

April
28th
29th
30th
Sursock Museum
Beirut



Sara
Schaub



Emilie
Goudal



Kerstin
Khalife



Firouzeh
Saghafi



Rowina
Bou-Harb



Morad
Montazami



Natasha
Gasparian



Charbel
Dagher



Malek
Steif



Marie-Nour
Hechaimé



Nadia von
Maltzahn



Mathilde
Ayoub



VISITING (IN)VISIBLE MUSEUMS

VISITING (IN)VISIBLE MUSEUMS

Series of encounters

April 28th - 29th - 30th 2022

Sursock Museum, Beirut

The cycle **VISITING (IN)VISIBLE MUSEUMS** organized at the Nicolas Sursock Museum takes as its starting point the question of the visible and the invisible in museums or in modern and contemporary collections of the region. It brings together philosophers, artists, researchers, archivists, art historians and poets in a series of events inviting the public to a museum forced to close following the explosion of August 4, 2020.

The cycle will aim at questioning both, the relation between the institution and its collection --what is on display and what remain in its reserves-- as well as museums within context of protracted crisis forcing them into invisibilities. Thus, this series will be an opportunity to also discuss the cases of the museums of Baghdad, Damascus, Algiers or Teheran...

We will be looking at the Sursock Museum's collection, and the history of its constitution in the face of these problematics, as well as giving an overview of the future display in preparation for the reopening. The public will be invited to the Museum's behind-the-scene and to learn about the conservation and restoration of artworks.

Visiting (In)visible Museums will consist of a series of talks, roundtables, and presentations, as well as a children workshop and will be an opportunity to discuss the various museum's stakes from different perspectives.

VISITING (IN)VISIBLE MUSEUMS
curated by **MATHILDE AYOUB**
invitation by **MARIE-NOUR HECHAIMÉ**

NICOLAS SURSOCK MUSEUM

GUESTS

APRIL 2022

Charbel Dagher

Natasha Gasparian

Emilie Goudal

Kerstin Khalife

Morad Montazami

Firouzeh Saghafi

Nadia von Maltzahn

with the collaboration of
the Sursock Museum's team :

Rowina Bou-Harb

Sara Schaub

Malek Steif



PROGRAM

THURSDAY 28

7 PM CONFERENCE AUDITORIUM (AR/EN)

Pr. Charbel Dagher

**IMAGINARY VISIT :
SEEING, IMAGE, AND MUSEUM.**

FRIDAY 29

3 PM CONFERENCE AUDITORIUM (EN)

Nadia von Maltzahn (Orient Institute)

**BOYCOTTING THE MUSEUM:
POWER RELATIONS AND CANON-BUILDING IN LEBANON**

Natasha Gasparian

**REPETITIONS, FISSIONS, AND GAPS IN THE HISTORY OF
THE LEBANESE SALON D'AUTOMNE**

4.30 PM PAUSE

5 PM TALK AUDITORIUM (EN)

CURATED BY ZAMÂN BOOKS AND CURATING

**MUSEUM STUDIES IN WEST ASIA AND EASTERN
MEDITERRANEAN, 20TH C. :
CURATORIAL STRATEGIES IN CRISIS CONTEXT, KEY
MOMENTS AND PLACES:**

Mathilde Ayoub (Université Cergy Paris/INP), **DAMASCUS**

Emilie Goudal (Université de Lille), **ALGIERS**

Morad Montazami (Zamân Books & Curating), **BAGHDAD**

Firouzeh Saghafi (Université de Genève), **TEHRAN**

8 PM DRINK GARDEN

SATURDAY 30

3 PM STORAGE, RESTAURATION ROOM, ARCHIVES (ENG)

LIMITED CAPACITIES. REGISTER ON IHJOZ

**BEHIND THE SCENE:
TOUR OF THE SURSOCK MUSEUM'S STORAGE**

4.30 PM KIDS WORKSHOP - GARDEN

FOR KIDS FROM 8 TO 12 YO - LIMITED CAPACITIES. REGISTER ON IHJOZ

**FIND THE COLORS
OF THE PAINTINGS OF ETEL ADNAN!**

IMAGINARY VISIT SEEING, IMAGE AND MUSEUM.

