

For Immediate Release



AUB to showcase art collecting in a special exhibit that opens in April ***Private view for the press on April 4***

Beirut, Lebanon- 29/03/2013 - The American University of Beirut will inaugurate in April a new exhibition entitled “Profiles: Collecting Art in Lebanon” at the AUB Art Gallery, in which the profiles of 10 leading art collectors in Lebanon will be showcased.

A private view for the press will be held on Thursday, April 4 from 2pm to 4pm, ahead of the official opening of the exhibition at the AUB Art Gallery, on Sidani Street in Hamra. The exhibition will be open to the public April 5-August 24.

The exhibition examines practices of art collecting and art patronage in contemporary Lebanon. On display are 10 video interviews conducted with private art collectors and inheritors of collections including **Saleh Barakat, Anachar Basbous, Georges Corm, Raymond Audi, Abraham Karabajakian, Ramzi Saidi and Afaf Osseiran Saidi and Tony Salamé**. The art critic and publisher **Cesar Nammour** offers a historical perspective on the practice of art collecting, while **Zeina Arida** of the Arab Image Foundation speaks about collecting as an artistic strategy. **Dima Raad**, of the Ministry of Culture of Lebanon, also offers her perspective. On the lower floor of the gallery, the house of a Lebanese art collector—inspired by the home of the collector, Dr. **Samir Saleeby**—has been reconstructed.

This exhibition is inspired by Lebanese collector Dr. Samir Saleeby. Throughout his life, Dr. Saleeby has collected paintings—a passion that he inherited together with a collection of works by his renowned relative Khalil Saleeby, whose works Dr. Saleeby has donated to AUB. It was this body of artworks that served as the core of his collection, later complemented with works by other distinguished Lebanese artists whom Dr. Saleeby befriended at certain periods of his life.

The private art collector has played a very prominent role on the Lebanese artistic scene, acting, for the most part, from behind its curtains. The situation is different in many respects from that encountered elsewhere in the region and beyond, where the state has traditionally played a more active role in the preservation of cultural heritage. In the case of Lebanon, it is predominantly the private sector that has taken this initiative into its hands. From its earliest days, the Lebanese bourgeoisie assembled in the coziness of their homes the relics of the archeological past and the artifacts of the cultural present, locally re-affirming a historical pattern of European modernity.

Before the emergence of curatorship as a profession, it was often the art collector who exhibited the artist, acting as a lens through which the product of artistic labor was projected

onto the public realm. For this event at AUB Art Gallery, AUB decided to turn this lens around. “Profiles: Collecting Art in Lebanon” shines a spotlight directly on the figure of the collector and on the practice of art collecting.

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Note to Editors

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 600 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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