



Arts and Culture Entrepreneurship ACE

First Workshop
November 2-6, 2018
Beirut



Welcome to the first cycle of the Arts and Culture Entrepreneurship program! We are very proud to have this eclectic group of young cultural managers from across the Arab region and look forward to our five exciting and challenging days of inspiring discussions and exchange.

ACE was designed and launched as a special initiative that aims to address one of the most pressing questions in the field of arts and culture today: what is the future of institutional work in light of a changing funding landscape, a fast-paced world of communication, and the increasingly challenging political and legal environments?

While we know that there is no straightforward answer to the loaded question above, we strongly believe that coming together, acknowledging this as a common challenge, and being receptive to new ideas is a much-needed action.

The question of sustainability, however, is not purely monetary. To be able to carry on with their work, arts and culture institutions in the Arab region need to re-examine their mission in light of a rapidly-changing globalized world, to re-assess their relevance to their communities and stakeholders, and to identify innovative ways to remain resilient and independent.

Envisioned to complement existing direct institutional capacity-building initiatives, ACE will offer a creative environment and an intimate space to reflect on challenges and opportunities; examine ethics of fundraising; gain storytelling skills; identify innovation practices related to our work; get inspired by case studies and peer institutions in other sectors and geographic regions; and explore meaningful collaborations with other sectors which we usually think of as 'unlikely allies'.

The novelty of ACE is that it is experimental. The program provides the space, stimulus and means for the participating institutions to re-invent themselves. It is specifically designed to expose the participants to different mindsets and allows for reflection and adaptation of experiences that resonate with opportunities back home.

We are very excited to be launching this initiative with Drosos Foundation and to offer practitioners the opportunity to further develop artistic innovation, grow in their capabilities as public value entities and as leaders, and to create new opportunities.

Rima Mismar
Executive Director
AFAC



Thanks to the collaboration with our partners during the past years, Drosos Foundation has had the opportunity to get to know the cultural sector in the Arab world better, and to learn from the experiences, challenges and successes of local actors. We noted that the Arab region is full of small and medium sized cultural institutions but that only very few are financially sustainable, leaving them vulnerable to donor strategies and agendas. However, we also observed an openness and growing interest within the sector to professionalize and to incorporate entrepreneurial thinking into the artistic work in order to become economically viable, increase sustainability

and create jobs. We realized - given the right conditions and environment - that the cultural sector can indeed play a significant role as an employer, especially for youth, and be an important economic driver for the community, city and country.

This is why Drosos Foundation and AFAC created the Arts and Culture Entrepreneurship Program – ACE. It was on a rainy day last winter over a strong Lebanese coffee, when we came up with the idea to develop a program that aims to build know-how within the cultural sector on thinking differently and exploring new funding venues, and to introduce skills needed to stay relevant and ensure continuity in today's cultural climate. A program that contributes to raising awareness about the value of culture as a serious player in national and international economies, ACE supports independence, sustainability and innovation for cultural organisations across the region.

We are honoured to partner with AFAC on the ACE Program and proud to be able to contribute to the development of a vibrant cultural sector in the Arab World.

Carole Guertler
Head of Department Levant
Drosos Foundation

ABOUT ARTS AND CULTURE ENTREPRENEURSHIP

The Arts and Culture Entrepreneurship (ACE) is a new AFAC special program, in partnership with Drosos Foundation, and supported by the German Federal Foreign Office. ACE is designed to inspire, invigorate and strengthen small and medium cultural institutions throughout the Arab region. The program is built so as to provide an opportunity for these institutions to re-examine their mission in light of a rapidly-changing globalized world, re-assess their relevance to their audiences and stakeholders, get inspired by peer institutions in other sectors and geographies facing the same challenges and opportunities, and finally to acquire new skills and capacities to improve their long-term sustainability.

The program is conceived as an experiment in “learning and doing” crafted and delivered by a group of specialists from the culture sector and beyond, that will continue to evolve in content throughout its planned three cycles - 1 year per cycle duration. ACE is made of several modules, delivered to 8 participating cultural institutions selected after a nomination and jury selection process. The director and deputy director of the respective institution will participate in the 12-month program that includes three workshops as well as mentorship and follow-up in-between. Much of the material generated during the program will be made available online for other non-participants to benefit from, with additional public talks and panels to engage with the wider public. The selected participants will additionally be given a grant of \$25K to fund a specific institutional activity that has been inspired by the program, which they can implement towards the end of the one-year cycle.

ACE content includes strategy, communications and fundraising; learnings from leaders in microfinance, social media and entrepreneurship; case studies from peer institutions in Africa, the Indian sub-continent and South America; reflections on global themes of inequality, technology and ethics.

ACE Workshops

We as cultural institutions are public benefit institutions. What is the value we generate? What is the social impact we create and for whom? How can we remain relevant and connected to our communities? How is what we do locally linked to global efforts for sustainable development? What can we learn from practitioners in different contexts and sectors? What kind of stories do we tell of our work and with what tools? How do we mobilize individuals, corporations and institutions in innovative ways to invest in arts and culture in our region? What are ethical considerations related to sources of funding? How adaptive is our leadership to espouse an entrepreneurial spirit? How do we inspire ourselves to innovate and what are our priorities? How can we work with a public and non-profit sector that aims to be as efficient as the private sector, and a private sector that tries to be socially-minded? What other aspects should we be busy with? These are some of the questions that we will dwell upon in the three ACE Workshops of November 2018, February and June 2019.

ACE First Workshop – Getting Started and Breaking the Bubble

The first workshop works as the ice-breaker and a chance for the participants to meet and exchange first ideas about their context, their success stories and challenges with the program’s specialists and mentors as well as with experts from India, South Africa and Brazil. We will talk about relevance of our institutions’ work to our communities, sustainability of our operations, audience cultivation tools and practices and explore the latest trends in storytelling and development/fundraising. We will hear from our experts about the latest trends in their geographical areas and from representatives of the corporate world about their needs, requirements and visions. We will reflect as a group on the acceptance and relevance of sustainable development goals and creative economy methodologies in a global context and how the diversity and inequality debate is shaping /distorting our work on the ground. We will interact with representatives from the private sector. We will engage as a group with two local peer institutions in Beirut as case studies and finish the program with a fun competitive exercise focused on strategy development and pitching.

PROGRAM SCHEDULE

DAY 1 – GETTING STARTED (FRIDAY NOV 2)

We will introduce ourselves and jointly examine the current state of the cultural sector, its aspirations, limitations, and the opportunities arising in the context of a rapidly changing world where old forces and new ones are simultaneously at play. We will reflect on the challenges in measuring the impact of arts and culture, critique some key contemporary policy instruments that shape our practices and examine how traditional CSR is morphing into the more meaningful “impact investment” paradigm.

9:00-9:15

Welcome Speech - Rima Mismar

9:15-9:45

Keynote - Housseem Aoudi

9:45-10:15

Roundtable Introductions

10:15-10:45

Coffee Break

10:45-11:15

The Context - Oussama Rifahi

The world around us is evolving at a rapid pace. Can we talk about progress or regression with the current headlines? What are the major forces shaping our world today and tomorrow? Are the principles and values that we believe in personally and at the core of the work of our institutions unchanged? Are we still relevant to our communities and audiences as cultural actors? Where do we focus the meagre resources at our disposal to further the mission of our institutions? What are the skills and attitudes needed for the cultural leadership of the future?