**CHARBEL
DAGHER**

— The three-day cycle of meetings and presentations starts with a proposition by philosopher and aesthetician Charbel Dagher to re-examine the relation between the so-called 'founding trio' of art: the seeing, the image, and the museum. Dagher gives a new reading to the links and relationships between them: are they as certain, verifiable and obvious as we thought, especially in classical and contemporary Arab culture?

AUJOURD'HUI
S'OUVRE 鳳 LE
PREMIER MUSEE
IMAGINAIRE
AU 鳳 MONDE

**CHARBEL
DAGHER**

Charbel Dagher is an author, poet, novelist, and researcher. He is currently a professor at the University of Balamand. Recent publications include *Bayna Al-lougha wa Al-nass* (Islamic Art: Between language and image), 2018; *Al-Hroofiya al-Arabiya: Fan Wa Hawiya* (Art and identity), 1991, 2016; and *Al-Fan Wa al-Sharq: al-Melkiya Wa al-Ma'ana Fi al-Tadawol* (Art and the East), 2004.

7 PM THURSDAY APRIL 28TH

AUDITORIUM

45 MIN

LECTURE IN ARABIC, WITH SIMULTEANEOUS TRANSLATION TO ENGLISH

BOYCOTTING THE MUSEUM: POWER RELATIONS AND CANON-BUILDING IN LEBANON

**NADIA
VON MALTZAHN**

— In the early 1960s, a number of Lebanese artists boycotted the annual group exhibition of the newly opened Sursock Museum in Beirut. They were reproving the lack of involvement of the Lebanese Artists Association for Painters and Sculptors in the selection process, as well as the emphasis on an abstract art considered imported from Europe. The 1960s were a peak period for contemporary art in Lebanon, with new galleries opening and the city establishing itself as a regional cultural hub. Each institution was connected to specific public and private bodies and groups of individuals that came with their own set of politics. This presentation will analyse the shifting relations between artists and the Sursock Museum during these formative years, as well as the dynamics at play around the construction and determination of art canons in Lebanon.

3 PM FRIDAY APRIL 28TH

AUDITORIUM

20 MIN

PRESENTATION IN ENGLISH



Ninth Salon d'Automne exhibition display in the newly renovated Sursock Museum in 1974. © Nicolas Ibrahim Sursock Museum.

**NADIA
VON MALTZAHN**

Nadia von Maltzahn is Research Associate at the Orient-Institut Beirut (OIB), where she leads the research project LAWHA “Lebanon’s Art World at Home and Abroad: Trajectories of artists and artworks in/from Lebanon since 1943”, funded by the European Research Council. She holds a DPhil in Modern Middle Eastern Studies from St Antony’s College, University of Oxford. Nadia’s recent publications include *The Art Salon in the Arab Region: Politics of Taste Making* (Beirut: Orient-Institut Beirut, 2018), co-edited with Monique Bellan.

REPETITIONS, FISSIONS, AND GAPS IN THE HISTORY OF THE LEBANESE SALON D'AUTOMNE

NATASHA GASPARIAN

— Contemporary visual presentations of the Nicolas Sursock Museum's permanent collection reveal an anxiety toward the museum's legacy. These presentations have oscillated between showcasing a triumphant history of the prize-winning artworks at the juried Salon d'Automne—the works that until recent years formed the bulk of the museum's collection—and ahistorical snippets of the range of artistic practices the museum supported. Against this polarized view of the history of the museum and its collection, and in anticipation of the next permanent collection display, this talk will visually expose the repetitions, fissions, and gaps afflicting the museum since its inception, from the looming figure of Nicolas Ibrahim Sursock to the boycott of the salon by a sizable group of politically committed artists.

3 PM FRIDAY APRIL 29TH

AUDITORIUM

20 MIN

PRESENTATION IN ENGLISH

The portrait of Nicolas Ibrahim Sursock in the catalogs of the annual Salon d'Automne, 1965-1992.



NATASHA GASPARIAN

Natasha Gasparian is an art historian and curator who works on modern and contemporary art in the Arabic-speaking world. She is the author of *Commitment in the Artistic Practice of Aref El-Rayess: The Changing of Horses* (Anthem Press, 2020). Currently, she is a curatorial assistant to Sam Bardaouil and Till Fellrath for the 16th edition of the Lyon Biennale.

