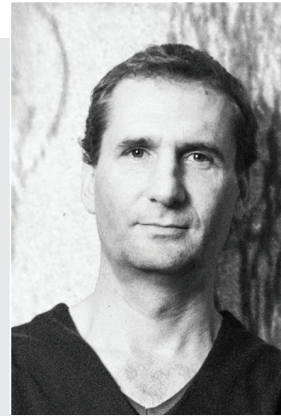
**m-O**

Mathias Ohrel supports brands in sectors with high creative added value (fashion, luxury, distribution, design, architecture, media, digital, and culture) by recruiting the personalities - and specifically creative personalities - that they need.

Ohrel keeps a constant eye on emerging talents, while his expertise, situated at the intersection of various disciplines, offers a unique look at the world of global design.

## SET DESIGN

**Studio Adrien Gardère**



Since its inception the Beirut Design Fair has prioritized quality, creativity, and a cosmopolitan spirit, an emphasis which makes the selection of Studio Adrien Gardère a natural and obvious choice for the direction of set design.

Studio Adrien Gardère is internationally renowned for its museum and set designs, and has collaborated with private and public institutions in Canada, China, Egypt, the USA, France, India, Indonesia, Iran, Italy, Mali, South Korea, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom. The studio is also the architect of museum design at Louvre Lens, at the Museum of Islamic Art in Cairo, the Aga Khan Museum in Toronto and at the future Muréna in Narbonne as well as the Royal Academy of Arts in London.

The studio's work is driven by the desire to create unique ideas in which intuition, innovation, and emotion respond to the artistic, scientific, and pedagogical endeavors of projects and the desires and needs of their clients.

The collaboration between the Beirut Design Fair and Studio Adrien Gardère is intended to generate a spatial language unique to the fair, forged in a spirit of cooperation while keeping in mind the creative singularity of each participant. Inspired by the contrasts in the urban nature of the city – its winding roads, mix of light and shadow, and the charm at the meeting of East and West – the design of the fair guides visitors along a dynamic and contemporary path.

## 3 QUESTIONS FOR...



*Founder and Director of BDF*  
**GUILLAUME TASLÉ D'HÉLIAND**

### **What are your ambitions for Beirut Design Fair ?**

We should bear in mind what Beirut Design Fair is meant to be: a salon for the exhibition of furniture and decorative objects – both contemporary and « vintage » – rather than for their collection. Some of the creations are affordable, others less so, but the market will stabilize naturally over time. The fair presents the work of top designers and international galleries, as well

as several rare objects. The event will also include a program of conferences, roundtable discussions, workshops, and installations. Our objective is to promote recognition of Lebanon's proper place: at the forefront of creativity in the region. We have here assembled evidence confirming that Beirut has both the legitimacy and the means to become a capital of design. Consequently, Beirut Design Fair aims to become an annual meeting place for discovery, exchange, and business opportunity, both for amateurs and professionals of design throughout Europe, the United States, the Middle East, in the Gulf and in Asia.

We are confident in our selection and quality and will continue to respond to the interests of fair visitors and participants alike.

### **What can Beirut Design Fair offer Lebanese creators ?**

Lebanon is home to an important creative community active in design, architecture, and the arts. It's easy to find established and well-respected

designers. All the same, the design community is young, talented, dynamic and mobile. We feel the need for a kind of springboard, a place where supply can meet demand.

As is the case virtually around the world, design in Lebanon is an emerging market. The regional supply needs a selective and high-quality platform to gain international visibility. International collectors, expert as they may be, always require guidance and illumination, points of comparison and affirmation. This is the primary mission and guiding principle of the fair.

For Lebanese creators, Beirut Design Fair endeavors to attract collectors, sponsors, investors, editors, manufacturers, art lovers and contacts: in short, a whole network of possibilities, as befits any major salon or fair.

### **Why exhibit in Lebanon ?**

Few Mediterranean countries are distinguished by the quality of their contemporary design. Italy, of course, comes to mind. But to the east and the bottom of the basin the most remarkable country is Lebanon. Each country has its own advantages. What makes Lebanon different is its ancient and international culture, as well as its enviable geographical location. It is the place to be: the crossroads of the Arab world, Europe and North Africa.

Lebanon's unique status is a result of its geographical position and history, which explains its exceptional and enduring vibrancy and phoenix-like perseverance. (The Phoenician roots of Lebanon are still present, and date back to before the rise of Athens, let alone Rome!)