11:15-1:00

Session 1 – Positioning & Value: Locating Ourselves within the Arts & Culture Ecology and Framing our Societal Value - Moukhtar Kocache

In an increasingly discordant and competitive cultural and civil society landscape, how can arts and culture organizations better position themselves and describe their missions? How can that process help them be more strategic about their energies to secure increased social and financial stability? For a variety of reasons, both intrinsic and extrinsic, the arts and cultural sector falls short in proving its value in a way that can be understood by funders, recipients and the public at large. What are some of the categories, strategies and methodologies that can help artists and cultural leaders better outline their contributions and value to the “public good”? What are the misconceptions, opportunities and pitfalls of increased specificity, measurement, evaluation and classifications in the arts and culture sector?

1:00-2:00

Lunch

2:00-3:15

Session 2 – International Cultural Policies and their Relevance to the Making of Art - Mike van Graan

Culture and Development. Cultural Diversity. The Creative Industries. Cultural Diplomacy. Cultural entrepreneurship. The Creative Economy. All these terms. All these policies that keep changing. All we want to do is create art! But we keep having to adapt our projects to fit into the policies as they change, because they come with resources. Because our governments don't support our creative work. And we are reliant on the Goethe Institute, the British Council, the French Institute, the European Commission. So, we conform to their policy directives. This session will provide an overview and a critique of some key contemporary policy instruments that shape the discourse and practice of contemporary art-making and distribution, and suggest ways of negotiating these, as creative practitioners.

3:15-3:45

Coffee Break

3:45-5:00

Session 3 - From CSR to Impact Investing and the Future of Work - Carla Fonseca

From philanthropy to corporate social responsibility, the relationship between companies and arts has been changing substantially over the past decades. Currently, many businesses operating in various industries state that their involvement with the cultural field is strategically driven. What benefits do they expect to reap? How do they select cultural projects and what evaluation criteria are used? We'll see a list of inspiring and eye-opening examples of such companies from a number of countries.

7:00-9:00pm

Evening Program – Culinary Team Building Activity - Firas Yatbokh

Discovering, creating, sharing. A lot can happen in the kitchen!

DAY 2 – HOW OTHERS DO IT (SATURDAY NOV 3)

We will listen to cultural leaders from the Global South and dive into the specific contexts of their geographies with respect to cultural strategies, policies, governance and funding schemes and reflect on similarities /differences with respect to the Arab region. We will revisit techniques of storytelling and how they apply to our institutions.

9:00-10:00

Session 4 – Revealing India: Not a Single Story - Arundhati Gosh

This session will take you through the context within which the arts and culture community in India survives and thrives. Over the past decade there have been many shifts – economic, political, social and technological – in the country. The session will attempt to analyse the impact of these changes on the environment and the ways in which practitioners of arts and culture as individuals and collectives are building solidarities and sustainability. Through examples from a diverse range of artistic practices, it will also raise the questions, concerns and challenges that the sector is encountering in the current milieu.

10:00-11:00

Session 5 – Revealing South Africa: Shedding light on “the dark continent” - Mike van Graan

There are many – sometimes competing - narratives about the African continent. With its population of more than 1 billion people and relatively high economic growth rates across numerous countries, there is the optimistic narrative of “Africa Rising”. The more dominant view however, has been of “the dark continent”, reflecting both a race-based narrative and its links to the underside of human history: poverty, disease, illiteracy and backwardness. This session will provide an introductory overview of the African continent, and concentrate on South Africa – its past and present – as a metaphor for our contemporary world with its structural and cultural inequalities.

11:00-11:30

Coffee Break

11:30- 12:30

Session 6 – Revealing South America: Focus on Argentina, Brazil and Colombia - Carla Fonseca

Home to 428 million people, South America is a mosaic of cultures within each country. From indigenous people to the biggest Italian, Japanese and Lebanese communities outside their original countries, dispersed from the Caribbean to Patagonia, the region encompasses completely different realities and a number of common challenges. This session will focus on three specific countries - Argentina, Brazil and Colombia - offering a critical view of their political-institutional cultural framework, policies, their most important cultural programs in place, as well as highlights of specific laws for cultural funding.

12:30-1:00

Forming Groups

We will organize ourselves in four groups of four each; the groups will be working together on the various exercises and assignments for the rest of the workshop.

1:00-2:00

Lunch

2:00-3:30

Session 7 – Storytelling Retold - Carla Fonseca & Oussama Rifahi

We love to tell and consume stories. Whether it be fiction, history, gossip, news or autobiography, stories permeate every aspect of our lives. How is storytelling changing and evolving with human culture and technology? In competing with mainstream entertainment for the attention of audiences and investors, do we learn to become as savvy as professional ad agencies, or remain true to the authenticity of our narratives?

3:30-4:00

Coffee Break

4:00-5:00

Group Work

Evening Program - Theatre Play and Dinner - Metro Al Madina, Hamra

8:30pm

The group will interact informally with the director (Hisham Jaber) and the producer (Sarah Nohra) of Metro Al Madina for 30 minutes to exchange on the theatre, its challenges and success stories.

9:30pm

Dinner and performance. The Hishik Bishik show is a tribute to the universe, ambiance and music of Egyptian cabarets and weddings in the early 20th century. Built around a solid musical backbone with a repertoire taken from Egyptian movies, ten artists on stage aim at doing justice to this era's musical riches by highlighting its nostalgic and artistic value.

DAY 3 – ENGAGING WITH STAKEHOLDERS (SUNDAY NOV 4)

We will have the opportunity to discover the Hamra neighborhood in the morning. We will then meet and engage in conversation with four leaders from the private sector. We will finish the day with an open session sharing our respective challenges in the larger group.

9:00-10:15

Tour of A Beirut Neighbourhood - Arab
Center for Architecture

You will hear stories from a well-versed guide about the Hamra neighborhood, while strolling around its colorful streets.

10:15-10:45

Coffee Break

10:45-11:00

Introducing Antwork - Zina Dajani

We will get to know the story of Antwork, and what inspired this co-working venue.

11:00-11:30

Session 8 - Meeting Stakeholders from the Private Sector: From Charity to Development – From Patronage to Partnerships - Oussama Rifahi & Arundhati

Gosh

Giving away money has never been so fashionable among the rich and famous. The new enthusiasm for philanthropy is in large part a consequence of the rapid wealth-creation of recent years, and ironically, of its uneven distribution. We will look at some statistics, dwell on motivation for giving, on vocabulary, trends in philanthropy and the paradigm shift of development and partnerships, before engaging in a discussion with our four invitees.

11:30-12:15

Abdallah Absi

12:15-1:00

Rami El Nimer

1:00-2:00

Lunch

2:00-2:45

Loubna Khalil

2:45-3:30

Ayad Nasser

3:30-4:00

Coffee Break

4:00-5:00

Debrief - About Us /Challenges and Gaps

After debriefing of the four sessions, this will be the chance for the participants to talk about their respective contexts, share with the rest of the group their challenges and ambitions, and finally, interrogate the notion of leadership for arts and culture from a personal perspective.

DAY 4 – WORKING WITH PEERS (MONDAY NOV 5)

We will visit two institutions in Beirut to learn about their work, challenges and opportunities. Working in groups, we will brainstorm with them on strategy, development /fundraising opportunities, and reflect on ways to innovate, grow, consolidate and sustain their presence in their respective communities and stakeholders.

9:30-1:00

Session 9 – Case Study - Zoukak Theatre
Company

We will go backstage to hear the story of Zoukak, a theater collective with a creation space for practitioners.

1:00-2:00

Lunch

2:00-5:00

Session 10 – Case Study – Waraq

This will be an opportunity to see a hybrid model in action – a visual arts platform with a co-working community space.