MUSEUM STUDIES IN WEST ASIA AND EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN, 20TH C. : CURATORIAL STRATEGIES IN CRISIS CONTEXT, KEY MOMENTS AND PLACES: BAGHDAD, DAMASCUS, TEHRAN, ALGIERS

ZAMÂN BOOKS & CURATING

MATHILDE AYOUB (Cergy Paris Université/INP)

EMILIE GOUDAL (Université de Lille)

MORAD MONTAZAMI (Zamân Books & Curating)

FIROUZEH SAGHAFI (Université de Genève)

— From the Bagdad Modern Art Museum troubled history, a symbol of petro-cultural growth, through the Gulbenkian family, even before the landmark first oil crisis, to the Damascus Museum undocumented Modern Art Collection, the examples are numerous as to raise the dialectic of (in)visibility as the main paradigm for thinking museum history and studies in the region. In order to expand our understanding of the regional dynamics and also our accessible conceptual tools between postcolonial art history and museum theory, these primary examples will be completed by additional accounts around the Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art; which collection has been subject to infinite speculations; and the Algiers Musée des Beaux Arts which represents one of the rare cases of contested and somehow decolonized collection.

5 PM FRIDAY APRIL 29TH

AUDITORIUM

2 H 30 MIN

PRESENTATION IN ENGLISH



Alessandro Balteo-Yazbeck (with Media Farzin). Detail of Alexander Calder's performing mobile Orange Fish (1946) at the TMOCA, Tehran, 2008. From the series Cultural Diplomacy: An Art We Neglect (detail), 2007–09. Photo: Ehsan Behmanesh. Courtesy of Galerie Martin Janda, Vienna

ZAMÂN BOOKS & CURATING

Zamân Books & Curating is dedicated to the study of Arab, African and Asian modernities, working towards the emergence of a transnational and postcolonial art history. Such new mappings of art histories develop through monograph and collective exhibitions, the research journal *Zamân*, textes, images & documents, and different kinds of publication (monographs, artists books, thematic and collective books), as well as reediting – or translanting – to-be-rediscovered and rare material.

Zamân Books & Curating engages actively with different communities of cultural producers, researchers, curators, translators, archivists, writers and other narrators worldwide, sharing the same desire : to revive and celebrate their transcultural artistic heritages.

LE MUSÉE
EST
FERMÉ

BEHIND THE SCENE TOUR OF THE SURSOCK MUSEUM'S STORAGE

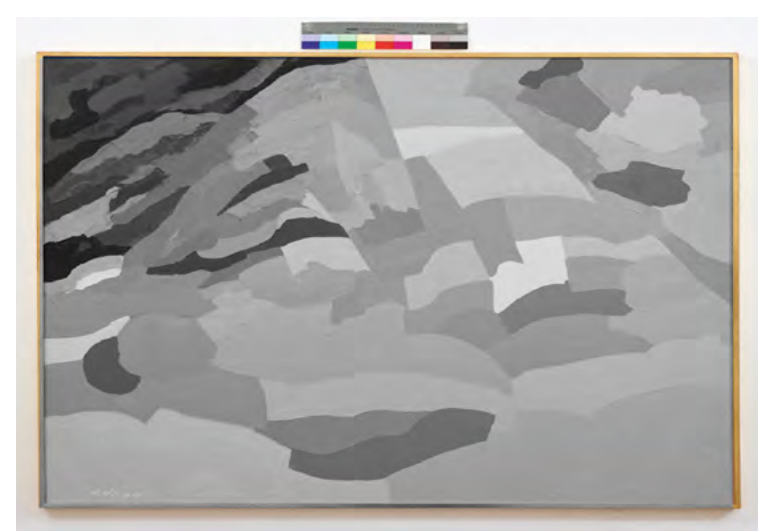
Closed to the public since the Beirut explosion of August 4 2020, the Sursock Museum has mainly been working behind the scenes since then, taking care of its collection and archive in anticipation for its reopening. This thirty-minute guided tour by the Museum's team will take the general public to a visit of the collection reserves, restoration workshop, and library.

3 PM SATURDAY APRIL 30TH

LIMITED CAPACITIES.

PLEASE REGISTER ON IHJOZ.

