

BeMA & STUDIOCUR/ART ANNOUNCE THE LAUNCHING OF CONTEMPORARY ART EXHIBITION "CYCLES OF COLLAPSING PROGRESS"

Other August 3, 2018



Under the patronage of the Lebanese Ministry of Culture and UNESCO – Beirut office, The Beirut Museum of Art (BeMA) and the curatorial platform STUDIOCUR/ART announced during a press conference the launch of the Contemporary Art Exhibition **"Cycles of Collapsing Progress"**. The event, held at Saint Joseph University, Innovation and Sport Campus, was attended by the Ambassador of Mexico Mr. José Ignacio Madrazo, Minister of Culture represented by Mrs. Lynn Tehini, International Director of Mikati Foundation, Mr. Ziad Mikati, as well as a number of media representatives, artists and social figures.

Anticipated to open on September 22, 2018, "Cycles of Collapsing Progress" is the first month-long contemporary art exhibition and the second joint art collaboration between non-profit organizations BeMA and STUDIOCUR/ART. Held at the Rashid Karami International Fair, designed by Brazilian architect, Oscar Niemeyer, and at Tripoli's citadel, the exhibition draws its inspiration from the significance of cyclical time and the cycles of collapse invested in the current state of both locations.

Partially built in 1974 and still unfinished as a result of the Lebanese Civil War, the 14 concrete run-down structures of the Rashid Karami International Fair, considered as one of the most important legacy of modern architecture in the Middle East, will be in dialogue with Tripoli's citadel, a monument to the layers of history. This is where, between history and modernism, a reflection on cyclical time and the cycles of collapse is born.

Curated by Karina el Helou, founder of non-profit curatorial platform STUDIOCUR/ART, "Cycles of Collapsing Progress", in partnership with Anissa Touati Corporation for Mexico, will feature 18 projects that include 11 commissioned artworks along with 8 produced works by artists from Lebanon and Mexico.

The month-long exhibition (September 22- October 23) is a culmination of 18 months of work based on a cultural dialogue between Lebanon and Mexico, with residencies in both countries that allowed the exchange of geographical perspectives on the theme.

The exclusively Lebanese and Mexican artists participating in the exhibition feature Edgardo Aragon, Ali Cherri, Jose Davila, Joana Hadjithomas and Khalil Joreige, Lamia

Joreige, Fritzia Irizar, Jorge Mendez Blake, Damian Ortega, Marwan Rechmaoui, Gabriel Rico, Stéphanie Saadé, Roy Samaha, Jalal Toufic, and Zad Moulataka in the Rashid Karami International Fair, as well as Rayyane Tabet, Haig Aivazian, Emmanuel Tovar, and Pablo Davila in the citadel of Tripoli.

Speaking at the conference, Karina el Helou said, "The purpose of this exhibition is to reflect on where humanity stands today, after years of progressive illusions that could lead to a future collapse if the pace of over-productivity remains unchanged".

El Helou added that "This exhibition has been in a build-up process for the past 18 months during which two artistic residencies in Beirut and Mexico have been organized with the collaboration of Anissa Touati, giving selected artists from these two countries the opportunity to reflect on the exhibition subject and exchange their different points of view and perspectives".

From her side, Founding Member of BeMA, Sandra Abou Nader, stressed on the fact that "the "Cycles of Collapsing Progress" is a joint project, that aims, through art, not only at reviving the purpose of an architectural project that has long been a utopian symbol of a new Lebanon, but also at reiterating the social dimension of art and its vital role in being a meeting space that connect individuals, communities, and cultures, transforming ideas into socially-engaging realities."

"When the Lebanese chose Niemeyer to build the dream center in Tripoli, they waited, and in waiting the reality changed. This unfinished structure reminds us of our ability to dream. Showing the importance of how waiting is a test for hope and it becoming the source of a new collective dream", added Abou Nader.

Before concluding, Abou Nader emphasized "our vision at BeMA is not just raising awareness, but a call to the return of art to the collective consciousness as an integral part of our character and as a means or lens to look at a political, social, cultural, or human reality."