Evening Program

7:00 pm

Dinner at Seza (in Mar Mikhael)

9:00 pm

“Dreaming Zenzile” performance at Zoukak
Sidewalks Festival (in Mar Mikhael)

DAY 5 – PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER (TUESDAY NOV 6)

Today, we will be working in groups to prepare a pitch for financial support to a three-member jury. Each group of four will be joined by an external participant to bring his /her outside perspective to our own know-how and circle of expertise. This exercise aims to help us put together the various bits and pieces we have been discussing throughout the five days of the workshop.

9:00-1:00

Session 11 – The Pitch - Preparation

We will meet with our four external participants, then share the project information with all four groups and agree on the format of the pitch and the selection criteria of the three-member jury.

The groups will then work individually on preparing their pitch until lunch, with the support of the external participants: Richard Shediak, Imad Baalbaki, Rula Alami and Inge Ceustermans.

1:00-2:00

Lunch

2:00-4:00

Pitch to Jury

Each of the four groups will then have a half-hour to present to the jury (anonymous until the pitch session), at the end of which the jury will retire to assess the four pitches and deliberate on strengths and weaknesses along the selection criteria. The jury will share their work with the groups before the evening's dinner.

4:00-4:15

Coffee Break

4:15-5:00

Workshop Debrief

We will reflect here on the five days of the workshop and discuss learning points, gaps, ideas for the next workshops. We will also discuss the mentorship component of the ACE program which will start early next year and any other relevant items.

Closing Dinner – Antwork Rooftop

8:00 pm

Welcome and Jury Debrief

9:00 pm

Dinner by Namlieh and music concert by Tanjaret Daghet

BIOGRAPHIES



KEYNOTE SPEAKER



Keynote Speaker: Housseem Aoudi

Housseem Aoudi is a Tunisian entrepreneur with over a decade of experience in media, civic engagement, and social innovation. A strong believer that supportive communities are the best catalysts for change, Housseem's work specializes in bringing together diverse stakeholders to tackle today's most pressing issues.

Housseem is the co-founder and CEO of Cogite Coworking Space, Tunisia's first coworking community. Cogite has grown to assume a leadership role in cultivating an entrepreneurship community across the country.

In 2010, Housseem co-founded TEDxCarthage, the country's first and largest TEDx event, which returns each year on new themes such as trust in society, tolerance, and female empowerment. Housseem launched the Afkar "Think and Action Tank" in 2015.

Housseem is a Draper Hills Fellow on Democracy and Development at Stanford University, BMW Foundation Fellow, National Endowment for Democracy Fellow and was named TED Hero in 2012.

He is board member of several initiatives including Tunisia Foundation for Development, French Tech Tunisia and TEDGlobal.

EXPERTS



Facilitator: Oussama Rifahi

Oussama is a board member of the Arab Fund for Arts and Culture - AFAC and was its executive director 2010 - 2016. Starting his career as a geophysical engineer in West Africa, he moved on to take management roles in Aerospace and Renewable Energies in Canada & Europe. Oussama worked on the development of tourism and culture strategies in Abu Dhabi and led feasibility studies for modern and contemporary museums around the world. Oussama is now based between Cologne, Germany and Beirut, Lebanon. He teaches philanthropy and leadership for non-profits and advises individuals, corporations, governments and private institutions on governance, strategy, communications and fundraising / development. He is involved in the launch and implementation of cultural initiatives in Europe, the MENA region and Africa.



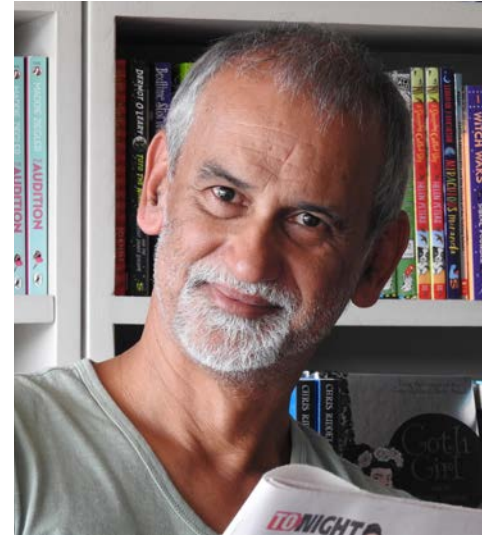
Ana Carla Fonseca

Dr. Ana Carla Fonseca is an Economist and Public Manager from Fundacao Getulio Vargas. A professor and coordinator of courses in Brazil and Argentina, she led innovation projects for multinationals for 15 years, in Latin America and Europe. Dr. Fonseca wrote and/or organized leading-edge books, such as Economics of Culture and Sustainable Development, which was awarded the Jabuti Prize 2007, the most important book award in Brazil; Creative Economy as a Development Strategy and Creative City Perspectives.

She designed and implemented impactful projects in Brazil. She is also a curator of

international congresses, a member of UNESCO Pool of Experts on Public Policies and a board member of LocalChef and Recicleiros startups. She won Claudia Award 2013 (the biggest women's award in Latin America) in the Business category and was appointed by El País (leading Spanish-speaking newspaper) one of the eight Brazilian personalities who impress the world.

Dr. Fonseca holds a four-year MA in Management cum laude and a PhD in Urban Studies from the University of São Paulo.



Mike van Graan

Mike van Graan is the President of the African Cultural Policy Network, a member of UNESCO's Technical Facility on the 2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, and an award-winning playwright. After South Africa's first democratic elections, he was appointed as a Special Adviser to the minister responsible for arts and culture, playing an influential role in shaping post-apartheid cultural policies. He has served in leadership roles in anti-apartheid and post-apartheid cultural formations, as well as in Pan-

African organizations like Arterial Network, promoting the creative sector and its contribution to human rights, democracy and development.

Mike is the 2018 recipient of the Sweden-based Hiroshima Foundation for Peace and Culture Award in recognition of his contribution to the fight against apartheid, to building a post-apartheid society and to the interface of peace and culture both in South Africa and across the African continent. Mike is a cultural activist who was recently awarded an honorary doctorate from the University of Pretoria.



Arundhati Gosh

After spending a decade in the corporate sector, Arundhati joined India Foundation for the Arts (IFA) as its first fundraiser in 2000, and assumed office as the Executive Director in 2013. She has received wide recognition for her work in the non-profit and arts and culture sector.

In 2010 she received the Global Fundraiser Award from Resource Alliance International, the same year IFA won the 'India NGO of the Year' award in the medium category. She is a recipient of the fellowship under Chevening Clore Leadership Awards, in the UK in 2015-2016 and has worked with the National Theatre, UK to recommend a strategy for their national reach. She is also a recipient of the Chevening Gurukul Scholarship for Leadership and Excellence at the London School of Economics, London in 2005.

She sits on various Boards and Advisory

Panels including those of the Beyond Sight Foundation, the Seagull Foundation for the Arts, and The Museum of Arts and Photography. She is also a member of the core team that has put together a first-of-its kind capacity building programme for theatre practitioners across India under the aegis of India Theatre Forum, called SMART - Strategic Management for the Art of Theatre. She often speaks and writes on arts and philanthropy for leading Indian and international non-profit and cultural networks.

Arundhati holds an Economics degree from the Presidency College, Kolkata and a post-graduation in management from the Mudra Institute of Communication Ahmedabad. She also holds a degree in classical dance and is a published poet in Bangla.



Moukhtar Kocache

Moukhtar Kocache is an independent advisor and consultant with expertise in curatorial practice, media, philanthropy and cultural and civil society development. His current interests include the sustainability of independent creative platforms, cultural and social justice philanthropy, political philosophy and policy, alternative institutional structures, memory, film and material culture.

