

For Immediate Release



AUB to open major exhibition by artist John Carswell

Beirut, Lebanon- 12/11/2014 - AUB Art Galleries and Collections will inaugurate its major exhibition of this year, entitled *Trans-Oriental Monochrome: John Carswell*. The exhibition opens on November 19, 2014 at 6pm and will be on display until February 25, 2015 in two galleries: the AUB Byblos Bank Art Gallery on campus, and the AUB Rose and Shaheen Saleeby Museum (previously AUB Art Gallery) located on Sidani Street, Hamra.

This exhibition familiarizes the public with a series of monochrome works produced by John Carswell: the art historian, artist, teacher, explorer, curator and scholar of Near, Middle, and Far Eastern art and culture. The exhibition - which runs simultaneously in the AUB Art Gallery and AUB Byblos Bank Art Gallery - displays a series of monochrome objects made by John Carswell in the 1960s. Most of these solid white, or black and white, artworks were made in the heat of a creative fever during one hot summer, in the upper studios of the Nicely Hall building at AUB.

This exhibition, however, deals primarily with John Carswell's art, and only secondarily with his writings and scholarly or curatorial projects.

Carswell graduated in 1951 from the Royal College of Art in London, and instead of setting out to conquer the British art world, ruled at the time by local social realists, he embarked on a steamboat and entered the Middle East through the port of Beirut. For almost six decades now, John Carswell has been studying this region, following on the heels of his lifelong source of inspiration, the medieval Islamic explorer Ibn Battuta. Instead of tracing the routes of the sacred *hajj*, however, Carswell has been closely observing the pilgrimage of artistic ideas, the circulation of cultural currents within and beyond an area that gave the world its earliest great civilizations. His interest in the art, culture and history of the Fertile Crescent has led him to various places and positions: from archaeological excavations in Turkey, Jordan, Syria, and Palestine, to teaching fine arts at the American University of Beirut, to following in the footsteps of the first Western explorers of Central Asia, to becoming the Curator of the Oriental Institute and then Director of the Smart Museum at the University of Chicago, and later moving back to London to become the Director of the Islamic and South Asian Department of Sotheby's, London.

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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 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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