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Beirut Art Fair Returns With A Promising Ninth Edition



Paul Guiragossian. Composition (La Grande Charge), 1990-91. Oil on canvas. 130x200cm.

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BEIRUT ART FAIR returns 20-23 September at the Seaside Arena with an increase in space, a special focus on photography, and a full citywide roster of events as part of Beirut Art Week

The **Beirut** art scene comes alive during Beirut Art Week, running 18-25 September. Alongside public sculptures and performances, La Nocturne des Galeries evening of vernissages and open-air cinema at archaeological sites, BEIRUT ART FAIR (BAF) cements the season. With its ninth edition falling after the Ministry of Culture's announcement of a five-year-plan including an increase of investment in the cultural field to help boost the economy, BAF's founding director Laure d'Hauteville shares that Lebanon has never needed art and culture as much as it does now.



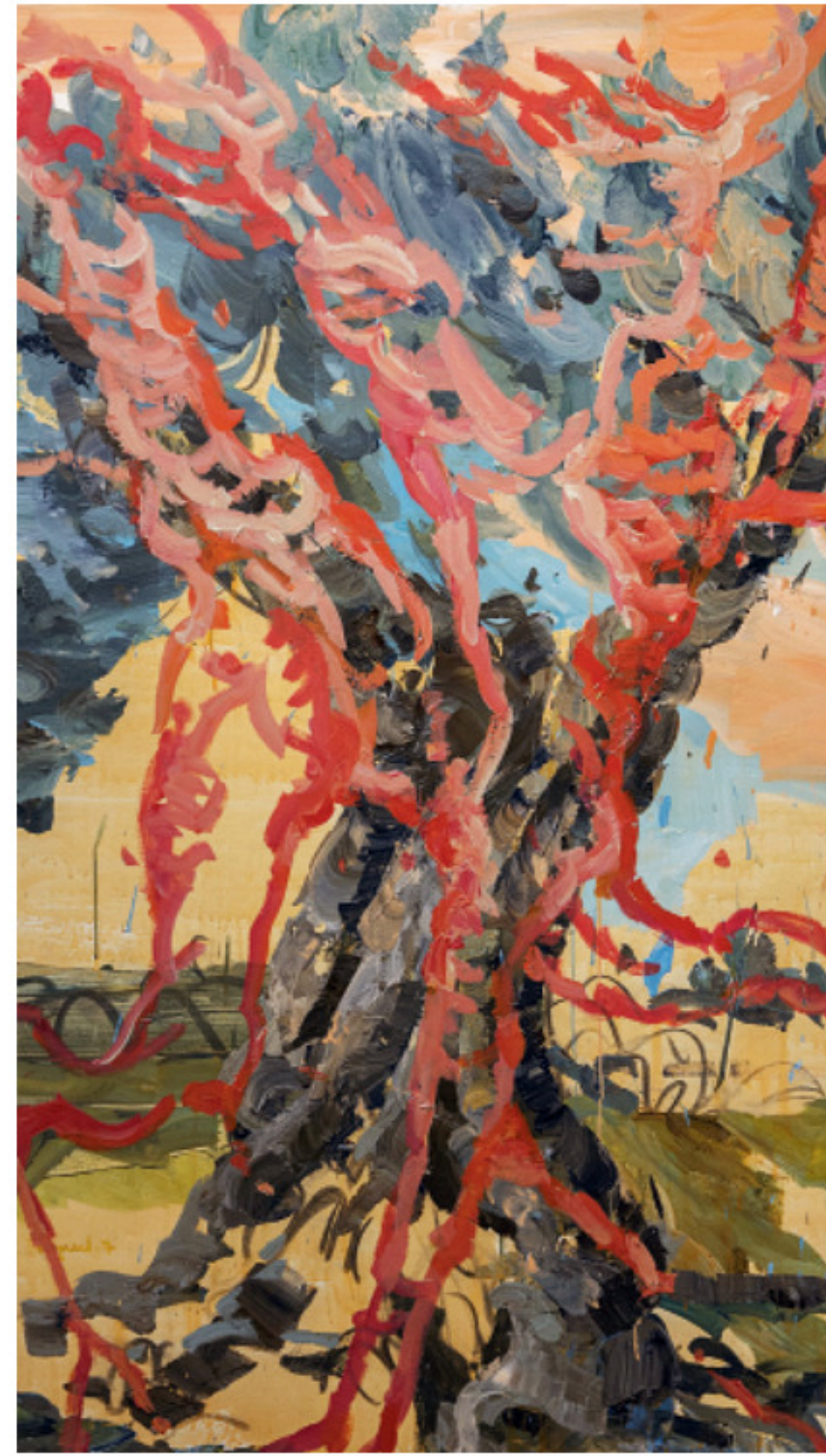
Randa Mirza. The Year of the Elephant. 2014. Diorama, 105x70x75cm. Courtesy of Galerie Tanit