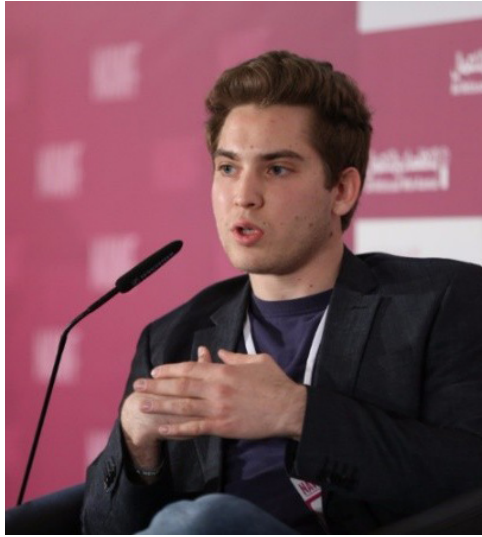
From 2004 to 2012 he was Program Officer at the Ford Foundation's regional office in Cairo. From 1998 to 2004 he was Director of Programs and Services at the Lower Manhattan Cultural Council in New York. He is the co-founder of Rawa: Creative Palestinian Communities Fund, a participatory initiative that supports Palestinian grassroots to creatively solve community development challenges.

Moukhtar has served on the board of the Gerhart Center for Philanthropy and Civic Engagement at the American University in Cairo since 2012 and has been a board member of the Open Society Foundation's Arab Regional Office since 2017. In 2018, he joined the board of International Media Support.

He is the author of *Creation Out of Crisis, A Historic Moment to Leverage Arts & Culture's Contributions to Social Change in the Arab Region* and several other reports on arts and culture and social justice philanthropy; he is also a regular lecturer and keynote speaker at educational institutions and arts and civil society fora.

He holds a BA in International Relations with a focus on diplomacy in the Eastern Mediterranean and an MA in Art History & Nonprofit Management.

EXTERNAL SPEAKERS



Abdallah Absi

A college drop-out, and a young serial and social entrepreneur. Abdallah aims at raising new generations of entrepreneurs in the Arab world and emerging markets. He believes in a world where there is equal distribution of innovation and where Silicon Valley can be local, everywhere.

Abdallah is currently the CEO of Zoomaal, an initiative funded by 4 major institutional investors and featured on CNN, Forbes, Wamda, and IHT. Zoomaal is the leading crowdfunding platform that aims at filling

the financing gap for early stage innovation in the Arab world and emerging markets. Abdallah has taken various leadership positions being an Ashoka fellow, a Global Shaper for the World Economic Forum in the Beirut Hub, a Startup Weekend Organizer by the Kauffman foundation, and founder of almost 6 startups. He has earned over 15 honors and awards in entrepreneurship and was listed in 100 Most Powerful Arabs under 40 in 2015, and 100 Most Influential Arabs under 40 in 2016.



Rami El Nimer

Rami El Nimer is an experienced art collector and philanthropist, the General Manager of First National Bank and the founder of Dar El-Nimer for Arts and Culture.

Over the past 40 years, Rami has amassed a growing collection of Islamic, Christian and Orientalist pieces that span about 10 centuries of civilization.

He also initiated a corporate art collection for the First National Bank in 2009, and sits on the board of several cultural institutions, including the Palestinian Museum.

Rami and his spouse manage a humanitarian foundation "U.L.Y.P, United Lebanon Youth Project" through which they help educate Lebanon's younger generation in the arts, sports, English, IT and other areas with a view to bringing about change by empowering children, older youth and women with new skills, and to creating thereby a more united Lebanon.



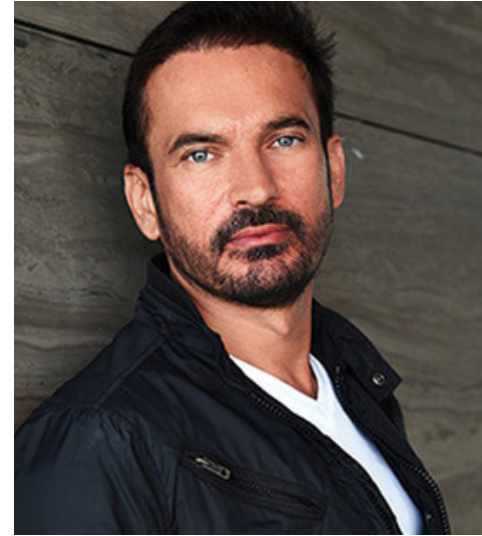
Loubna Khalil

In 2017, Loubna together with her husband began the process of establishing the “Saadallah and Loubna Khalil Foundation” which aims to nurture artists and incubate young talents from the region.

She studied Arabic Literature in Beirut University College (today the Lebanese American University), and then enrolled in the Islamic Studies Program in Sheikh Anta Diop University in Senegal and attended selected courses at UPT in philosophy, cultural studies and cinema.

She opened her house in Senegal to local artists and hosted non-profit exhibitions to help foster their careers and raise their profile. She also joined women's associations to assist people in need.

Her passion led her to take part in civic work and to join humanitarian and cultural associations.



Ayad Nasser

Ayad Nasser is a self-made man, real estate developer, philanthropist and social entrepreneur. He is the co-founder and General Manager of “Loft Investments”, a development company which transforms neglected lands into environmental communities in Lebanon and in France.

Ayad brought Urban dawn 2 to Beirut; he is the initiator of the Ouzville project, uplifting and beautifying the underprivileged and neglected neighborhood of Ouzai: the first village that we see when we land in Lebanon. This personal initiative expanded all over Lebanon and across the region, bringing, art, colors, cleanliness, tourism, unity, breaking the stereotypes, creating job opportunities and initiating the citizens to give back to their own community. Ayad lives by the following motto: if we want to see the change in our country we have to create the change, “leading by example”.

EXTERNAL PARTICIPANTS



Zina Dajani

Zina is a founding member of Antwork, a community where entrepreneurs, freelancers, start-ups, SME's, and all other talents and businesses thrive on collaboration and complementarity.

She is a founding member and partner at Benchmark where she led the efforts on Wadi Hills Residences, a real estate project, and launched the development of an award-winning high profile residential tower, designed by Herzog & de Meuron, Beirut Terraces.

Zina was an active member of the development and financial team at Millennium Development, a real estate consultancy services company where she worked with two of the well-known and established architecture firms in Lebanon: Pierre el Khoury Architects (PelK) and Nabil Gholam Architecture and planning (NGAP). Zina holds a Master's of Science degree in Real Estate Development from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and a Bachelor of Architecture from the American University of Beirut.



Inge Ceustermans

Inge Ceustermans is the Managing Director of The Festival Academy, an initiative of the European Festivals Association (EFA). The Festival Academy has grown out of the success of the Ateliers for Young Festival Managers, and offers unique, intense and rigorous training programs on festival management to young, dynamic and passionate festival makers worldwide.

She was the general manager for the Brussels based artists' company Needcompany under the artistic direction of Jan Lauwers from 2003-2012. In 2012 she started working for the European Festivals Association (EFA), a network organization of more than 80 festivals in Europe and beyond, to manage the 'Atelier for Young Festival Managers'. In 2012 she set up a

new non-profit organization 'The Festival Academy' as an initiative of the European Festivals Association. The organization has developed into a regular training offer for festival managers worldwide on the artistic side as well as on the production side and upsills and empowers a network of future festival leaders counting today 580 festival managers from 80 countries and all continents.

Inge also consults different artists on their general strategy and international relations. Moreover, she is a member of the advisory committee for the Agency of Arts and Heritage in Flanders.

Inge holds an MA in languages and literature with a specialization in theatre sciences.



