

ISSUE # 26 | JUNE-JULY 2014

SELECTIONS

ARTS / STYLE / CULTURE FROM THE ARAB WORLD AND BEYOND



• IN CONVERSATION WITH ZAHA HADID • RICHARD SERRA IN DOHA • SALONE DEL MOBILE WITH JUSTIN MCGURK •
• IN THE STUDIO WITH RABIH KAYROUZ • THOMAS HEATHERWICK IN ABU DHABI •
• BEIRUT DESIGN WEEK 2014 • SPECIAL SECTION CURATED BY STUDIO PUTMAN •

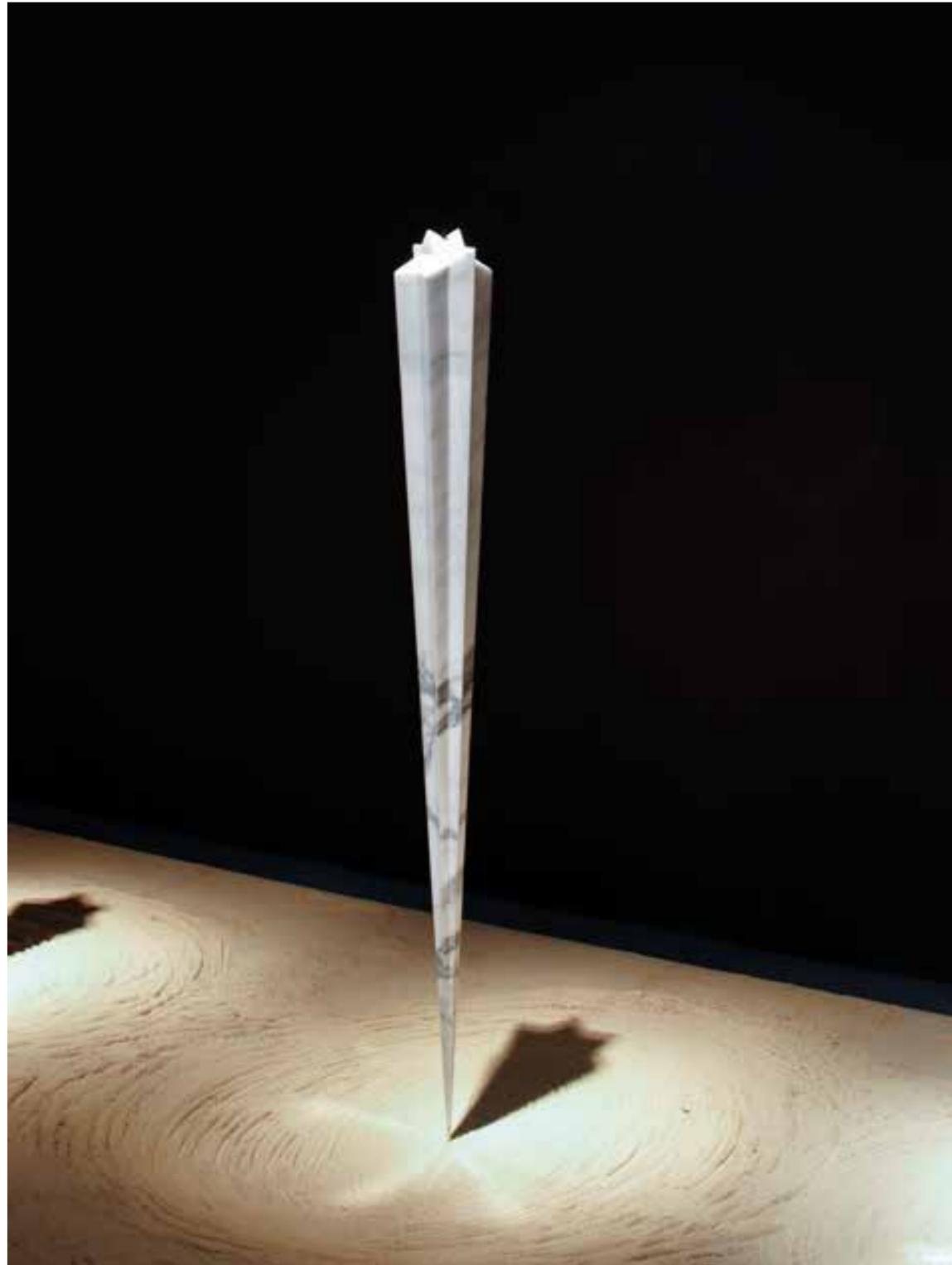
THE DESIGN ISSUE

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Pendulum No.9 by Ranya Sarakbi at SMOgallery

MENA'S CREATIVE CAPITAL

by Kasia Maciejowska

As international headlines continue to foretell the demise of Beirut, the city itself is celebrating its own creativity and collaborating to strengthen it with **Beirut Design Week**. Just some of this year's international guests include the **artist Mona Hatoum**, **fashion journalist Hilary Alexander**, **curator at the V&A Museum Rowan Bain**, and **designer at Philips Rik Runge**. Selections wades through the events, talks to the founders, and guides you through the week with our map overleaf.



