

## Art illuminates fragile Lebanese life

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Photo provided by Katzen Arts Center.

Art, as defined in Webster's dictionary, is "the process or product of deliberately arranging elements in a way to affect the senses or emotions." Reflecting the dreams, history and depressing reality of Lebanese culture after its civil war (1975-1990), [Convergence: New Art from Lebanon](#) is a gem of an exhibit showing in Washington.

As the first exhibition in North America to introduce [Lebanon's](#) post-civil war art, it expresses both the vigor for and the precariousness of life in Lebanon today and will be at [The American University](#), in the [Katzen Arts Center](#) through May 16. The show was co-selected by the Katzen Museum's director, [Jack Rasmussen](#), and a highly respected Lebanese curator, Amal Traboulsi.

The various peoples of Lebanon have continuously overlapped in their cultures, sometimes violently, since before the birth of Christ. This juxtaposing of peoples has allowed for vibrant art to be created, partly from the violence that often engulfs the region. Modern-day artists have used the country's historical convergence of cultures to create the show's masterpieces.

Although many works of photography appear in the show, there are also more high-tech mediums, such as video art and digital animation. The show features 30 talented artists who created more than 50 paintings, sculptures and digital works of art. Of these unique artistic representations, more than a third of the creators are women who live in Lebanon's capital city of [Beirut](#).

Depressing destruction infuses Nada Sehnaoui's elegant photographic grid "Rubble," a 3-by-3 meter collage portraying multiple views of debris in Lebanon. Artist Nadim Karam created a 16-foot high metal piece of art made solely for this Washington show. The work brings about bitter feelings stirred up by lives influenced by war, but also by hope, represented by the installment of a cloud-like garden.

Another piece of art, an oil painting on canvas by Marwan Sahmarani, depicts soldiers at night. This dark work is meant to be a guiding light for future generations to view and then learn from so they can avoid the violence of their ancestors. Although the work is beautifully painted, Sahmarani writes that it should serve as a reminder of the cyclical patterns of Lebanon's violent history.

The American University Museum at the [Katzen Arts Center](#) is free and open from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m., everyday except Monday. For more information, call 202-885-ARTS.

### First exhibit at Katzen Arts Center

Art is defined in Webster's dictionary as "the product of deliberate or skillful design in a way affecting the senses or emotions." Evoking the dramatic and depressing reality of Lebanon's culture since the civil war (1975-1990), artist Paul Lehman has now taken his work to Washington.

As the first exhibit at the Katzen Arts Center to introduce Lebanon's post-civil war art, it captures both the vigor for life, the post-war optimism in Lebanon today and will have the surprising opportunity to be shown at the Katzen Arts Center through May 15. The show was co-selected by the Katzen Museum's director, Jack Baumgartner, and a highly respected Lebanese curator, Amal Traboulsi.

The various mediums of Lebanon have continuously developed in their own unique and widely diverse ways before the birth of Christ. This progression of art-making evolved as visual art to be created, partly from the evidence that often depicts the region. Most of the artists have used the country's historical heritage of art to create for their own generation.

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Depicting destruction before Nour Sabraoui's elegant photographic set "Rubens" is a small-scale collage portraying multiple views of Beirut in Lebanon. Artist Nour Sabraoui's culture is the first major piece of art made solely for this Washington show. The work brings about the feelings shared by lives influenced by war, but also by hope, captured by the blossoming of a vibrant-like garden.

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