Imad Baalbaki

Dr. Imad Baalbaki is the Vice President for Advancement at the American University of Beirut (AUB) since 2016. He is responsible for the Offices of Development, Alumni Relations and Advancement Services at the University.

He holds a long record with AUB, as he was appointed Director of the Graduate School of Business & Management in 1997, Director of Development & External Affairs in 2001, then Assistant Vice President for Development in 2007.

Dr. Baalbaki's management of the University's lead donor group and a team that worked closely with the

University president, trustees, university senior leadership, and individual faculty, physicians, and volunteers, have resulted in the conclusion of a series of major gifts supporting AUB's academic, medical, educational, and research agendas. He combines his fundraising efforts with actively reinvigorating strategic dialogue and reconnection with alumni chapters and supporters around the world.

Dr. Baalbaki holds a BBA and MBA in Business Administration from the American University of Beirut, and a PhD in Marketing and Research Methods from Georgia Institute of Technology.



Rula Alami

Rula Alami is an art collector, assistant curator and art dealer based in Lebanon. She has been engaged in Middle East art market for over 15 years. Her area of special interest is Arab modern and contemporary art. She has co-curated thematic exhibitions in Beirut (Art in Iraq Today), Dubai (Art Palestine) and Kuwait (Third Identity), and collaborated with regional galleries (Amman) to curate exhibitions for Lebanese and Palestinian artists.

Her extensive collection focuses on Arab art and is featured on her personal website www.kiyan-art.com. The goal of her site is to raise exposure to regional art and create a

platform of information about Arab artists. Rula is a member of the curating and collections committees of The Palestine Museum, a board member of Inaash Association, a board member of Dar El Nimer and a board member of ULYP (United Lebanon Youth Project). She also participates in the mentoring program with Challenge to Change.

Rula holds a master's degree in Economics from SOAS, University of London and an EMBA from the American University of Beirut. She recently received a certificate in Art Management from Ecole Supérieure des Affaires, Beirut and Gurr Johns London.

PARTICIPATING INSTITUTIONS



Richard Shediak

Richard Shediak is an independent senior adviser and strategy consultant. He retired in 2018 from Strategy& (previously Booz & Company) where he was a Senior Partner and the Managing Director of its Middle East business. He also served for 3 years on Booz & Company's global board of directors.

Richard has more than 20 years of experience working with governments and the private sector in the Middle East region across a broad range of policy areas.

During his career with the Firm, he led the Firm's Public Sector and Financial Services practices for many years. He primarily focuses on the development of sustainable public-sector strategies, multi-sector restructuring initiatives, governance and organization development.

Richard holds an MBA from the University of Chicago, a master's degree in engineering from the George Washington University, and a bachelor's degree in civil engineering from the American University of Beirut.

PLATFORM
بلاتفورم

13 A 12
BEIRUT ART RESIDENCY

مركز
الفرقة المسرحية
MINWAL | THEATRE COMPANY

ورشة القيسارية
Atelier Kissaria

PHOTOPIA
the photographers' hub

مختبر دمشق المسرحي
DTL

MUSIC
PRODUCTIONS

ZAWYA

ATELIER KISSARIA

MOROCCO - VISUAL ARTS

Established in 2016 by a collective of young cultural practitioners, Association Laboratoire Kissaria is a space dedicated to visual art production. It aims to be active in the cultural development of Tangier and views arts and culture as the keys to a prosperous social and economic development; allowing for social cohesion and territorial integration. It offers a space for experimentation, a laboratory through which artists, artisans, and researchers meet, exchange and produce new experimental practices related to printed image and objects.



Hicham Bouzid

Hicham Bouzid is a cultural practitioner and an independent curator. He is the co-founder of Atelier Kissaria, a workshop for visual art productions, and the artistic director of Think Tanger – Urban Laboratory in Tangier, an urban and cultural laboratory. His interest in art and culture started when working at Les Insolites, a bookstore with a Photogallery in his hometown as sales and program assistant before moving to Marrakech in 2013, where he was part of the team launching Le18, darb ferrane, a multidisciplinary cultural artist residency in the old medina of the red city.

Hicham's experience in site specific cultural programming led him to take part in international programs about community activism through art and culture, such as IdeasCity, a program by the NEW MUSEUM. Hicham is a graduate of the International High Institute of Tourism, and has followed educational museum training at the Center for Creative Photography - University of Arizona – Tucson, in partnership with the Marrakech Museum for Photography and Visual Arts.



Amina Mourid

Amina Mourid is a cultural entrepreneur and project manager based in Tangier. She is the co-founder and Project Manager of Think Tanger and Atelier Kissaria since 2016. She launched her cultural career as Project Manager of Festival Nuits Sonores Tanger in 2014-2016, before embarking on a Cultural Entrepreneurship Med Culture program in 2016-2017. Amina has collaborated with different international institutions like the British Council, Med Culture, and the Stimulering Creative Fund (Netherland) to share her experience and local expertise. She was nominated in 2017 by the US Embassy in Morocco to participate in the "Resilient Societies Program" as part of the International Visitor Leadership. Amina holds an MA in Political Science & International Project Management from University Jean Moulin in Lyon, France.

BEIRUT ART RESIDENCY LEBANON – VISUAL ARTS

Founded in 2015, the Beirut Art Residency (BAR) is a non-profit association that is committed to creating opportunities for international and local artists through residencies, local exhibitions and public interventions. By collaborating with like-minded cultural institutions, BAR continues to pursue the stimulation of the country's intellectual and cultural stance. With a core focus on the professional growth of artists from all disciplines, the residency encourages artists to venture beyond their usual practice and to create links with local residents of Beirut to engage on a wider international discourse surrounding contemporary art.



Amar Zahr

Amar Zahr is the founder and director of Beirut Art Residency (BAR) since 2015. BAR is an interdisciplinary artist-run residency that has hosted over 45 artists from 22 countries to-date. During that period, Amar co-founded 'La Vitrine', a street-level space for public art interventions, and established BAR Project Space, dedicated to fostering and promoting research-based projects. Starting out as an artist herself, after exploring a few residencies around the world, including Istanbul, Dubai and New York, she was convinced that this would be the track to follow. In 2014, she started as curator and Director of Communications for Jalanbo Collection in New York, and as Art Week Manager for Art Dubai Group. In December 2017, she co-founded CUB Gallery, a space dedicated to showcasing the work of emerging artists from fine art programs across Lebanon. Amar studied Business with a Studio Arts minor at the American University of Beirut.



Nathalie Ackawi

Nathalie Ackawi is a partner and co-director of Beirut Art Residency as well as the co-founder of CUB Gallery, a space dedicated to showcasing the work of emerging artists from fine art programs across Lebanon. Her internships in Metro Pictures Gallery New York and Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington DC propelled her in the arts and culture scene in 2013. She occupied the position of Exhibitions Coordinator in Leila Heller Gallery New York in 2014-2015 before moving to Beirut as Exhibitions Coordinator in STUDIOCUR/ART in 2016. Nathalie was a panel speaker at the Harvard Arab World Conference in Beirut in April 2018. She holds a BA in Business Administration from the American University of Beirut, and an MA degree in Art & Museum Studies from Georgetown University, Washington D.C.

DAMASCUS THEATRE LAB

SYRIA – PERFORMING ARTS

Damascus Theater Lab (DTL) is an artistic entity that was founded in 2010. Its objective is to work towards establishing a theater that is based on creative and artistic research into the modern trends in theater production, the relation between dramaturgy and acting, and the current relationship that links theater to social reality. It organizes workshops with theater and cinema professionals in Syria and motivates young people to produce their own shows.