[HTTPS://IHJOZ.COM/EVENTS/6505](https://ihjoz.com/events/6505)



FIND THE COLORS OF THE PAINTINGS OF ETEL ADNAN

— Become an apprentice restorer and discover the paintings and colors from the collection of the late Lebanese painter Etel Adnan! By using black and white reproductions of the artworks and playing with transparency, the children will get to imagine and restore works of art that lost their colors. They will discover the behind-the-scenes work of an art restorer and learn about diverse practices. At the end of the workshop the parents are invited to visit the exhibition presented by the apprentice restorers.

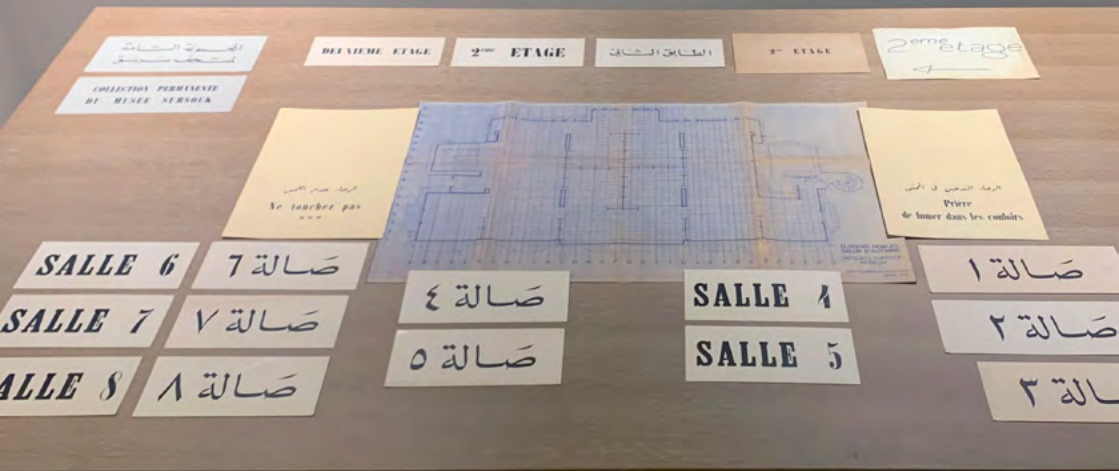
4.30 PM SATURDAY APRIL 30TH

THIS WORKSHOP IS DESIGNED FOR CHILDREN

BETWEEN 8 TO 12 YEARS OLD.

LIMITED SPACES. PLEASE BOOK ON IHJOZ.

[HTTPS://IHJOZ.COM/EVENTS/6504](https://ihjoz.com/events/6504)



ARCHIVING THE INVISIBLE

During the 3-day cycle “Visiting (In)Visible Museums”, the Nicolas Sursock Museum will be showcasing in its Library a small display of archival material highlighting the work done behind-the-scene when it comes to selection, exhibition, and communication.

Consisting of correspondences and communication documents, old signage and captions, photographs and publications, the display will cover archival material from the previous Salon d'Automne, the exhibition “Peinture Syrienne Contemporaine” held in 1966, and the sequence of events leading to the boycott of the Museum in 1969.