Doreen Toutikian



Maya Karounouh

Beirut Design Week (BDW) is not a design fair but more like a festival, as much for participants as it is for the general public or a niche audience of collectors. This is largely down to the vision and efforts of its co-founder Doreen Toutikian whose priorities lie with the design community itself, having formerly worked as a designer after training in Glasgow and Cologne, before founding the MENA Design Research Centre, the festival's over-

seeing organisation. Her other half in the venture is Maya Karounouh, who previously set up two branding design agencies Cleartag and TAGbrands having studied architecture and art history; BDW is something of a CSR project for TAGbrands. This dynamic pair of focused women believes in Lebanon as a cultural hub and bubbling creative centre of the Middle East. As a result, the programme of exhibitions, talks, workshops and



Architectural CGI by The Other Dada



Fractal Light by White sur White



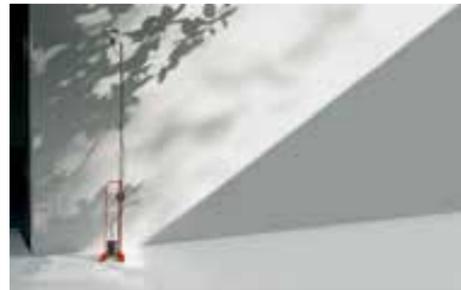
Magma Light Fixtures by Ghassan Salameh



Tree of Life wall hanging by Bokja



Posters by Wonder8



Toio light by Achille and Pier Castiglioni for Flos at Lightbox



Til leotard and Ralin skirt from by Nour Hage SS14



One plus One see-saw by White sur White



Handwork at Sarah's Bag



Spring Summer 2014 jewellery collection by Rosa Maria



Saint Louis crystal chandelier by Lux Lab



Arik Levy lighting for Vibia at Lumiere Group

OF COURSE WE WANT TO ENCOURAGE CULTURAL EXCHANGE BETWEEN LEBANON AND THE REST OF THE WORLD AND HOPE BDW MIGHT INSPIRE OTHER COUNTRIES IN THE REGION TO BUILD THEIR OWN DESIGN CULTURE

open studios is geared towards boosting communication between different segments within design in Beirut and the wider region, as well as bringing in international contributions to inspire and stimulate the local conversation.

Beirut the crossroads, Beirut the political melting pot... these clichéd summaries still ring true and can be felt in the creative output produced by the city. But in recent years there has been a concerted push among artists and designers to develop creative practices that are meaningful to Lebanon. Quite how that can be done when the country itself is inherently so polyphonic is a big question, but Toutikian elaborates: "Many of the influences of nearby cultures, as well as colonialism, have had their imprint on our current design culture. Most of our design schools in universities have imported curricula from the West, but for the past decade, there has been a conscious shift to create design that the Lebanese can truly identify with. This ongoing process and the current quest among the Lebanese to redefine their own design culture is what makes the contemporary context so exciting."

The well-founded belief of Toutikian and Karounouh that Beirut is a regional, rather than just a national creative hub means their intention is to have a positive influence beyond the Lebanese borders. "Of course we want to encourage cultural exchange between Lebanon and the rest of the MENA region,

and with the rest of the world. We also hope BDW might inspire other countries in the region to build their own design culture.”

That Hilary Alexander, leading fashion journalist of international standing, is coming especially to speak at BDW reveals how much the event has grown since being launched in 2012. The former Fashion Director of British newspaper the Telegraph will talk about how different modes of dress from around the world, from Bhutan to Mongolia, and Russia to Peru, become glamorised through the fashion industry. She was invited as part of an expanded focus on fashion at BDW to celebrate the establishment of the fashion design program at LAU. That she said yes, especially during this time of off-putting international press coverage on Lebanon, indicates growing belief in the event and trust in its founders. Talks

tour of artisanal workshops such as leather-workers and jewellery-makers in Bourj Hammoud can catch it again this year, and Le Gray hotel is hosting the week’s best opportunities for real discussion with its Designer Dinners, where you can engage a mix of local and overseas talent in some serious chat.

As last year, the week is organised with a focus on a different part of town each day; moving from Downtown and Saifi Village on Monday 9th June, through Achrafieh, Gemmayzeh, Hamra, Mar Mikhael, and Bourj Hammoud over the following days. Selections is hosting an event at Carwan gallery, to celebrate the week and the launch of this Design Issue. Carwan is exhibiting designs by Lebanese product designer Carlo Massoud and Italian architect Vincenzo de Cotiis, two of the outstanding names on the roster of Beirut’s most exciting luxury design gallery.

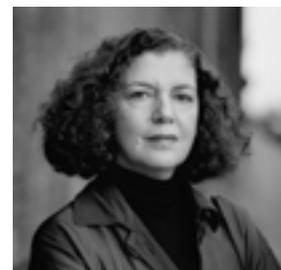
THAT HILARY ALEXANDER SAID YES, ESPECIALLY DURING THIS TIME OF OFF-PUTTING INTERNATIONAL PRESS COVERAGE ON LEBANON, INDICATES GROWING BELIEF IN THE EVENT AND TRUST IN ITS FOUNDERS

by Rowan Bain, print curator at the V&A Museum in London, and Rik Runge, designer at Philips Healthcare do the same. Toutikian sees these international guests (of whom there are 15 in all) as playing an essential role in expanding the festival’s audience beyond the design community to the wider public.

For those who prefer to look than to listen, the three headline exhibitions are of Danish Architecture, Dutch Design, and Newcomers, showcasing local up and coming designers. For something more participatory, those who missed last year’s



Hilary Alexander



Mona Hatoum