Oussama Ghanam

Oussama Ghanam is a theater director, dramaturg and translator. He is the founder and artistic director of Damascus Theatre Lab (DTL) since 2010. He is also a professor at the Higher Institute of Dramatic Arts in Damascus since 2005.

DTL produced: "The Last Tape"- Samuel Beckett in 2009, "It Happened Tomorrow" – Kroetz, Dario Fo, Mark Ravenhill in 2010, "Homecoming"- Harold Pinter in 2013, "Glass"; a free adaptation of Tennessee Williams's "Glass Menagerie" in 2015 and "Drama"; a free adaptation of Sam Shepard's "True West" in 2018.

Since 2011, Oussama has delivered 14 professional, artistic research workshops with topics discussing dramaturgy, acting and performing in modern and contemporary theatre. He translated many plays from English and French into Arabic. Recently, he had finished translating Patrice Pavis' "Dictionary of Performance and Contemporary Theatre". Oussama holds a Doctoral degree from the University of Paris VIII (Saint-Denis).



Dima Abazah

Dima Abazah is an assistant director, dramaturg, translator and manager. She is an active member of the Damascus Theater Lab (DTL) and assistant director in the theater plays directed by Oussama Ghanam. She has coordinated various workshops on a plethora of topics such as improvisation theater, contemporary writing in cinema and theater, translating contemporary theater, and realism in theater.

Dima is a member of the company (Citizens. Artists), active in youth theater, and a trainer with Sandouk al Hakaya, a company which works in the social – educational field, holding different writing workshops with children and teenagers. She was also a trainer of trainers in Interactive Theater for the Syrian Society for Social Development in the Juvenile Center in Damascus in 2011. Dima translates modern and contemporary plays including Sara Kane's "Crave" and Samuel Beckett's "Rockaby" from English into Arabic, among others. Dima graduated from the English Literature faculty at Damascus University, and holds a BA in Dramatic Studies from the Higher Institute of Dramatic Arts in Damascus.

MINWAL THEATRE COMPANY LEBANON – PERFORMING ARTS

Minwal Theatre Company was founded in Beirut in 2014 as a result of the need to combine efforts in strengthening, researching and developing frameworks for theatre productions and programs. It aims to contribute to an increase in Lebanese theatrical productions that have high artistic quality; to create artistic opportunities and practice that activate the role of local youth to defend their social and cultural rights; and to create a platform for private and public schools in different regions in Lebanon. For Minwal theatre is the typical space to exercise democracy. Contributing to the Lebanese theatrical scene reinforces theatre as a profession, and Minwal's work also tackles identity and memory.



Roaa Bzeih

Roaa Bzeih is a theater maker and performing art instructor and a Founding Member in MINWAL Theatre Company and cultural Association since 2014. In this respect, she serves as Facilitator at the SIBA program, a youth training program on theatrical methods in Saida, Lebanon. She works on developing the theatre training programs addressed to actors and non-actors, in addition, to participating in the core of the company's artistic vision. Her artistic practice is based on the role of the performer in creating a dynamic and vocal language that simulates contemporary artistic language. She has presented her work in Beirut, Egypt, Tunisia, Uganda, Rwanda and Italy. Roaa graduated from the Lebanese University, with a higher studies diploma in theater studies.



Jad Hakawati

Jad Hakawati is a theater maker and a founding member of Minwal Theater Company. He attempts to develop an experimental contemporary theatre form where using the multimedia as a third performer on stage is an important element showing the transparency between the virtual, the real and the in-between. His work has been presented in Lebanon, Tunisia, Egypt, Italy, Rwanda and Uganda. Jad holds a higher studies diploma in dramatic arts from the Lebanese University – Fine Arts Institute.

NOWHERE ONLINE MUSIC PLATFORM

EGYPT - MUSIC

Established in 2014, Nowhere Online Music Platform aims to overcome the usual obstacles in art and cultural events that are determined by limited spatial, temporal and material dimensions. Platform works on organizing cultural and artistic events through the Internet, inviting musicians from Egypt and the Arab world, along with a number of countries participating in Platform events, to present their art works, and organize lectures online, thus allowing for their archiving online.



Emad Mabrouk

Emad Mabrouk is an Egyptian filmmaker and curator, and the Founder and Director of "Nowhere Online Music Platform" since 2012. He consulted, coordinated and curated several film projects and programs, in coordination with the Goethe Institute, among others. He also trained and lectured in workshops on filmmaking, documentary, and video journalism, in Egypt, Sudan, Yemen and Uganda. Emad is a highly prolific filmmaker, having directed a rich diversity of short fictions, documentaries and others since 2002, including several documentary films for local and international NGOs. His films have participated in many festivals around the world. He was the director of cultural events at the Jesuit cultural center, and built strong relationships with bands around the Arab region. He has designed several musical events within Egypt for the Jesuit cultural center, the French center, and the Goethe-institute. Emad holds a BA in Commerce from the University of Alexandria. He also earned two scholarships in 2007 from the Arab Film Institute (AFI) in Creative documentary film and from the National Film School in Denmark in directing and using multi cameras.



Yahia Abou-Shousha

Yahia Abou-Shousha assisted Emad Mabrouk in the establishment of Nowhere Online Music Platform from a logistic and administrative perspective, since 2014. Although he studied naval architecture, he has always been interested in arts and culture. In 2012 he got involved with the production team of some documentaries & short fiction films that took place in Alexandria. Some of those films were screened in many festivals in Clermont-Ferrand, Croatia, Sudan, etc.

PHOTOPIA CAIRO

EGYPT - PHOTOGRAPHY

PHOTOPIA is an independent full-fledged school for photographers operating since 2012 in Cairo (Korba, Heliopolis). Photopia is founded on the basis of bridging young talents in photography with more established ones. Its objectives are to offer unmatched photography education by photography masters in each genre; to raise the standard of photography in the region; to expose local photographers to regional and global markets; and to publish photo books that document powerful photography in a non-digital form.



Marwa Mamdouh Abou Leila

Marwa Mamdouh Abou Leila is an ambitious photography school entrepreneur & art manager with a strong track-record of managing Photopia Cairo as co-founder since 2012.

She started a promising career in banking in 2003 before following her ambition of bridging young talents together with more established artists in the field of photography, with Photopia.

Marwa participated as the main judge in National Geographic Abu Dhabi's latest TV photography contest: I AM A NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC PHOTOGRAPHER that was aired on their channel in March/April 2018. She was also part of the jury panel of 2016's EU photo contest. She is currently working on bringing Cairo Photo Week (an annual event that is dedicated to the image industry) to light by November 2018.

Marwa graduated from Ain Shams University Faculty of Commerce – English Section.



Reham El Sheimy

Reham El Sheimy has joined Photopia Cairo in 2016. She is the Deputy Manager of the Photopia Photography School, and the Digital Marketing Head of Photobook Egypt.

She is a photographer at heart, specialized in fashion, conceptual, fine arts and portrait photography. She has a passion for capturing souls and identities through photos. She took several assignments as freelance photographer since 2016. Reham is currently studying photography at the University for the Creative Arts (UCA) in Farnham, England.

SJ MUSIC PRODUCTIONS

PALESTINE - MUSIC

Established in 2012, SJ Productions began as a music production company and eventually became one of the longest and only standing entities that is specialized in music production in Palestine. They believe that independent music is one of the most important means of liberation, independence and respect for others; a tool that can bring people together and uplift communities. In addition to developing a new system for selling albums and products of bands, artists are accompanied by a dedicated media campaign. SJ Productions has more than 30 sale points distributed throughout the West Bank, the 1948 territory (Occupied lands) and Gaza Strip.