MUSEUM'S

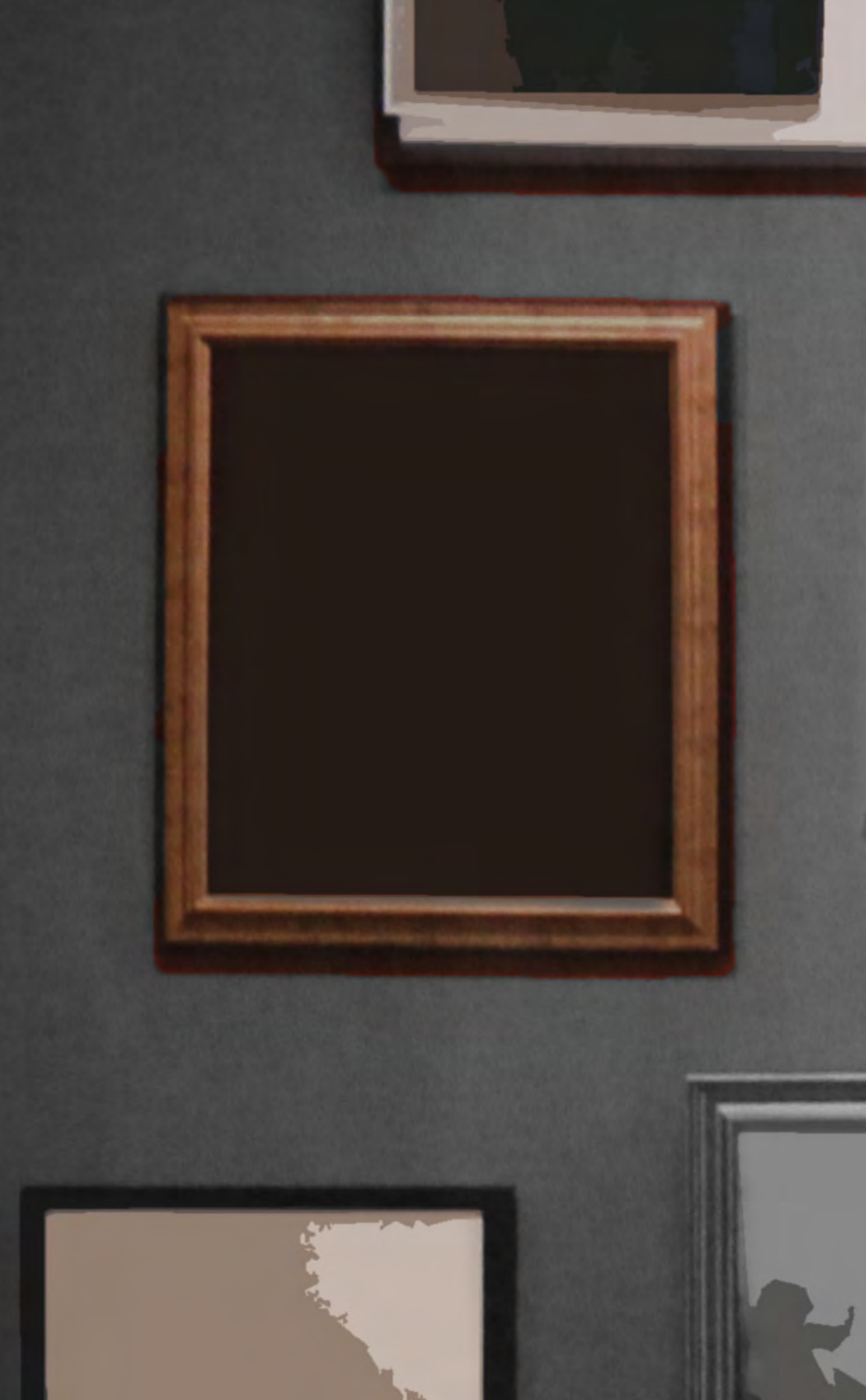
LIBRARY

OPENING HOURS

THURSDAY APRIL 28, 6PM TO 7PM

FRIDAY APRIL 29, 2PM TO 8PM

SATURDAY APRIL 30, FROM 2PM TO 6PM.



VISITING (IN)VISIBLE MUSEUMS

SURSOCK MUSEUM, BEIRUT

The Nicolas Ibrahim Sursock Museum is a modern and contemporary art museum in the center of Beirut first opened in 1961, with a mission to collect, preserve, and exhibit local and international art.

With over ten exhibitions a year – ranging from thematic group shows to solo shows by emerging artists – and a diverse public program of talks, screenings, and family workshops, the Museum aims to provide a platform for encounter and experimentation with art and ideas, and to inform and challenge different audiences and communities in new and unexpected ways.

Sursock Museum

Greek Orthodox Archbishopric Street, 20715509

Ashrafieh, Beirut, Lebanon

www.sursock.museum

FOR MORE INFORMATION

ABOUT THE CYCLE

PLEASE CONTACT :

Marie-Nour Hechaimé

Curating and programmation

marienour.hechaimé

[@sursock.museum](https://www.instagram.com/sursock.museum)

Mathilde Ayoub

PhD Student

Cergy Paris Université / INP

mathilde.ayoub

[@gmail.com](mailto:mathilde.ayoub@gmail.com)