

THE FOCAL EXHIBITION OF BEIRUT ART FAIR 2017
OUROUBA, THE EYE OF LEBANON
Curated by Rose Issa

21 - 24 September, 2017
BIEL - Beirut, Lebanon

BEIRUT ART FAIR has selected London-based independent curator Rose Issa, a world-renowned expert on contemporary Middle-Eastern art, to curate the focal exhibition of its 2017 edition.

Entitled Ourouba, The Eye of Lebanon, the exhibition will reflect the aesthetic, conceptual and socio-political concerns that have surfaced in the Arab world over the last decade. It will feature installations, paintings, photography and sculptural works on loan from major private and institutional collections in Lebanon. The complex, recent history of the notion of “Arabicity” (the literal translation of “ourouba”) will serve as the common thread for the selected works, which bear witness to the diverse paths and inspirations of artists from the Arab world. The exhibition will specifically explore themes relating to memory, destruction and reconstruction, conflict and peace.

These selected works examine the personal, national and regional issues affecting the Arab world in light of recent upheavals:

- Why we do what we do and accept what is done?
- How can we resist clichés, injustice, double standards, opportunism and at times even opportunities?

Across diverse media and subject matters, the works reflect the pulse of the region and the nature of artists’ engagement with the political realities they face. In chaos they discover that which endures.

In the booming cultural scene that is Beirut, Ourouba, The Eye of Lebanon will show how artists and collectors with different tastes and visions are challenging the confines of their identity and reshaping the parameters of their cultural traditions.

Based in London since the 1980s, Rose Issa is an independent curator, writer, producer and specialist on the visual arts and cinema of the Middle East. Through Rose Issa Projects, she has produced numerous exhibitions in collaboration with international private and public institutions,

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including the Crawford Art Gallery, Cork (2014); Virginia Commonwealth University Qatar, Doha (2014); the Victoria and Albert Museum, London (2013, 2006); Leighton House Museum, London (2013; ongoing since 1992); Beirut Exhibition Center (2010-11); the Bluecoat Arts Centre, Liverpool (2010); Tate Britain, London (2008); the European Parliament, Brussels (2008); the State Museum of Oriental Art, Moscow (2007); the Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg (2007); ING Bank, Geneva (2007); the Haus der Kulturen der Welt (HKW), Berlin (2004); The CCCB (Contemporary Cultural Centre), Barcelona (2003); the IFA - Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen (2002-3), Stuttgart; the Barbican Art Centre, London (2001, 1995); and the Tropenmuseum, Amsterdam (2011-2013; 1996-1997).

Ourouba, The Eye of Lebanon follows the success Arabicity at the Bluecoat Gallery in Liverpool (2010) and Arabicity II at the Beirut Exhibition Centre (2011) — both of which inspired significant interest.

Ourouba, The Eye of Lebanon is made possible through the support of Bankmed, main partner of BEIRUT ART FAIR since 2010.

Note to editors

BEIRUT ART FAIR was created in 2010 and is directed by Laure d'Hauteville, an exhibition curator and former journalist.

BEIRUT ART FAIR's Artistic Director is Pascal Odille, an expert in modern and contemporary art (member of C.N.E.S.). Marine Bougaran directs the fair's "Projects" spaces.

Organized with the renewed support of Bankmed, the 8th edition of BEIRUT ART FAIR will take place from 21 to 24 September at the BIEL (Beirut International Exhibition and Leisure Center) in Beirut.

Following the success of the 2016 edition that brought together 45 galleries from 20 countries, BEIRUT ART FAIR 2017 will feature the focal exhibition Ourouba, The Eye of Lebanon, an expanded REVEALING by SGBL section, the 6th edition of the BYBLOS BANK AWARD, the VIDEO BOX space presented by the MACAM, and a VIP program that gives exclusive access to the best Lebanese art collections.

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