In addition, it's important to take into account the Lebanese diaspora, a vast network of 14 million people throughout the world. They also play an essential role in making Lebanon a remarkable design platform – a reality that has attracted the attention of collectors.



*Co-founder & Head of Exhibitor Relations*

**HALA MOUBARAK**

**As a designer, design professor, journalist, and co-founder of the Beirut Design Fair, and as an expert of Lebanese design, what were, for you, the most significant evolutions in terms of creativity and the design market in Beirut ?**

Of course the Lebanese design scene has evolved rapidly and tremendously, showing a wealth of new promise. In just five years an important community has developed and is continually affirming its own work and craftsmanship. Until recently, Lebanese designers seemed few and far between. They scrapped for work between architects and interior designers; these latter did everything, from buildings, to furniture, to layout, to organization. Little by little, the center of gravity

has shifted: a new generation of students of the ALBA, many of whom have studied in Europe and in the USA, have brought their own ideas and a new vision to a country which greatly needed them. The market, too, has begun to take shape. We have made progress since the original creations, which were much more luxurious and destined for the elite. Today, thanks to galleries, editors, collectors and a few sponsors, the market has matured. On top of that, more and more designers are successfully meeting the challenges of producing in Lebanon.

Today, a real Lebanese design market exists, and it has gained notoriety both at home and abroad. It is distinguished by its richness of conception, its simultaneously aesthetic and functional design, its sensibility, and its openness to the world. 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.

**In your opinion, what will visitors see at Beirut Design Fair that is unique compared to other countries in the region ?**

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. Everywhere in Lebanon, you will find artisans who have mastered ancient techniques. It's up to us to keep those traditions alive through contemporary creative innovation. The meeting of designer and artisan, of imagination and realization, lead to creations rich in history and stories. And we know how to tell a story! Each designer, each team, and each studio has its own brand and its own style. No two are alike. When I watch the reactions of foreign visitors, I see that they are surprised, delighted by the diversity, ingenuity and novelty they find here. In this, its first year, Beirut Design Fair will unite the best galleries and established designers with emerging creators representative of a rising yet still relatively unknown generation. The fair is a rich manifestation of Lebanon itself: filled with surprises, beauty, and interesting exchanges and permeated by an inspiring and dynamic energy.

**What reactions and expectations has Beirut Design Fair inspired?**

Our project developed and evolved tremendously before seeing the light of day. So it's based on strong foundations. Guillaume and I included the input of a majority of Lebanese designers in our vision; the project has been refined with their consultation and collaboration. Beirut Design Fair owes its existence

to the work of its many dedicated « parents », who together have created a truly Lebanese project. We felt drawn together by this need to create a challenging and high-level platform which would underline and reinforce our country's legitimacy in the realm of design on an international scale. Each of the contributions – numbering more than one hundred in total – has allowed us to define our position and to construct an environment for showcasing the talent and demand with which we Lebanese are already familiar. Our role in this project is to unite this community by giving it space and time for dialogue, exchange, cooperation and interaction. This is the fair. We know that a coherent Lebanese conception of design exists, in all its richness and diversity. The moment has come for the « Made in Lebanon » label to make its mark domestically and around the world. Wonderful things await Lebanese design – both in Lebanon and in Europe – thanks to the international dimension of the Beirut Design Fair, which we expect to become more and more apparent as time goes on.



*Special advisor*

**BÉNÉDICTE COLPIN**

**Today, Beirut is described as an outstanding « incubator » for a variety of artistic fields. In your opinion, what place does design occupy in this landscape, and what makes Beirut unique among other cities and places in the world?**

Beirut has always occupied a special place, thanks to its geographical position, its history, its way of interacting with the rest of the world. These factors make it a truly exceptional spot, both in reality and in the collective imagination. It's a city in perpetual reconstruction, and this type of urgency always inspires creativity. Creators are inevitably influenced by this immense cultural richness, along with Beirut's particular form of cosmopolitanism. There exists in Beirut a way of understanding the world that isn't

simply a façade or a function of modern hyper-connectedness: it's something that is truly lived. Most creators in Beirut have studied abroad or in highly regarded local design schools (ALBA, USEK or LAU), and while they're focused on Lebanon, they radiate internationally. It's an ultra-connected, highly cultured scene that's proud of its freedom.