Speaking on behalf of the Mikati Foundation, International Director Mr. Ziad Mikati, thanked everyone for their "work and success in reviving the cultural and artistic role of Tripoli, particularly BeMA for reconsidering Tripoli as a cultural hub."

He mentioned that "Tripoli's citadel was built between the Crusaders and Islamic Mameluke eras, while the Rashid Karami International Fair is a beautiful museum that symbolizes our city. As Tripolians, we have offered our lands and time to support this international fair as a landmark that raises Lebanon's name high. We hope this project becomes a bridge between Lebanon and Mexico, and between Tripoli, the rest of Lebanon, and the world. We also hope you raise the name of this city, which has been long forgotten and demeaned, so we can reclaim its positive image."

Representing the Minister of Culture, Tehini stated, "this distinctive project and announcement, that we support today, is very significant to the ministry of culture, being an event that honors our memory." Tehini pointed out that the "Rashid Karami International Fair is more than a place, more than an architectural structure; it is a landmark that entered history to confer a new modern dimension to Tripoli's remarkable heritage. This is why it is our duty to work on including it on the UNESCO's World Heritage List, a project the ministry has already started tackling." She reiterated the fact that the importance of the contemporary art exhibition "Cycles of Collapsing Progress" lies in its nature evoking the depth of art's influence, which transcends the art work itself and the exhibition to encompass the social dimension of art, connecting the evolution of culture and art in Lebanon with global-scope cultural dynamics."

Tehini announced as well that "the Ministry will always support any project that positions arts rightfully", disclosing "the ministry's decision to exempt all visitors of the Tripoli's citadel, as part of the exhibition, from any fees, from September 22 to October 22, 2018."

In turn, the Ambassador of Mexico, Mr. José Ignacio Madrazo stated "the government of Mexico gives a high priority to this project, and considers it an integral part of its policy in promoting Mexico in Lebanon", he added "when I first heard about the project, I was very pleased, as I saw in it an opportunity to get closer to the community in Tripoli, and reconnect with the Mexicans and the Lebanese with Mexican connections living in Tripoli, since our activities are mostly concentrated in Beirut".

Madrazo concluded his speech by thanking all the entities involved in the implementation of this project.

About BeMA:

One of the most significant developments for Lebanese art and culture in a generation, Beirut Museum of Art (BeMA), is a new museum set to launch in Beirut in 2020.

Envisioned as a cultural hub highlighting modern and contemporary art from Lebanon and the region, BeMA will encourage Lebanese artistic creation while fostering dialogue and cross-cultural collaborations.

In addition to housing an extensive collection of modern and contemporary art, the museum will create opportunities for the production of new works through artist residencies, commissions and cultural partnerships. Committed to nurturing a dynamic and creative civil society, it will also host cultural and educational programs.

An independent institution, BeMA will be a site for discourse, creativity, academic research, and public education, engaging local communities. Drawing inspiration from the city itself, the museum's innovative design was developed by one of Lebanon's leading architecture houses Hala Wardé / HW Architecture following an independently juried competitions. For more information about BeMA visit our website

<http://www.bema.museum>

About STUDIOCUR/ART:

Studiocur/art is a non-profit curatorial platform specialised in Contemporary art and registered in Paris. Created by Franco-Lebanese curator, Karina El Helou in 2015, the platform conceives exhibitions to create unique interactions between the artist and the public.

The platform is not defined by a geographical and cultural appartenance, its mission is to combine the artists work with a school of critical thinkers and talented producers, architects and scenographers around the world.

The platform has been also developing an interest in bringing Contemporary art to heritage buildings, moving away from the confines of today's white cube experience.

In addition to the exhibitions, a programme of conferences, research projects screenings and residencies is on going with academics, scientists and artists invited to meet and exchange ideas and experiences.

The platform has collaborated with institutions, museums, other non-profit platforms, curators, artists and residencies, in both the public and private domains.