Emphasizing Lebanese heritage, d'Hauteville asserts that it is BAF's mission to showcase Beirut as an art hub, given its rich 8,000-year history, complex memory and diverse culture. "This year the program focuses on photography, photography collectors, foundations for photography, the new NABU Museum in the Chekka region... art is everywhere," explains d'Hauteville. "We would like to show 100 years of Lebanese photography through the view of art collectors." The Focus exhibition *Across Boundaries*, curated by Tarek Nahas and Marine Bougaran, includes a meticulously researched selectin of over 100 Lebanese photographic works from private and institutional collections, accompanied by a roundtable series. Through three sub-themes—*Territory*, *The Document* and *Intimate*—across 500-square-metres, it will reveal how Lebanese photographers such as Tanya Traboulsi, Akram Zaatari and Saro have broken away from outdated stereotypes.



Manoug Alemian. Bacchus Temple at night. 1963. Photographic Collections of the Archives and Special Collections, AUB Libraries

The return to Lebanon's roots, a motivation which d'Hauteville initiated in last year's edition, also includes a tribute to Paul Guiragossian in the Lebanon Modern! Section in collaboration with the Paul Guiragossian Foundation. Honoring the 25th anniversary of the seminal painter's death, it will present unexhibited sound and video recordings as part of its non-profit programming, as well as a final monograph published by Sam Bardaouli and Till Fellrath. "Since its 2010 creation BAF has always had one non-profit space to show the **heritage** of Lebanon as the crossover between East and West and to reveal the many important movements and artists in Beirut's past and present," she explains. The homage to modernity also serves to highlight the importance of archives and historical documents. "We want to show the importance of collecting documents and how archives are important for institutions and the future," says d'Hauteville.



Tagreed Darghouth. Untitled. 2017. Acrylic on canvas. 160x120cm. Courtesy of Agial Art Gallery

While many pillars of the fair remain in place—the Byblos Bank Award for Photography which has transformed into one of the nation's most prestigious; Revealing by SGBL, which this year shows promising 18 emerging artists and their galleries; a talks program; and book signings—there are new tweaks. The selection process has become even stricter—only 70 out of 120 applicants were accepted—and the space has increased by 45 per cent under architect and urban planner Patrick Boustani. The fair 's new *mise en abyme* layout will see Beirut reproduced in miniature to evoke a real city, complete with numerous pathways and multiple entrances. This accommodates an additional exhibition by ART by Bankmed: *The 40 Figurines of KAWS*. Curated by Nelly Choucair-Zeidan, the longtime collector aims to plunge the viewer into KAWS' street art aesthetic and sociological propositions of Generation Z.

D'Hauteville and special advisor Joanna Abou Sleiman-Chevalier are preparing for over 32,000 international visitors, drawn to the offerings of galleries including Galerie Janine Rubiez, Mark Hachem, Galerie Tanit, Anallx for Ever, Agial Art Gallery, Mazel Galerie, Marfa', Galerie Dominique Fiat, and for the first time, three galleries from Africa: VOODART Gallery, Artual Gallery and Short Stories by daddy G'. They are confident in what's to come from the dialogue between their non-profit and commercial angles, because ultimately, "culture educates taste," observes d'Hauteville.

Beirut-art-fair.com

BY

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