

For Immediate Release



AUB receives major gift for art history and curating

Beirut, Lebanon- 03/07/2015 - The American University of Beirut has received a major gift to support new initiatives in art history and curating. The gift from AUB alumnus and trustee Philippe Jabre will enable AUB to play a critical role in the flourishing regional arts scene and to educate professionals in the growing and highly specialized field of art curatorship.

Jabre is the founder and chief information officer (CIO) of Jabre Capital Partners and the founder of Association Philippe Jabre, dedicated to providing Lebanese with access to education and health care. The foundation offers medical aid and scholarships, more than 1500 thus far, in addition to supporting a number of charities and cultural organizations.

Jabre has been a long-time supporter of AUB. In 2004, he established the Philippe Jabre Scholarship, which has helped cover the cost of tuition for some 150 AUB students to date, and enabled 79 AUB graduates to pursue further studies abroad.

Jabre and his wife, Zaza, are highly respected international art collectors and patrons of the arts. Unprecedented in the Arab region, Jabre's gift to the Department of Fine Arts and Art History will create endowments to support a Professorial Chair in Art History and Curating, an exhibition fund, and a visiting lecturer series. It will help AUB bring some of the world's foremost experts in art history and curating to the University, and to create major exhibitions of works by modern and contemporary artists, with a special focus on art from the region. The gift will also help with research and publication on topics related to interpreting, preserving, and exhibiting art.

AUB has historically played a major role in the development of modern Lebanese art. Many of the region's most celebrated artists of the 20th century either taught or studied at AUB. Forced to close during the Civil War, today the Department of Fine Arts and Art History is once again taking the lead in art education. Since 2012, a major collection of Lebanese art has been donated to the University and two new galleries have been created.

"Lifelong devotees of the fine arts, Philippe and Zaza Jabre have provided AUB with an inspirational gift. This will provide invaluable support for the teaching, practice, and curation of the fine arts," said AUB President Peter Dorman. "At a time when regional cultures and the artistic patrimony of the Middle East need to be understood, preserved, and celebrated, their gift will position AUB as a regional leader in art history and curation."

"In recent years, curatorship has emerged as one of the most influential factors within the art world, often setting the agenda and determining themes within which contemporary artists work," said Rico Franses, associate professor of fine arts and director of AUB Art Collections and Galleries. "The Jabre gift allows us to bring this new area into prominence, to train our

students in it, and to participate in determining how this burgeoning but still young field will develop.”

For Philippe Jabre, the decision to support the arts at AUB was based on his confidence that AUB has the facilities, the expertise, and the vision to educate the art historians needed by regional galleries and museums. “AUB is embedded in the fabric of Lebanese art,” he said. “It has long been a locus of artistic expression and has become a trusted guardian of the country’s cultural heritage. I have no doubt that professionals trained in curatorship at AUB will go on to shape the contemporary arts scene in the Arab world.”

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About AUB

Founded in 1866, the American University of Beirut bases its educational philosophy, standards, and practices on the American liberal arts model of higher education. A teaching-centered research university, AUB has more than 700 full-time faculty members and a student body of about 8,000 students. AUB currently offers more than 100 programs leading to the bachelor’s, master’s, MD, and PhD degrees. It provides medical education and training to students from throughout the region at its Medical Center that includes a full service 420-bed hospital.

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