Samer Jaradat

Samer Jaradat is an independent Palestinian artist who established an independent audio and video productions label, SJ Productions, in Ramallah, Palestine in 2012. He works with local, regional and international professional musicians, who represent the highest level of musical and artistic expression in their respective genres.

He launched, in the past 4 years, a rich diversity of music albums by Palestinian musicians and bands, including Hawa Dafi (Occupied Syrian Golan), El Container, Rola Azzar, Sharaka Ensemble...

Samer also produced a number of musical projects in the Arab region, as well as projects involved in global music and regrouping musicians from diverse countries. Samer studied music as a percussionist at the Edward Said National Conservatory of Music, and later travelled around the world to participate in workshops in Turkey, India, Germany, and Brazil, amongst other countries.



Ibtisam Ahmad

Ibtisam Ahmad is the Public Relations Officer of SJ Music Productions in Ramallah, Palestine.

Her cultural career kicked off in 2016 at the Khalil Sakakini Cultural Center, where she occupied the position of Programs Coordinator. She has been active in the last 3 years as a volunteer in several institutions in the domains of communication, digital expression and music, such as Events.ps, Shaghaf Foundation and the Palestinian Association for Cultural Development NAWA. Ibtisam teaches music at the Edward Said National Conservatory of Music since 2015. She gave singing performances within various Palestinian musical bands, such as NAWA Arabic Music Ensemble and the Revolution Choir. Ibtisam holds a BA in Media and Filmmaking from Al Quds University.

ZAWYA CINEMA

EGYPT - CINEMA

Misr International Films (MIF) launched Zawya in March 2014 as one of Egypt's first art-house cinemas, located in Downtown's Cinema Odeon in Cairo. Zawya's mission is to provide an alternative to the commercial film experience in Egypt and to celebrate and promote the artistic elements of the medium, thus catering to an increasing demand for local and international arthouse films. It provides a platform for emerging local and Arab filmmakers with a focus on local independent films to encourage. Having organized screenings in multiple venues outside of Cairo, Zawya aims to eventually grow into a series of cinema screens spread out across the country.



Youssef Shazli

Youssef Shazli is the Managing Director of Zawya Cinema, one of Egypt's first arthouse cinemas. He also manages Zawya Distribution, an initiative to promote Egyptian arthouse films locally and abroad. He started off by joining Misr International Films (MIF) as Festival Coordinator of Panorama of the European Film in 2013, and then moved to the position of Music Curator at Zigzag from 2016 to 2018. Youssef has served twice as Jury member for the Backstory Residency organized by Goethe Institute, and participated in multiple workshops, talks and panels on alternative film exhibition and distribution in the Arab world. Youssef holds a BA in International Development Studies from McGill University.



Ahmed El-Sobky

Ahmed El-Sobky is Head of Sales and Acquisitions at Zawya Cinema & Distribution since 2015.

He started his career in film PR and marketing, later venturing into film distribution in Egypt and the Arab region. His latest projects include "Cactus Flower", "In the Last Days of the City", "Mother of the Unborn" and "Experimental Summer". He participated in multiple workshops, the latest of which, "Amplifying Independent Voices Through Film", he represented the Egyptian film scene as part of a delegation to the US in 2017.

Ahmed holds a BS, Media Engineering and Technology from the German University in Cairo.

CASE STUDIES

WARAQ

Waraq is an artistic and cultural NGO based in Beirut. Founded in 2012, Waraq acts as a platform to support, promote and connect artists and professionals in the Arab region with a focus on illustration, animation and design, while allowing them to exchange expertise, share resources, and showcase their work.

One of Waraq's first projects, Beit Waraq, is a community space that actively promotes the art of illustration, printmaking, design and animation by allocating each of its rooms to one of these practices. The space is set up on the co-working model, where artists can rent equipped studio spaces for various durations of time. Beit Waraq is also an incubator for visual arts studio, Studio Kawakeb.

Moreover, Waraq organizes workshops under the umbrella of Werash Waraq. Werash Waraq is a yearly program of workshops and short courses, developed with a committee of professionals, and implemented in Beit Waraq. The program acts as a collaborative platform for artists working in the fields of animation, illustration and design to reflect on the city with the local audience. The workshops are technical and process driven, equipping participants with the tools to develop an idea from start to finish.



David Habchy

David Habchy is a Beirut-based visual artist working with the mediums of animation, illustration and printmaking. In 2012, he co-founded Waraq association, a cultural and artistic association that supports, promotes and connects artists and professionals working in illustration, animation and the art of craftsmanship in the Arab region. David teaches illustration, design, and animation courses at Notre Dame University, ALBA University and Saint Joseph University. He participated in book fairs, conferences, workshops, exhibitions and residencies in Beirut, Syria, Egypt, Tunisia, Jordan, Kuwait, UAE, Iran, Armenia, France, Italy, Bulgaria and Germany.

David is also a committee member of Beirut Animated, an animation film festival organized once every two years that aims to promote animation in Lebanon and in the Arab region.

David holds a degree in computer graphics and animation.



Jana Traboulsi

Jana Traboulsi is a visual artist, graphic designer and illustrator. She is the co-founder and art director of Bidayat pan-Arab quarterly, and the art director of Snoubat Bayrou publishing house.

In 2014, she has co-founded the art collective Sigil. Their work has been exhibited in Venice, Marrakesh, Oslo and Beirut. Since 2004, she teaches design and illustration studios and lectures in history and theory, in Lebanon and abroad. Her works explore methods of visual research, and the relation text-image for critical commentary, often bridging between the personal and the socio-political. Jana holds a BFA in Graphic design from the American University of Beirut, and an MA in Media and Communication Studies from Goldsmiths College, London.



Hussein Nakhal

Hussein Nakhal is a co-founder of Waraq, and the co-founder of Studio Kawakeb. He teaches in the design department of ALBA University. His work revolves around personal narratives, personal and collective memory. He works with performance, images, objects and moving images. Hussein graduated with a BA in Performing arts from the theatre department at the Institute of Fine Arts in Beirut and a BS in Biology from the Lebanese University.

ZOUKAK THEATER COMPANY

Zoukak was established in 2006 as a non-hierarchical structure, dedicated to theatre practice as a social and political involvement, with a belief in theatre as a space for common reflection and in collectivity as a position against marginalizing systems. Zoukak has implemented theatrical interventions in emergency situations and beyond, working with incarcerated youths, children with multiple disabilities, women subjected to domestic violence, migrant domestic workers and other marginalized fractions of society, in addition to working with people affected directly and indirectly by war.

Zoukak endeavors to develop an environment of dialogue and reflection around the performing arts in Lebanon and to provide artistic development and international touring opportunities for local artists, curating since 2013 “Zoukak Sidewalks”, an international festival and “Focus Liban”, a platform for the support and diffusion of work by local emerging artists. In 2008, Zoukak opened “Zoukak Studio”, a space for practical exchange and critical thinking, serving in part as a free access rehearsal and creation space for local practitioners and remaining “the kitchen” of the entire Zoukak project.

Zoukak received the Ibsen Scholarship award (2012), the Anna Lindh Foundation's Euromed Dialogue Award for social resilience and creativity (2014), the Honorary Citizenship of the City of Palermo (2017), the premium Imperiale Grant for Young Artists from the Japan Arts Association (2017), the Chirac Foundation Award of Culture for Peace (2017) and the Ellen Stewart International Award (2018).



Lamia Abi Azar

Lamia Abi Azar is a performer and drama therapist, and a founding member of Zoukak Theater Company.