**There is a significant, global Lebanese diaspora that is a driving force behind Beirut's creativity. In terms of design, who are the major figures in France, Europe and the rest of the world?**

This is another aspect of Beirut that makes it such a unique place. In addition to a local scene with undeniable influence, the city also benefits from a diaspora spread throughout the world : people who are at once integrated into their adopted cultures while remaining attached to their country of origin, in one way or another. Whether these creators are based in Lebanon or elsewhere, Beirut remains the anchor. And this is true for all the celebrities in the industry, be it Chahan Minassian, Aline d'Amman Asmar, Karim Habib, Karen Chekerdjian, David/Nicholas, Nada Debs, Marc Baroud, Charles Kalpakian, Bernard Khoury or Rabih Kayrouz - to mention only the best-known. In terms of style, this by no means

implies that Middle-Eastern archetypes are omnipresent. Quite the contrary: Lebanon is, by definition, a place of confluence between West and East. No, there exist a variety of styles. On the other hand, what unites all creators in Beirut is their permanent search for authenticity, freedom, quality and singularity. From Paris to New York, from London to São Paulo, the great designers, interior architects, and architects distill this unique culture and lifestyle.

**For decades, Beirut and Lebanon have offered a unique network of craftsmanship. Many designers have come to the country to produce objects and projects. Could you outline the general history of this phenomenon?**

Unlike other countries in the Middle East, Beirut has very active artisans in the fields of metalworking, ceramics, glass, wood, etc. The presence of these artisans and craftsmen stems directly from the demand for their skills. The Lebanese value quality, buyers are present, and the city is in perpetual construction and reconstruction - all of these factors keep this culture of craftsmanship alive. Artisans work in the same way as creators. They excel in their art and gather other skills from neighboring countries to complement their expertise. This attitude of openness, flexibility and community is one of the city's strong points, and

the close dialogue that exists between artisans and designers enhances the quality of the local scene. For several days and in a single location, Beirut Design Fair will serve as a catalyst for these creative energies, while showcasing the richness of Beirut's design scene - both locally and internationally based. It will allow design lovers from Beirut and elsewhere to acquire exceptional pieces that testify to the quality of contemporary design in the city and region. In addition, the fact that Beirut Design Fair will take place at the same time as Beirut Art Fair enhances the event and heightens the excitement for its debut edition in September 2017.

# THE BANQUET

**In partnership with YEW Studio and Maroun Chedid**

Exhibited for the first time to the public in the context of Beirut Design Fair, this extraordinary, monumental table sculpted from 50,000-year-old wood welcomes guests in a space named *The Banquet*.

Created by YEW Studio with Rani Kik, the table is exceptional for its size – 8 m x 2.20 m – and above all for its composition and construction.

Made from the wood of a New Zealand Kauri tree more than 50,000 years old, the table is a direct import from the Ice Age. After its construction, undertaken in agreement with and under the strict supervision of the New Zealand government, the table was transported to the United States to be stabilized before being brought to Lebanon, where its sculpture and design were finalized.

In keeping with the creativity of the table's history, chef Maroun Chedid, a renowned figure in Lebanese gastronomy, invites participants to taste a series of creations based on ingredients from land to sea. Chef Chedid adds a personal, modern approach to Lebanese and Mediterranean cuisine, while remaining true to the spirit of his country's culinary traditions.



# PARTNERS

## PARTNER INSTITUTIONS

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## FAIR SUPPORTERS

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## MEDIA PARTNERS

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# PRACTICAL INFORMATION

## LOCATION

**BIEL** (Beirut International Exhibition & Leisure Center)  
Beirut, Lebanon

## PUBLIC INFORMATION AVAILABLE AT

**+ (961) 1 99 55 55**  
**info@beirut-design-fair.com**

## PROFESSIONAL AND OPENING DAY (BY INVITATION ONLY)

**Wednesday, September 20, 2017**  
6pm – 10pm

## OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

**Thursday-Sunday, September 21 – 24**  
3:30pm – 9:30pm

## MORE INFORMATION

**beirut-design-fair.com**

# CONTACTS

## ORGANIZATION

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*Special Advisor / Lightboart - Paris*

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# BEIRUT DESIGN FAIR

is organised by

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LEBANON

**[beirut-design-fair.com](http://beirut-design-fair.com)**