She developed a personal approach to drama therapy through continuous experimentation and practice, based on two separate schools: experimental theatre and clinical psychology; applying theatre and art as tools of alternative expression, personal investigation and self-affirmation. Since 2005, Lamia has been conducting a drama therapy laboratory with children with multiple psycho-physical handicaps in a rehabilitation pre-school at one of the Palestinian camps in Lebanon. She has also led different workshops and training sessions in theatre and drama therapy with children, adults and persons with special needs in diverse contexts. Lamia Abi Azar acquired a degree in Clinical Psychology from St. Joseph University in Beirut (USJ), and a degree in History & Practice of Arts, Music and Performance, with an emphasis on theatre from the Università Degli Studi Dell'Aquila in Italy.



Mohamad Hamdan

Mohamad Hamdan is a consultant in training and in strategy, and a member of Zoukak Theatre Company. He co-manages Zoukak, leads key production projects and participates in the creative process.

Mohamad's focus evolves around people development and collective work sustainability. He has been practicing this focus in various contexts within the business and association worlds, and within social movements and communities. He kicked-off his career with Murex, managing projects and clients' relationships. In 2013, Mohamad completed a course on 'Leadership, Organizing and Action' delivered by Harvard University followed by 'Train the Trainer', delivered by CIPD, in the UK. He then started designing and delivering training programs and consultancy services in communication, client care, leadership, social organizing and cultural management. Since 2016, he followed trainings in Non Violent Communication.

Mohamad studied Mathematical Engineering at the Institut National Des Sciences Appliquées in France.



Soumaya Berri

Soumaya is the co-general manager of Zoukak. She is specialized in the management of humanitarian programs. She worked in development and emergency contexts in a number of countries as Lebanon and Haiti. Soumaya possesses experience in diverse fields of intervention including psychosocial support, mental health, emergency relief, disability & special needs, migration.

Soumaya holds a BA in Finance and an MA in NGO management.

COOKING ENTREPRENEURS



Firas Yatbokh

Firas Abi Ghanem, aka Firas Yatbokh, is a multidisciplinary professional, social activist, self-trained cook, and event organizer. Firas has been involved in the fields of Human Rights, Humanitarian Assistance, Education, and Environmental Protection. Over the past 11 years, he has organized food and music events in Lebanon and abroad, collaborating with local and international activists, artists, and professionals from different fields, and using food as a medium for cultural exchange and peacebuilding.

Firas holds a BA in Business Administration from the American University of Beirut, and an MA in Conflict Resolution and Peace Studies from the University of Bradford. Firas currently lives in Beirut, where he heads the Quality Department at an international humanitarian organization working in response to the Syrian crisis.



Namlieh

Namlieh is a marketing cooperative formed in 2012 by nine mainly women-run cooperatives active in producing traditional “baladi mooneh” foodstuffs as well as other traditional crafts.

The main purpose of the Namlieh cooperative is to assist in marketing the products of its member organizations as well as provide its own new service products which will boost the work of its members and create new work opportunities for women in both Beirut and rural areas.

EVENTS & VENUES



Zoukak Sidewalks Performance: “Dreaming Zenzile”

This performance, within the AFAC-supported Zoukak Sidewalks Festival, is a modern jazz opera based on the extraordinary life of South African singer and political activist Miriam Makeba. Performed and written by vocalist & songwriter Somi, it features reinterpretations of Makeba's popular repertoire through the jazz idiom as well as original songs reflecting on Makeba's life journey. This project is largely inspired by Somi's recurring dreams of being in conversation with Makeba that Somi began having after the loss of her father. The piece, therefore, is a reflection on both Makeba's biography and of those dreamed conversations. The word “Zenzile” is actually Makeba's true first name, which means “you have done it to yourself” in her native language of Xhosa. In short, this work is meant to be an exposition of the burdens and freedoms that accompany the gift of song, progressing community.

Antwork

Positioned as the hub for the independent workforce, Antwork is one of the leading co-working spaces in Beirut. Built with agility and flexibility in mind, every area at Antwork is designed to boost creativity, productivity and interactivity in a modern and welcoming environment. Antwork's various activity-based workspaces provide a professional ecosystem enabling the community to work, learn, and connect, to unlock its full potential. Antwork recently won Number One Co-working Space in Beirut and the region. This award is offered by Coworker, the member-powered platform for the global co-working community, and is given to the co-working space with the most innovative spaces and facilities, as well as the most engaged and progressing community.

The Arab Center for Architecture

The Arab Center for Architecture (ACA) aims to raise awareness about architecture and urbanism within civil society. Its ambition is to provide a public forum for debating the present and future of architecture and cities. ACA organizes guided tours in Beirut and the neighborhood, focusing on architecture and urban development, and showcasing a selection of buildings from the various periods and styles from the 20th century.

Metro Al Madina

Metro Al Madina is an independent theatre company founded by Hisham Jaber and a group of theater enthusiasts, situated in the thriving street of Hamra in Beirut.

Metro Al Madina has produced a rich panoply of shows ranging from theatre performances, concerts and music shows to musicals, orchestras and cabarets.

Metro Al Madina aims to provide a stage where all kinds of scenic arts can flourish, and where the wide public is invited to choose from an extremely rich events agenda.

Tanjaret Daghet

The Syrian rock band Tanjaret Daghet, which came to life in 2008, is composed of the trio of musicians Khaled Omran (Bass & Lead Vocals), Dani Shukri (Drums) and Tarek Ziad Khuluki (Electric Guitar, Vocals & Electronics). The trio left Syria in 2011 to further expand their musical experience in Beirut. Their first album, “180 degrees”, supported by AFAC, received highly positive reviews.

Inspired by a sense of community, the trio often participates in philanthropic endeavors whereby they most recently donated a performance at a paint-up event dedicated to the maintenance and beautification of Nabaa – a marginalized area in the Lebanese capital.

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Arab Fund for Arts and Culture – AFAC

The Arab Fund for Arts and Culture - AFAC - is an independent regional initiative that offers financial and professional support to emerging and established artists from the Arab region and diaspora and to cultural institutions engaged in supporting the contemporary Arab art and culture scene. Founded in 2007, AFAC is active in 20 Arab countries and supports annually around 150 artists and institutions in the fields of Performing Arts, Visual Arts, Film, Music, Writing, Photography, Research, and Training and Regional Events. AFAC advocates for philanthropy for the arts and culture and for sustainability of the sector through public and private investments and entrepreneurial practices. AFAC has supported 1,292 projects to date (out of 11,558 applications) and contributed around \$18 million towards the production of artworks.

Drosos Foundation

Drosos Foundation is committed to enabling disadvantaged people to live a life of dignity. Together with partner organisations, it develops and supports projects aimed at promoting life skills of disadvantaged children, young people and young adults. The Foundation is convinced that life and technical skills are key elements in personal development as they empower individuals to take control of their lives, take on responsibility and make a positive contribution within their community. In this context, the Foundation pursues two complementary strategies: "Promoting creative skills" as it believes that creativity embedded within the respective cultural environment strengthens both personal and social skills of children and young people; as well as "Promoting economic independence" to improve adolescents' and young adults' employability and entrepreneurial skills, and thus facilitate their access to the labour market.

Drosos Foundation was established in Switzerland in 2003. It owes its existence to a private endowment and is acknowledged as a non-profit organisation. It is ideologically, politically and religiously independent. The Foundation is active in Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine and Tunisia as well as in Switzerland and Germany, and maintains offices in Zurich, Cairo, Casablanca and Ramallah.

The Federal Foreign Office

The Federal Foreign Office represents Germany's interests to the world. It promotes international exchange and offers protection and assistance to Germans abroad. With headquarters in Berlin and a network of 229 missions abroad, the Federal Foreign Office maintains Germany's relations with other countries as well as with international and supranational organizations.



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